
MENTAL HEALTH OUTLOOK 2021: UNEMPLOYED, SINGLE/LONELY PARENT HOUSEHOLDS, STUDENTS AND NEWCOMERS SHOW HIGHEST NEGATIVE SELF- ASSESSMENTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE HOLIDAYS

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INTRODUCTION: WOMEN, STUDENTS, UNEMPLOYED, LONE PARENTS AND NEWCOMERS MOST AT RISK IN REGARDS TO MENTAL HEALTH

Experts agree that lockdowns and confinement risk having a significant impact the state of our mental health. One of the more detailed studies at the height of the pandemic in the UK revealed that “young people, women, individuals from more socially-disadvantaged backgrounds and those with pre-existing mental health problems reported the worst mental health outcomes in the initial phase of (that country’s) national lockdown.” (<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-54616688>). Another extensive study of University students in France found that those who experienced lockdowns due to COVID-19 exhibited a high prevalence of mental health issues. The authors of the study concluded that “Protecting the mental health of students is a public health issue that appears even more critical in the context of a pandemic,” and called for particular attention to be directed at female students. <https://www.healio.com/news/psychiatry/20201023/university-students-at-significant-risk-for-mental-health-effects-of-covid19-lockdown>.

With the holidays and new year’s behind us and much of the country asked to reduced interaction with varying degrees of lockdown and confinement (and a curfew in the province of Quebec) the mental health outlook for 2021 will need to be closely monitored. Two that end, two studies are being presented: (1) looks at the most recent findings from the January 2-3, 2021 Leger-Association for Canadians survey with a focus on which socio-demographic groups are most vulnerable based on their self-assessed mental health and the impact of recent visits with family and friends on mental health self-assessments and (2) which identity-based groups (immigrants and selected ethnic and religious minorities) that have exhibited the poorest rates of mental based on a two month rolling of six surveys aimed at significantly boosting the sample size so as to thicken the reliability of survey findings. This study also offered comparative data amongst on fear of getting Covid 19.

The first study confirms that in Canada it is women, students, unemployed persons and single/lone parent households that had considerably poorer mental health self-assessments. The second study points to higher negative mental health assessments for newcomers to Canada.

METHODOLOGY

These findings arise from a survey conducted via web panel by Leger in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies between January 2 and January 3, 2021 with 1523 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.

The second set of findings on mental health and identity markers arise from rolling up the samples of six surveys by Leger in partnership of the Association for Canadian Studies over the period October 29th, 2020 to January 3, 2021. All the surveys were conducted via web panel and the combined respondent total number is upwards of 9000 Canadians. 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.

FEMALES 18-34 HAVE FAR HIGHER NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF-ASSESSMENTS THAN MALES IN THE SAME AGE COHORT

January 2-3, 2021	18-34		35 and over		Total	
Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Excellent	10.7%	2.9%	17.2%	9.7%	15.5%	7.9%
Very good	19.4%	7.8%	25.8%	22.8%	24.1%	18.9%
Good	41.8%	50.7%	41.7%	45.7%	41.7%	47.0%
Bad	19.9%	26.3%	11.4%	16.2%	13.7%	18.9%
Very bad	6.1%	10.2%	2.6%	3.0%	3.6%	4.9%
Total Bad	26%	36.5%	14%	19%	17%	24%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	2.0%	2.0%	1.3%	2.6%	1.4%	2.4%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

OVER 30% OF STUDENTS 18-34 REPORT BAD MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS

Mental Health amongst those declaring Students 18-34 (95 respondents) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health? (Full-time or whose studies take up most of his/her time)	January 2-3, 2021	December 11-13, 2020	October 29-31, 2020
Excellent	5.3%	7.9%	4.5%
Very good	11.6%	10.9%	14.4%
Good	49.5%	52.5%	51.4%
Bad	25.3%	12.9%	22.5%
Very bad	6.3%	12.9%	6.3%
Total Bad	31.6	25.8%	28.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	2.1%	7.9%	0.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

OVER ONE IN THREE UNEMPLOYED CANADIANS REPORT NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS AND THE GAP BETWEEN UNEMPLOYED MEN AND WOMEN IS QUITE SIGNIFICANT

Mental Health amongst those declaring unemployed (80 respondents) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Male	Female	Total
Excellent	9.4%	8.3%	8.8%
Very good	9.4%	6.2%	7.5%
Good	53.1%	37.5%	43.8%
Bad	18.8%	31.2%	26.2%
Very bad	9.4%	12.5%	11.2%
Total Bad and Very Bad	28.2%	43.7%	37.4%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	0.7%	4.2%	2.5%

CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS FOR SINGLE AND LONE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS OVER THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2020 TO JANUARY 2021

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	January 1-3, 2021		October 29, 2020		December 11 -13, 2020	
	Both parents in household	Single or lone parent in the household	Both parents in household	Single or lone parent in the household	Both parents in household	Single or lone parent in the household
Excellent	11.6%	6.1%	8.4%	7.5%	6.3%	9.3%
Very good	19.9%	10.2%	24.1%	17.0%	20.8%	16.3%
Good	47.3%	42.9%	50.3%	37.7%	50.2%	46.5%
Bad	16.4%	30.6%	14.1%	22.6%	15.2%	11.6%
Very bad	3.2%	10.2%	1.9%	11.3%	4.6%	9.3%
Total Bad and Very Bad	19.6%	40.8%	16%	33.9%	19.8%	20.9%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	1.6%		1.2%	3.8%	3.0%	7.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE WHO MADE MULTIPLE VISITS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD WERE SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO REPORT NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS

January 2-3, 2021	Over the recent holiday period did you visit with family or friends that live outside your home?		
Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Never	Rarely (once)	More than once
Excellent	13%	9%	12%
Very good	22%	21%	20%
Good	42%	49%	43%
Bad	17%	14%	20%
Very bad	4%	5%	3.5%
Bad and Very Bad	21%	19%	23.5%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	2%	2%	1.5%
	100.0%	100.0%	100%

WOMEN WHO MADE MULTIPLE VISITS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS OVER THE HOLIDAYS WERE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Over the recent holiday period did you visit with family or friends that live outside your home?					
	Male			Female		
	Never	Rarely (once)	More than once	Never	Rarely (once)	More than once
Excellent	17.5%	10.6%	18%	9%	7.5%	5.5%
Very good	22.3%	25.4%	27%	21.5%	17.5%	13%
Good	40.6%	45.8%	36%	43%	51.5%	51.5%
Bad	15.0%	11.9%	14%	19%	16%	25%
Very bad	3.0%	4.2%	4%	5%	5.5%	3%
Bad and Very Bad	18%	16.1%	18%	24%	21.5%	28%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	1.5%	2.1%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100%

SINGLE/LONE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS, UNEMPLOYED, YOUNG WOMEN AND FEMALES 18-34 ALL SHOW UPSWING IN POST HOLIDAY REPORTED NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS

Bad and very bad mental health for selected groups (Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?) Oct 2020 to January 2021	October 30-31	December 11 -13	January 2-3, 2021
Unemployed	33	34	37
Single or Lone Parent	34	21	40
Full Time Students 18-34	29	26	32
Females 18-34	24	31	36

NEWCOMERS, SOUTH ASIANS AND JEWS SHOW HIGHEST NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SELF ASSESSMENTS

October 29 to 31, 2020 to January 2-3, 2021 (six surveys) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Mental Health Combined Bad and Very Bad
Less than 5 years (158)	25%
5 years to 10 years (178)	15%
11 years to 20 years (288)	18.5%
21 years and more (775)	13%
Total Born Outside of Canada	14%
Total Born in Canada	19%

October 29 to 31, 2020 to January 2-3, 2021 (six surveys) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health	Mental Health Combined Bad and Very Bad
Jewish (126)	26.2%
Muslim (165)	21.5%
Atheists (2797)	23%
Catholics (2835)	15%
Protestants (1511)	12.5%
Black (156)	20%
South Asian (324)	26.8%
Chinese (434)	17.5%

NEWCOMERS, CHINESE CANADIANS, SOUTH ASIANS AND JEWS ARE THE MOST AFRAID OF GETTING COVID-19

October 29 to 31, 2020 to January 2-3, 2021 (six surveys) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health	Fear of Getting COVID-19
Less than 5 years (158)	78%
5 years to 10 years (178)	76%
11 years to 20 years (288)	72%
21 years and more (775)	65.5%
Total Born Outside of Canada	70%
Total Born in Canada	59%

October 29 to 31, 2020 to January 2-3, 2021 (six surveys) Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health	Fear of Getting COVID-19
Jewish (126)	76%
Muslim (165)	70%
Atheists (2797)	57%
Catholics (2835)	60%
Protestants (1511)	62.5%
Black (156)	68%
South Asian (324)	76%
Chinese (434)	80%

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