

COVID-19 survey shows almost eight out of 10 adults are worried, bored, stressed, lonely or sad

4 May 2021, by Lou Corpuz-Bosshart



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The pandemic continues to take an emotional toll on people in Canada, with 77% of adults reporting negative emotions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest mental health survey by UBC researchers, in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

The five most common [emotional](#) responses to the pandemic across Canada were "worried or anxious," "bored," "stressed," "lonely or isolated" and "sad," says lead researcher Dr. Emily Jenkins, a professor of nursing at UBC who studies [mental health](#) and [substance use](#).

"The pandemic has been incredibly hard for many people," said Jenkins. "There has been significant loss—of loved ones, of connection, of [feelings](#) of security. This can contribute to very challenging emotions and it is important to acknowledge and process."

The data, released today to mark CMHA's 70th annual Mental Health Week, was compiled in late

January 2021 using a representative sample of 3,037 people ages 18 and older living in Canada.

"While it's discouraging to think that so many Canadians are feeling upset, difficult emotions may actually be an appropriate response to a major event like a global pandemic," says Margaret Eaton, national CEO of CMHA. "The good news is, being able to experience a range of emotions is healthy. Recognizing, understanding and processing our feelings—even the uncomfortable ones—is actually a sign of positive mental [health](#)."

Managing emotional responses

The researchers emphasize that good mental health is not about being happy all the time, but having appropriate emotional and behavioural responses to stressors and life events.

However, it's important to know when anxious feelings become a cause for concern.

"It's time to seek help if you are feeling overwhelmed for prolonged periods of time or have persistent feelings of worry, anger or despair," says Dr. Anne Gadermann, co-lead researcher and professor at the school of population and public health at UBC.

"Or, if challenging emotions are interrupting your daily functioning, negatively impacting your relationships, your ability to work or enjoy life or causing you to rely on substances to cope. If you are having thoughts or feelings of suicide, you should seek help for your mental health."

Mental health challenges

The survey found that those experiencing the most challenging emotions related to the pandemic are

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