
RATIONAL OR IRRATIONAL: IS THERE A HEALTHY LEVEL OF FEAR WHEN IT COMES TO COVID-19?

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INTRODUCTION: NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FEAR ITSELF?

Twenty four weeks of surveys on levels of anxiety around COVID-19 has pointed to a wide spectrum of fear amongst Canadians and Americans about getting the contagion. But a majority in both countries report that they're either very or somewhat afraid of getting the virus. In the group that say they are either not very afraid or not afraid at all is a segment that believes that the level of fear with respect to COVID-19 is irrational and that too many people are overreacting. Americans are more likely than Canadians to feel that way and in Canada it is Albertans that are most likely to think so. Republicans in the USA and Conservatives in Canada are most likely to think that there is overreaction.

Paradoxically those expressing the feeling that people are exaggerating give themselves the best mental health assessments. The survey was conducted via web panel by Leger Marketing in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies between August 28th and August 30th with 1521 Canadian respondents and 1003 American respondents. No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (Web panel in this case). However for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1521 Canadian respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20 and the 1003 American respondents a margin of error of $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

NEARLY ONE IN FIVE CANADIANS THINK THE AMOUNT OF FEAR ABOUT COVID-19 COMPARED WITH OVER ONE IN FIVE AMERICANS

Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?		
	Canada	United States
I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	75%	65%
The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	18%	28%
Unsure / I prefer not to answer	6%	7%

AMERICA'S REPUBLICANS, INDEPENDENTS AND CANADIAN CONSERVATIVES ARE MOST LIKELY TO THINK THAT THE AMOUNT OF FEAR IS IRRATIONAL

Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?								
	LPC	NDP	BQ	CPC	GPC	Republican	Democrat	Independent
I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	87%	80%	75%	65%	76%	49%	88%	60%
The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	9%	16%	19%	29%	13%	48%	7%	29%
Unsure / I prefer not to answer	4%	4%	6%	7%	10%	3%	5%	10%

AT 30% ALBERTANS ARE MOST LIKELY TO FEEL THAT THE FEAR OF COVID-19 IS IRRATIONAL

Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?						
	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	82%	72%	79%	66%	66%	78%
The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	10%	22%	14%	25%	30%	15%
Unsure / I prefer not to answer	8%	6%	6%	9%	4%	7%

THOSE CANADIANS AGED 35 TO 44 ARE SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT THE LEVEL OF FEAR IS IRRATIONAL

Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?						
	Total	Man	Woman	18-34	35-54	55+
I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	75%	75%	76%	72%	71%	82%
The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	18%	20%	17%	20%	23%	13%
Unsure / I prefer not to answer	6%	5%	7%	8%	6%	5%

THOSE CANADIANS THAT SAY THEY ARE NOT AFRAID AT ALL OF GETTING COVID-19 ARE BY FAR THE MOST LIKELY TO THINK THAT PEOPLE ARE OVERREACTING TO THE CONTAGION

Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?	Are you personally afraid of contracting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?			
	Very afraid (16%)	Somewhat afraid (41)	Not very afraid (31)	Not afraid at all (12)
I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	95.6%	86.8%	70.9%	24.6%
The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	1.6%	8.3%	21.1%	66.8%
Unsure / I prefer not to answer	2.8%	4.8%	8.0%	8.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TWO THIRDS OF THOSE CANADIANS THAT FEEL THE FEAR IS SENSIBLE ARE AFRAID OF GETTING COVID-19 COMPARED WITH 20% THAT FEEL THAT THE LEVEL OF FEAR IS IRRATIONAL

Are you personally afraid of contracting the COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?	Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?		
	I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	Unsure / I prefer not to answer
Very afraid	20.7%	1.4%	7.4%
Somewhat afraid	47.2%	18.6%	31.6%
Not very afraid	27.8%	34.1%	37.9%
Not afraid at all	4.0%	44.8%	16.8%
I already have or have been exposed to the virus	0.3%	1.1%	2.1%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer			4.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THE FEAR OF COVID-19 IS IRRATIONAL ARE MOST LIKELY TO RATE THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS EXCELLENT

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, how would you rate your mental health?	Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?			Total
	I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	Unsure / I prefer not to answer	
Excellent	12.3%	23.2%	10.6%	14.2%
Very good	28.1%	26.4%	28.7%	27.8%
Good	43.5%	36.4%	43.6%	42.2%
Bad	11.6%	11.1%	12.8%	11.6%
Very bad	3.3%	2.5%		3.0%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	1.1%	0.4%	4.3%	1.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE CANADIANS WHO FEEL THAT THE FEAR OF COVID-19 IS IRRATIONAL ARE MOST COMFORTABLE GOING BACK TO WORK AND USING PUBLIC TRANSIT

	Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?	
	I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting
Going back to your workplace/office - Once the governments lift the protective measures put in place to fight COVID-19,	41.7%	62.5%
Using public transit (buses, subways, tramways, etc.) -	18.3%	43.7%

THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THE AMOUNT OF FEAR IS IRRATIONAL ARE MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT THE WORST OF THE CRISIS IS BEHIND US

What statement best describes your personal opinion of the COVID-19 crisis for Canada?	CTC270: Which of the following is closest to your view of people's reaction to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?			Total
	I think the amount of fear is sensible given how serious the pandemic has become	The amount of fear is irrational and too many people are overreacting	Unsure / I prefer not to answer	
The worst of the crisis is behind us	25.7%	48.7%	17.9%	29.5%
We are in the worst period of the crisis now	11.4%	9.0%	12.6%	11.1%
The worst of the crisis is yet to come	45.3%	22.9%	31.6%	40.3%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	17.5%	19.4%	37.9%	19.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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