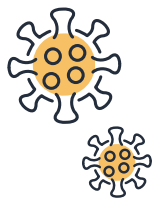


Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression during the COVID-19 Pandemic

September to December 2020 Data from the Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health¹

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Stress



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected individuals, families, and communities in several ways. **Almost 7 out of 10** Canadians reported being negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Almost 2 out of 5 Canadians reported some level of distress in the past month. With social distancing and repeated lockdown measures, feelings of isolation and loneliness can increase levels of anxiety and depression.

Anxiety and depression

Feelings of anxiety and depression are some of the most common symptoms of mental health conditions.

Anxiety symptoms may include:²

- Excessive and constant feelings of nervousness
- Worry and fear

Depression symptoms may include:³

- Lack of energy
- Agitation
- Lowering of a person's mood

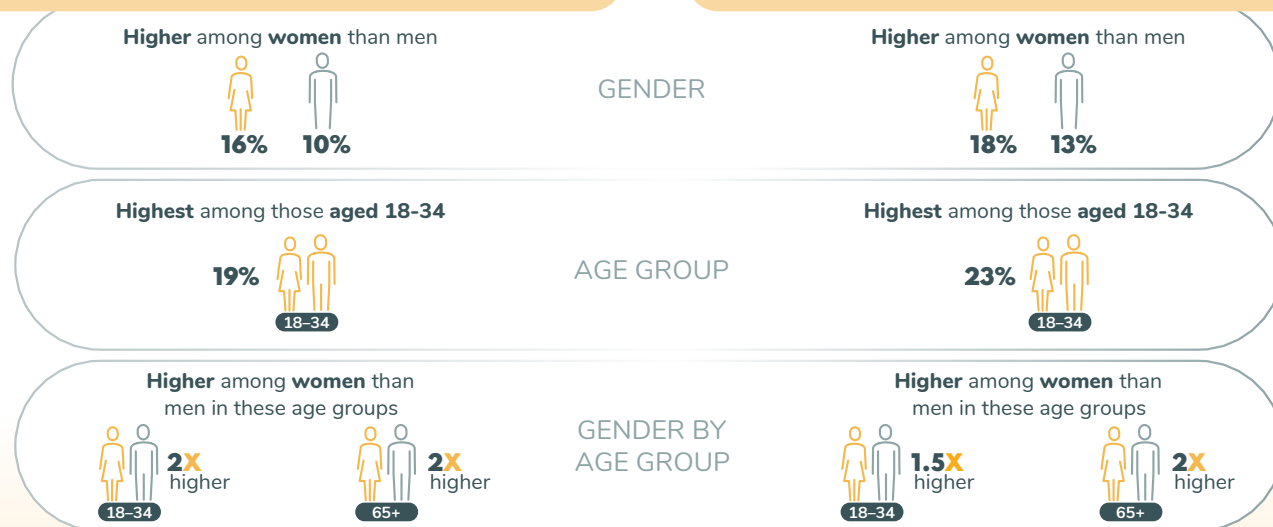


Diagnosing a disorder related to symptoms of anxiety or depression requires a trained and licensed clinician. The Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health used symptom-based screening tools to identify individuals with moderate to severe symptoms of anxiety and depression (i.e., those who would screen positive for **generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)** or **major depressive disorder (MDD)**).⁴

Symptoms of anxiety (GAD) and depression (MDD) in Canadians aged 18+

13% of Canadians screened positive for **GAD**.

15% of Canadians screened positive for **MDD**.



19% of Canadians screened positive for either **GAD, MDD, or both**.

Alcohol and cannabis

Since the beginning of the pandemic, **16%** of Canadians reported an increase in alcohol consumption, and **5%** reported an increase in cannabis use.

Compared to those who did not screen positive for GAD and/or MDD, those who screened positive were **more likely** to report:



3X

Daily or almost daily heavy drinking⁵



2.5X

Daily cannabis use

Groups with higher prevalence

A higher proportion screened positive for GAD and/or MDD:



Indigenous identity

2X higher among Indigenous groups⁶ compared to non-Indigenous groups



Those with decreased income due to the COVID-19 pandemic

1.5X higher than those who had increased income



Those who experienced a traumatic event during their lifetime

1.5X higher than those who did not experience any traumatic events



Frontline workers

1.5X higher than those who are not frontline workers⁷

As the pandemic continues, it is important to learn how to cope with stress in a healthy way in order to minimize experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression.



VISIT

Canada.ca website on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



MORE

Mental health support: Get help
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Awareness resources
Wellness Together Canada

REFERENCES & NOTES:

1. Statistics Canada. Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health (SCMH). 2020 (Retrieved January 2021). Available from: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&id=1283036>.
2. American Psychiatric Association. Anxiety Disorders. In Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). 2022 (Retrieved August 2022). Available from: https://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787.x05_Anxiety_Disorders.
3. American Psychiatric Association. Depressive Disorders. In Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). 2022 (Retrieved August 2022). Available from: https://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787.x04_Depressive_Disorders.
4. The severity of anxiety and depression were measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) respectively. These clinical screening tools are widely used in population health surveys to identify those who may have generalized anxiety disorder and major depressive disorder, with scores of ≥ 10 (i.e., moderate to severe symptoms) in the two weeks prior to completing the survey. The data reported above do not necessarily reflect a clinical diagnosis of these conditions.
5. Heavy drinking is defined as 4+ alcoholic drinks for women and 5+ alcoholic drinks for men in one sitting.
6. Indigenous identity refers to the First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit). The target population of the survey only included persons living off reserves.
7. A frontline worker was defined as "an individual who has the potential to come in direct contact with COVID-19 by assisting those who have been diagnosed with the virus". Examples provided were "police officers, firefighters, paramedics, nurses or doctors."



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