

Standing Committee on Community Services: Impacts of COVID-19 on Mental Health

Data retrieved from:

COVID-19 Impact on the mental health and wellbeing of Nova Scotians

Data from national survey conducted by CMHA and UBC, released June 2020 & Dec. 2020

Survey conducted by Maru/Matchbox

Who we are:

CMHA Is a nationally federated community-based, non-government mental health promotion-mental health and addictions disease prevention & recovery support maintenance association.

CMHA is comprised of 1 National (license + governance + policy), 12 Divisions (provincial/territorial), 87 branches.

Vision: Mentally Healthy People in a Healthy Society

Mission: Mental Health for all Nova Scotians



As the pandemic drags on, it continues to take a toll on the mental health of Canadians

- 40% of Canadians said their mental health has deteriorated since the onset of the pandemic (up slightly from 38% in Wave 1).
- 48% of Canadians reported high levels of anxiety/worry as a result of COVID-19, as well as stress (38%), sadness (25%) and depression (24%).

71% of Canadians are worried about the impact of the second wave of the virus

- 58% worried about a loved one or family member dying
- 55% fearful of contracting the virus
- 54% worried about being separated from family and friends
- 51% worried about vaccine safety and effectiveness
- 39% worried about finances
- 30% worried about vaccine availability
- 26% worried about job loss
- 20% worried about having enough food to meet their family's needs
- 10% worried about being safe from domestic violence

**Canadians are not getting the addictions help they need.
Left to cope on their own, they are increasingly relying on unhealthy strategies.**

Substance use

- 17% of Canadians have increased substance use as a way to cope.
- 20% of Canadians have increased alcohol use.
- 9% of Canadians have increased cannabis use.
- 7% of Canadians have increased prescription medication use

Suicidality and self-harm are also up since the pandemic started, with 1 in 10 Canadians experiencing recent thoughts or feelings of suicide.

- This is up from:
 - 6% in wave 1
 - 2.5% pre pandemic
- 4% have recently tried to harm themselves (up from 2% in Wave 1).

Vulnerable and Marginalized persons/communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, both during the first and second waves.

61% of those with a pre-existing mental health condition (up slightly from 59% in Wave 1)

61% of those who are unemployed

60% of those aged 18-24, compared to 21% of those aged 75+

54% of Indigenous peoples (up from 41% in Wave 1)

54% of LGBTQ2+ people (up from 50% in Wave 1)

50% of those with a disability (up slightly from 47% in Wave 1)

45% of women, compared to 34% of men

Parents of children under 18 are under extreme pressure.

- 13% of parents have had recent suicidal thoughts or feelings
- One in five (18%) of parents are concerned about being safe from physical or emotional domestic violence
- Almost half (48%) of parents are worried about finances
- Two in five (36%) parents are worried about job loss
- One in four (27%) are worried about putting food on the table
- One in four (28) have increased alcohol use

Many Canadians were already struggling to get the mental health care they need before the pandemic—we need policy-level interventions to improve social conditions and ready access to community mental health supports.

- 1.6 million Canadians per year already reported unmet mental health care needs—and the needs are rising due to the pandemic.
- Isolation, physical distancing, economic insecurity and stress are all contributing to an “echo pandemic” of mental health issues.

Issues throughout the pandemic that have been amplified for vulnerable persons marginalized communities, as well as impacting the general population. if left unchecked, these issues will begin affecting the mental wellness of all.

- As COVID-19 continues to spread and the economic impact increases, more and more people in Nova Scotia will be in need of help.
- A lack of available mental health and addictions primary prevention and recovery maintenance funding and programming will also continue to compound these issues within marginalized communities and beyond.

Canadians/Nova Scotians are suffering from mental health conditions that are preventable or manageable with the right services and supports—that can be cost-effectively delivered at the community level



How we support communities

- Education and training
- Food security
- Housing support and eviction prevention
- Employment
- Psychosocial-wellness resilience-based programs [SEL]
- Social programs
- Community-based peer support
- Life skills development supports
- Community-based suicide prevention [CAST]
- Community navigation and service support
- Addiction support services

Questions?

