

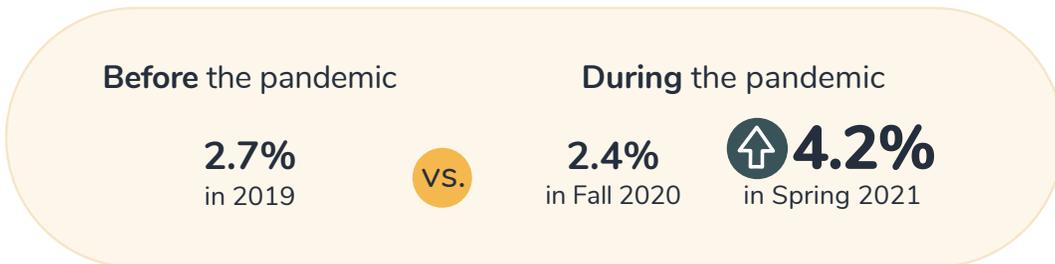
Suicidal ideation among adults in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting public health measures have affected economic, psychosocial, and health-related risk factors for suicidal ideation (i.e., when people experience suicidal thoughts). The Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health was conducted in 2020 and 2021 to better understand the self-reported mental health of adults aged 18 years and older in Canada during the pandemic, including suicidal ideation.^{1,2} Results of the survey were compared to the 2019 Canadian Community Health Survey.

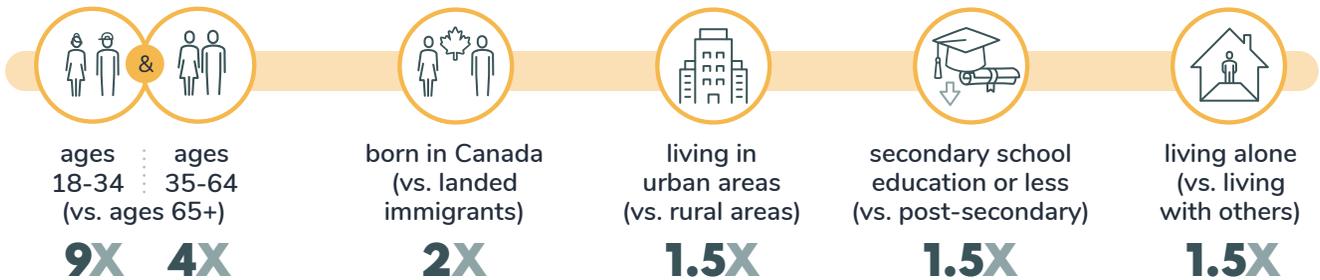


More adults in Canada reported suicidal ideation during the pandemic³

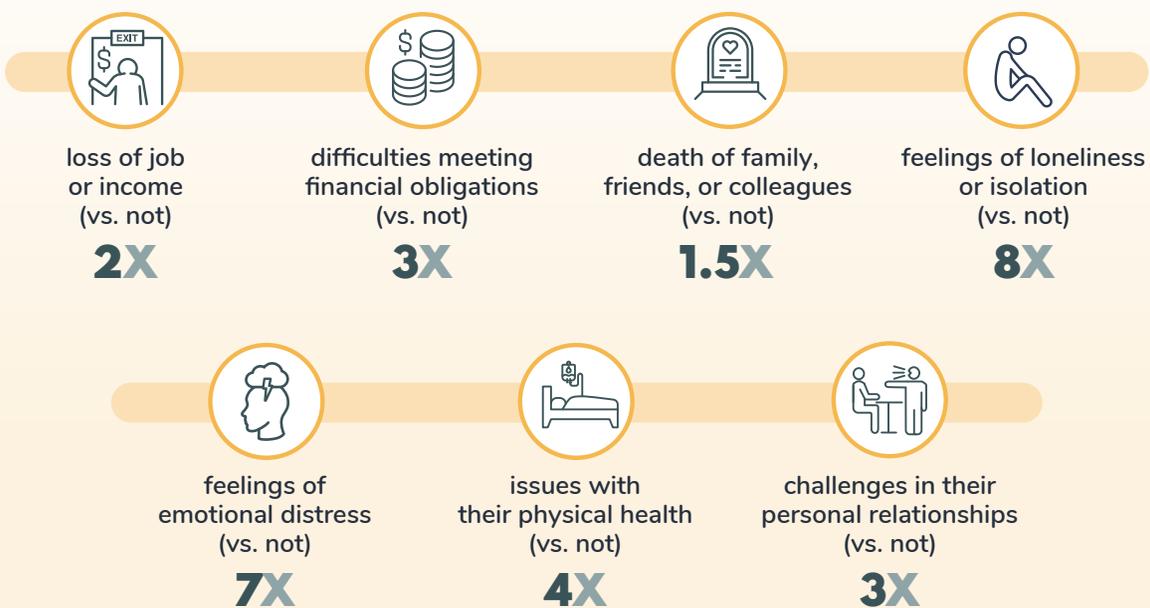


Some populations were **more likely** to report suicidal ideation⁴

Sociodemographic groups



Adults who experienced pandemic-related impacts



Suicidal ideation increased with the number of pandemic-related impacts experienced, e.g., compared to those who experienced 0-1 impact, it was **9X higher** in those who experienced 2 or more impacts, and **25X higher** in those who experienced 6 or more.

Adults with symptoms of mental illness



moderate to severe symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (vs. not)

8X



moderate to severe symptoms of major depressive disorder (vs. not)

14X



moderate to severe symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (vs. not)

10X

Other populations



had increased alcohol consumption (vs. no change or decreased)

2X



had increased cannabis use (vs. no change or decreased)

2X



had concerns of violence in their own home (vs. did not)

2X



experienced stressful/traumatic events in their lifetime (vs. did not)

3X



did not exercise to improve their health (vs. did)

2X

Although an increase in suicidal ideation was observed in spring 2021, there is currently no evidence of an increased number of deaths by suicide since the pandemic began;⁵ this could change as data are updated. Monitoring changes in the population over time using surveys and administrative data can help identify groups that are at increased risk of suicide and inform suicide prevention efforts.

Information about the data

The two cycles of Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health were conducted by Statistics Canada from September to December 2020 and February to May 2021. Participants were asked if they had seriously contemplated suicide since the COVID-19 pandemic began. In the 2019 Canadian Community Health Survey, participants were asked if they had seriously contemplated suicide in the past 12 months.

Help is available

Reading about suicide may bring about difficult emotions. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.

Help is available 24/7 for suicide prevention and mental health.



Here are some resources:

- Talk Suicide Canada: 1-833-456-4566 (or text 45645 4pm to midnight ET)
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- Wellness Together Canada: <https://www.wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>
- Hope for Wellness Help Line for Indigenous peoples: 1-855-242-3310
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366
- For Quebec residents: 1-866-APPELLE (277-3553) or suicide.ca



Additional resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/suicide-prevention/warning-signs.html>



VISIT
the Government of Canada's website on
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



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FOOTNOTES:

1. Statistics Canada. Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health. 2020 (Retrieved June 2022). Available from: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=1283036>
2. Statistics Canada. Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health. 2021 (Retrieved October 2022). Available from: <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5330>
3. More detailed methods and results can be found in the journal articles: Suicide ideation in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and Prevalence of suicidal ideation among adults in Canada: Results of the second Survey on COVID-19 and mental health.
4. The estimates were based on pooled data of the 2020 and 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health.
5. Statistics Canada. Deaths, 2020. The Daily. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220124/dq220124a-eng.htm>