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# WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST STRESSORS AND SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION TO WHICH COVID-19 IS GIVING RISE? FOR BELL LET'S TALK DAY

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# INTRODUCTION :THE PSS TEST....BIGGEST COVID-19 STRESSORS

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic stress assessment instrument. Originally developed in 1983, remains the most popular tool for psychological assessment to help understand how different situations affect our feelings and establish the degree to which situations in one's life are perceived to be stressful. The 10 questions aim to provide insights into how unpredictable, uncontrollable people find their lives at a given point in time. We put a modified version of all 10 of the PSS questions and used a 3 rather than a 5 points scale to over 1500 Canadians with a view to determining the level of stress Canadians are feeling at this juncture. Three additional items were added which are described as sources of frustration so as to provide greater insight into issues that underlie stress notably whether Canadians are bored about being at home, feeling isolated from family and friends and whether they are upset about not seeing the end of COVID-19 in view. These findings arise from a survey conducted via web panel by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies between January 15 and January 17, 2021 with 1516 Canadians and while no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample, for comparative purposes the national sample would have a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5\%$ , 19 times out of 20

# INDICATORS OF PERCEIVED STRESS AND FRUSTRATION

## The 10 indicators of stress

Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly

Nervous

That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life

Unable to control irritations in your life

That things were outside of your control

That you could not cope with all the things that you had to do

That you were on top of things (Less Often)

That there were too many challenges for you to overcome

That things were going your way (Less often)

Confident in your ability to deal with personal problems (less often)

## 3 sources of frustration

That you were isolated from my friends/family

Upset that you don't know when the COVID-19 crisis will end

Bored and sick of being in my home

# ON EACH OF THE TOP FIVE INDICATORS OF STRESS IT IS WOMEN WHO ARE CONSIDERABLY MORE STRESSED THAN MEN

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often... More Often %	Total	Men	Women	Gender Gap
That things were outside of your control	41%	35%	48%	13
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	38%	32%	44%	12
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	37%	29%	44%	15
Nervous	36%	28%	43%	15
Unable to control irritations in your life	29%	23%	34%	11

# YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FAR MORE STRESSED SINCE COVID-19 BEGAN THAN ARE OLDER COHORTS AND THE BIGGEST GAP IS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ABILITY TO CONTROL IRRITATIONS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often... <b>More Often</b>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	Gap between 18-24 and 65 plus on 5 top stressors
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	50%	51%	43%	36%	28%	30%	20
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	50%	50%	37%	31%	31%	29%	21
That things were outside of your control	50%	48%	44%	41%	33%	37%	13
Unable to control irritations in your life	48%	41%	28%	21%	21%	22%	26
Nervous	47%	43%	41%	39%	24%	26%	21

# QUEBECERS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE UPSET BECAUSE MANY THINGS ARE HAPPENING UNEXPECTEDLY WHILE BC-ERS AND ONTARIANS MOST LIKELY TO FEEL THAT THINGS ARE OUTSIDE OF THEIR CONTROL

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often... <b>More Often</b>	ATL	QC	ONT	MB/SK	AB	BC
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	37%	42%	39%	36%	38%	32%
That things were outside of your control	42%	39%	44%	40%	34%	45%
Nervous	36%	36%	39%	31%	25%	37%
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	35%	33%	39%	36%	39%	36%
Unable to control irritations in your life	25%	29%	30%	25%	27%	27%

# THOSE REPORTING BAD AND VERY BAD MENTAL HEALTH ARE REPORTING VERY HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS ON ALL FIVE INDICATORS WITH THE BIGGEST GAP IN FEELING MANY THINGS ARE HAPPENING UNEXPECTEDLY

	Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?						
Top 5 Indicators of Stress More Often %	Canada Sample (1517)	Excellent (175)	Very good (315)	Good (688)	Bad (236)	Very bad (74)	Gap between Excellent and Very Bad
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	38%	7.4%	20.6%	39.5%	66.9%	87.8%	81.4
Nervous	36%	6.3%	18.7%	33.7%	71.1%	82.4%	76.1
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	37%	11.5%	22.2%	34.5%	66.8%	86.5%	75
Unable to control irritations in your life	29%	10.9%	10.2%	26.5%	56.4%	83.8%	72.9
That things were outside of your control	41%	12.6%	27.3%	41.6%	69.9%	79.7%	67.1

# AS REGARDS THE MOST AND LEAST NERVOUS THE BIGGEST GAPS ARE BEING UPSET BECAUSE MANY THINGS ARE HAPPENING UNEXPECTEDLY AND THINGS ARE OUTSIDE OF YOUR CONTROL

Top 5 Indicators of Stress % More Often	Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt the following more often/about the same/less often...Nervous			
	More often	About the same	Less often	Gap between those most nervous and least nervous across the five indicators
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	71.2%	21.5%	7.4%	63.8
That things were outside of your control	71.1%	26.4%	9.6%	61.5
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	63.5%	23.3%	7.4%	56.1
Unable to control irritations in your life	53.9%	15.2%	9.6%	44.3
That there were too many challenges for you to overcome	40.1%	8.4%	3.2%	36.9



# ISOLATION FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS GIVES RISE TO GREATER STRESS OVER THINGS BEING OUT OF CONTROL

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt the following more often/about the same/less often... That you were isolated from your friends/family			
Top 5 Indicators of Stress More Often %	More often	Less often	Gap between more often and less often
That things were outside of your control	56.8%	20.0%	36.8
Nervous	47.4%	19.6%	27.8
That you were unable to control the important things in your personal life	49.2%	23.2%	26
Upset because many things are happening unexpectedly	51.1%	25.5%	24.6
Unable to control irritations in your life	37.6%	25.5%	12.2

# STUDENTS REPORT HIGHER CUMULATIVE RATES OF STRESS THAN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN AND PERSONS THAT ARE UNEMPLOYED

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often/about the same or less often... <b>MORE OFTEN</b>	Students	Households with Children	Unemployed
That things were outside of your control	49	45	48
Nervous	46	44	41
Unable to control irritations in your life	44	32	33
Cumulative Stress Score	<b>46.5</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40.5</b>

# FEELING ISOLATED FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS DURING COVID-19 HAS HAD A GREATER IMPACT ON WOMEN THAN MEN

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often about the same or less often... Additional indicators <b>More often %</b>	Total Canada	Men	Women	18-24	65 and over
That you were isolated from my friends/family	61%	<b>53%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>65%</b>	66
Bored and sick of being in my home	50%	<b>45%</b>	<b>55%</b>	65%	51
Upset that you don't know when the COVID-19 crisis will end	55%	<b>46%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>68%</b>	53

# QUEBECERS RANK FIRST ON ALL INDICATORS OF FRUSTRATION

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often...	ATL	QC	ONT	MB/SK	AB	BC
Bored and sick of being in my home	46%	55%	52%	50%	47%	42%
That you were isolated from my friends/family	51%	72%	61%	59%	57%	52%
Upset that you don't know when the COVID-19 crisis will end	47%	62%	57%	48%	48%	54%

# BEING AT HOME AND NOT KNOWING WHEN COVID-19 WILL END ARE THE SOURCE OF THE LARGER GAPS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?						
Additional Indicators	Excellent (175)	Very good (315)	Good (688)	Bad (236)	Very bad (74)	Gap between Excellent and Very Bad mental health
That you were isolated from my friends/family	34.3%	53.0%	64.7%	75.0%	85.1%	50.8
Upset that you don't know when the COVID-19 crisis will end	25.7%	37.0%	59.6%	80.5%	86.5%	59.8
Bored and sick of being in my home	17.7%	38.3%	53.3%	74.6%	78.1%	60.4

# FEAR OF GETTING COVID-19 CONTRIBUTES TO HIGH RATES OF NERVOUSNESS

Nervous - Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often...	Are you personally afraid of contracting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?			
	Very afraid	Somewhat afraid	Not very afraid	Not afraid at all
More often	61.6%	41.3%	22.0%	13.3%
About the same	34.7%	55.1%	70.3%	70.6%
Less often	3.7%	3.5%	7.7%	16.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

# NERVOUSNESS IS A KEY DRIVER IN MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Nervous - Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often	Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?				
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad
More often	6.3%	18.7%	33.7%	71.1%	82.4%
About the same	74.7%	70.3%	62.6%	28.9%	17.6%
Less often	19.0%	11.1%	3.6%		
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

# FEAR OF COVID-19 MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH THINGS WE NEED TO DO

That you could not cope with all the things that you had to do - Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have you felt more often, about the same or less often...	Are you personally afraid of contracting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?			
	Very afraid	Somewhat afraid	Not very afraid	Not afraid at all
More often	35.8%	22.9%	14.5%	16.8%



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