

CMHA Mental Health During COVID-19 Ontario Survey



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ontario



Wave 4, January 2022

Methodology

Methodology: On behalf of the CMHA, Pollara Strategic Insights conducted an online survey among a randomly-selected, reliable sample of **N=1,001** adult (18+) Ontario residents.

Field Window: January 10th to 17th, 2021

Reliability: As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of \pm 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments. Although demographic and regional quotas were employed to ensure reliable and comparable sub-segment analysis, the data was weighted by the most current gender, age, & region Census data, to ensure the sample reflects actual population of adult Ontario residents. Discrepancies in total % are due to rounding.

	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4	
Region	Number of Interviews	Margin of error						
Toronto	200	±6.9%	200	±6.9%	201	±6.9%	210	±6.8%
905 ^{GTA} Belt	220	±6.6%	222	±6.6%	222	±6.6%	261	±6.1%
Hamilton-Niagara	133	±8.5%	133	±8.5%	135	±8.4%	92	±10.2%
North	81	±10.9%	79	±10.9%	84	±10.7%	63	±12.3%
East	167	±7.6%	168	±7.6%	169	±7.6%	158	±7.8%
Southwest	200	±6.9%	200	±6.9%	193	±7.1%	215	±6.7%
Ontario	1,001	±3.1%	1,002	±3.1%	1,004	±3.1%	1,001	±3.1%





Summary of Results



While there have been some improvements in mental health compared to last year, Ontarians are still worried about the future.

Ontarians have seen an improvement in their physical and mental health this wave, with slightly fewer experiencing high levels of stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness. That said, half still believe the pandemic has had a negative impact on their health, and the majority continue to feel worried about the strain it is putting on the mental health of them, their family and all of Canada.

- In Wave 4, Ontarians are more positive about both their physical (+3%) and mental health (+8%) compared to Wave 3. However, levels have not returned to the all time high seen at the beginning on the pandemic, and almost half continue to feel COVID-19 has had a negative impact on both their physical and mental health.
- Levels of high stress (32%), anxiety (31%) depression (15%) and loneliness (16%) have also declined, compared to findings from February 2021. However, one-third of Ontarians are feeling more lonely now than they have at other times during the pandemic.
- Despite the gains, Ontarians are still concerned about what is to come. Consistent with Wave 3 findings, the vast majority continue to feel that the longer COVID continues the more strain it will put on mental health, and that a serious mental health crisis could be looming in this province. Additionally, seven-in-ten are more concerned about the mental health of their friends and family now than when the pandemic started, and half are feeling the mental strain of the Omicron variant.



Despite Ontarians handling it well, the negative impact of the pandemic is still high, particularly among children

The difficulties and negativity of dealing with COVID has declined this wave, but still the majority are finding dealing with various aspect of the pandemic to be difficult and that the pandemic itself is having a negative impact on mental health. Most Ontarians still have concerns about the virus and what it is doing to themselves, their family and the country as a whole. These concerns are particularly high when it comes to our children, with worries around their schooling and mental health increasing since last year.

- While Wave 3 saw a sharp incline in the negative impact of COVID on mental health, these impacts have declined slightly this wave, with levels close to that seen in Wave 1. However, this means that still a majority see the pandemic as having a negative impact on themselves, their friends and family and Canadians as a whole.
- Despite this, most Ontarians think they, their children, their spouse, and their parents are all handling the stresses of the pandemic well, overall. However, at least two-thirds say they find dealing with the various aspects of the pandemic difficult, a decline compared to Wave 3 findings.
- Parents are having even more concerns when it comes to their children. The vast majority say their kids are having difficulty dealing with the issues of the pandemic and this has gotten worse since Wave 3. Their concerns about their children's schooling and mental health during this uncertainty has also increased since the last wave of study.



Finding mental health supports are becoming more difficult

Despite the continued strains of COVID-19 on mental health, Ontarians feel there is less relief now than in the past. They are finding it more difficult to find mental health supports, and those who have used them have found them to be less helpful.

- As the pandemic continues, more people have access mental health supports, with one-quarter of households having accessed these since the outbreak.
- However, Ontarians in general are less confident that they will be able to find the support they need in their community and
 more likely to say mental health support is difficult to find, compared to Wave 3 findings. Likewise, those who have accessed
 these supports are more likely to say they were difficult to find.
- While two-thirds of those who have access mental health supports since COVID say the support they received was helpful, this has also declined since February 2021.
- Only one-third of Ontarians believe the government is doing all it can to help support Ontarian's mental health at this time, also down since Wave 3.





Results in Detail





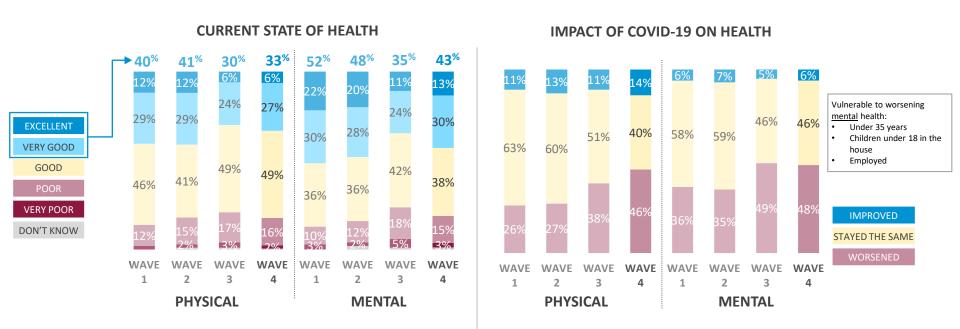
Current Physical and Mental State of Ontarians



COVID-19 continues to impact Ontarians' physical and mental health negatively

In Wave 4, Ontarians saw improvement in their health; since Wave 3, people feeling excellent or very good increased significantly to 43% from 35% in terms of mental health and to 33% from 30% for physical. Four-in-ten of the Ontarians says that both their mental and physical health remained the same since COVID-19 but half report that their mental health has worsened

Profile of Ontarians' mental health worsening: Younger (18-34); poor or very poor physical health; very high or high stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness; vaccinated for COVID-19.



Base: (Wave 1 N=1,001; Wave 2 N=1,002; Wave 3 N=1,004; Wave 4 N=1,001)

Q1. How would you rate your current level of physical and mental health?

Q2. And would you say your health has improved, worsen or stayed the same since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada?



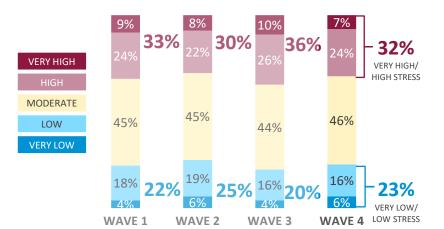
While one-third of Ontarians report high levels of stress and anxiety, this has decreased slightly this Wave

A third of Ontarians report high to very high levels of stress (32%) and anxiety (31%), down from Wave 3 but similar to Wave 1 and 2

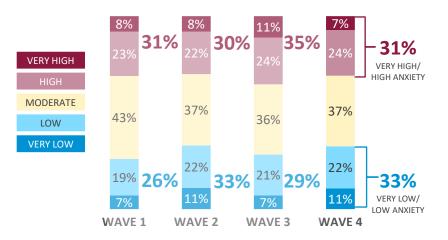
A slightly increased number of people reported low to very low levels of stress (from 20% to 23%) and anxiety (from 29% to 33%) in comparison to Wave 3

Vulnerable to stress and anxiety: Younger (18-34); children under 18 in the house; employed Ontarians; vaccinated for COVID-19.

Stress is defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. People can experience stress when the demands placed on them strain their ability to cope



Anxiety is defined as an emotion characterized by feelings of tension and worried thoughts





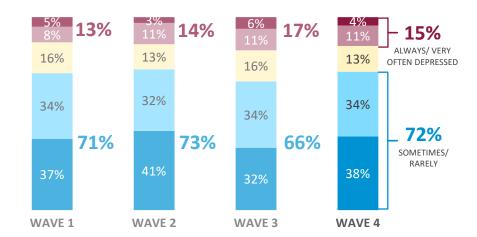
Wave 4 saw a slight decrease in the number of Ontarians reporting high levels of Depression when compared to Wave 3

Almost a sixth of the Ontarians report being very often to almost always depressed (15%, down by 2%) in Wave 4 People feeling depressed rarely went up to 38% (from 32% in Wave 3)

Vulnerable to depression: Younger (18-34); very poor or poor physical and mental health; employed Ontarians.

Depression has been described as feelings of sadness, loss, or anger that interfere with a person's everyday activities







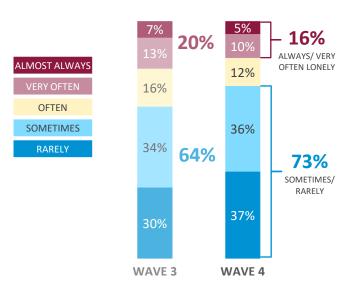
While fewer Ontarians reported being feeling always to often lonely this Wave, one-third are lonelier now than in other pandemic times

A sixth of the Ontarians reported feeling lonely always or very often with a third (35%) reporting to have an increased feeling of loneliness compared to other times during the pandemic.

Vulnerable to feeling lonelier: Children in virtual/home school; employed Ontarians; very poor or poor physical and mental health; vaccinated for COVID-19.

FEELINGS OF LONELINESS NOW COMPARED TO OTHER TIMES IN THE PANDEMIC** **Wave 3 measures current loneliness compared to before the pandemic **WAVE** WAVE 4 3** 35% **NET MORE** 57% Much more often than before the pandemic 19% Somewhat more often than before the 28% 38% pandemic 17% **NET LESS** 8% Somewhat less often than before the 11% 5% pandemic 6% Much less often than before the pandemic 3% Feelings of loneliness have not changed 41% 31% Don't know 4%

Loneliness has been described as an unpleasant or distressing feeling due to a lack of social relationships



Base: (Wave 3 N=1,004; Wave 4 N=1,001)

Q6. Would you say that, on the whole, you are experiencing feelings of loneliness...

Q7. How does this compare to the feelings of loneliness you may have experienced during other times in the COVID-19 pandemic? Would you say that you are now feeling lonely...

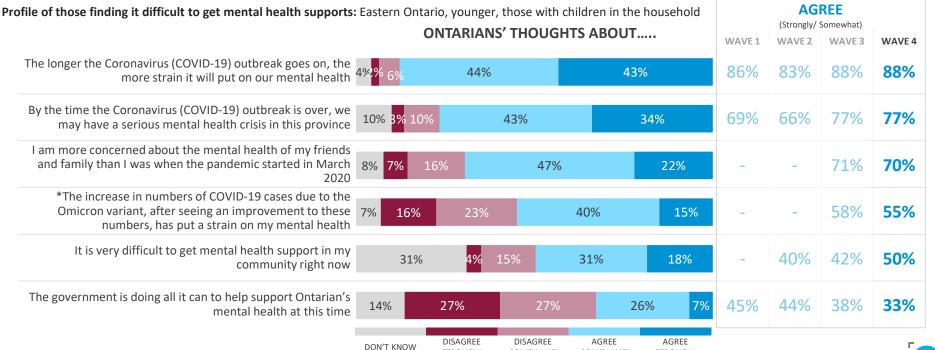


Ontarians continue to be highly concerned about the strain the outbreak is having on mental health as the pandemic continues

As in Wave 1, most (88%) Ontarians agree that the strain on mental health will worsen the longer the outbreak continues. A majority (77%) also believe that once the outbreak is over, there may be a serious mental health crisis in the province, a finding similar to the last Wave.

Despite the mental health concerns, there has been an increase in those who say getting mental health support is difficult (from 42% to 50%) and a decrease in those who feel the government is doing all it can to support Ontarian's mental health (from 38% to 33%).

Profile of people concerned about the aftermaths of the pandemic: Female; employed.



Base: (Wave 1 N=1,001; Wave 2 N=1,002; Wave 3 N=1,004; Wave 4 N=1,001)

*New wording in Wave 4. Wave 3 wording: The increase in numbers of COVID-19 cases, after seeing an improvement to these numbers in the summer of 2020, has put a strain on my mental health

STRONGLY

SOMEWHAT

SOMEWHAT

STRONGLY

Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic



Ontarians reported the negative impact of COVID-19 on mental health is slightly decreasing, in contrast to Wave 3

In Wave 4, Ontarians are slightly less likely to feel the outbreak is having a negative impact on mental health: personal (7% decrease); household (1% decrease); family/ friends (4% decrease); and Canadians (3% decrease) compared to Wave 3

Vulnerable to negative impact on mental health: Younger (under 55 years); children under 18; poor mental and physical health.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH 10% 9% 10% 10% 9% 9% 8% **POSITIVE IMPACT** 54% **NEGATIVE IMPACT 58**% 55% 48% **57%** 59% 63% 79% 76% 6% 5% STRONG POSITIVE IMPACT SOMEWHAT POSITIVE 13% STRONG NEGATIVE IMPACT 26% 21% NO IMPACT 32% 24% 28% 23% 12% 32% 30% 24% DON'T KNOW 14% 11% 12% 9% 3% WAVE WAVE WAVE WAVE WAVE WAVE WAVF WAVE WAVE WAVE 4* 3 4* The mental health Your personal The mental health of The mental health of family of Canadians as a mental health those in your and friends outside of your whole household household



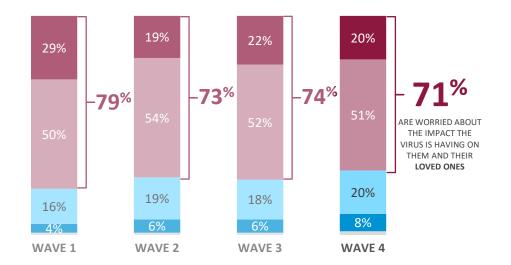
In Wave 4, Ontarians report being slightly less worried about the impact on them and their loved ones compared to Wave 3

Worry about the impact of the outbreak on themselves and family has decreased significantly since Wave 1 (79% to 71%), with the biggest shift among those who described themselves as very worried in April 2020 (from almost a third (29%) to a fifth)

Vulnerable to impact and worry: Women; children under 18 in the house; children attending virtual/home school; good to poor mental and physical health; vaccinated for COVID-19; more substance use.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY IMPACT OF COVID-19





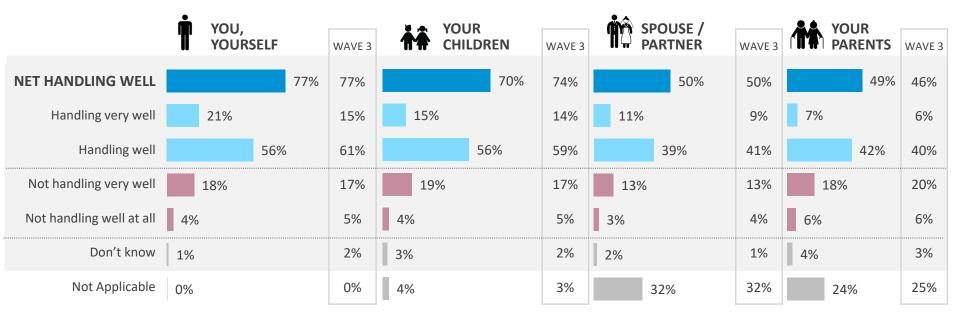


Most Ontarians report to be handling restrictions and stresses of the pandemic well

While the majority of Ontarians say they and their children are handling it well, the number who feel that of their children has reduced slightly (70% -4%) since Wave 3 One in every five (almost 20%) of the Ontarians reported that they and their families are not able to handle the restrictions and stresses well enough

Vulnerable to restrictions and stresses: Younger (18-34); poor mental health; negative seasonal affect on both mental and physical health; more substance use.

HANDLING RESTRICTIONS & STRESSES OF THE PANDEMIC



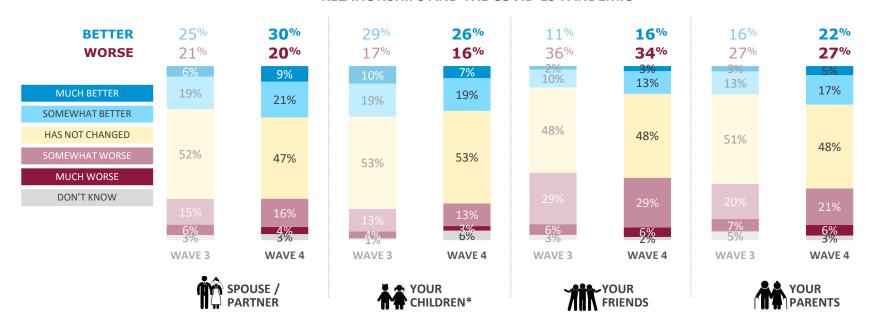


Ontarians are more likely to have improving relationships with their spouse/partner, friends and parents

In this Wave, parents are less likely to say their relationships with their children have improved rather than worsened compared to the last Wave. Ontarians feel that their relationship with their spouse has gotten better. The relationship between friends has suffered the most as almost two out of five (34%) Ontarians report that their relationship got worse with their friends

Profile of people reporting worsening relationships: 18-54 years; employed Ontarians; poor physical and mental health; increased substance consumption.

RELATIONSHIPS AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC





Overall worry has declined slightly, but concern for children has increased

Worry about the impact of variants (78% -6) and impacts on older generations (80% -3) has declined slightly. However, concern about the impact on children has increased (75% +4) Almost half continue to wish they had someone to talk to

Profile of people wanting to have someone to talk: Younger (under 55 years); children under 18 in the house; employed Ontarians; increased substance consumption.

AGREE (Strongly/ Somewhat) ONTARIANS' THOUGHTS ABOUT..... WAVE 1 WAVE 4 I worry about the impact the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will have on elderly family 7% 5% 8% 80% 46% 34% members/the older generation I am worried about the impact the Omicron variant 52% 26% 12% will have on Ontarians** I worry about the impact the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will have on my children/the younger 9% 6% 10% 42% 33% generation I wish I had someone to talk to about all the things 45% 19% 29% 14% 31% that are worrying me right now DISAGREE DISAGREE **AGREE** AGREE DON'T KNOW **STRONGLY SOMEWHAT SOMEWHAT** STRONGLY

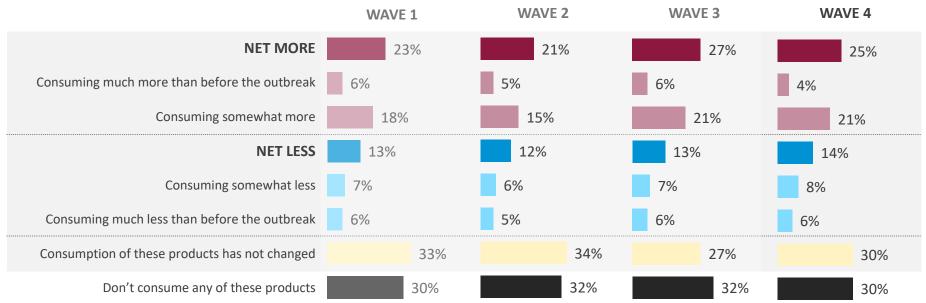


As the pandemic continues, Ontarians' consumption of substances (like alcohol and marijuana) remained at par with Wave 3

A quarter (25%) of Ontarians report that they are consuming more substances, down from 27% last wave. Three-in-ten (30%) have not changed consumption habits and only a few (14%) are consuming less

Vulnerable to substance use increase: Younger (under 55 years); children under 18 in the house; poor mental health.

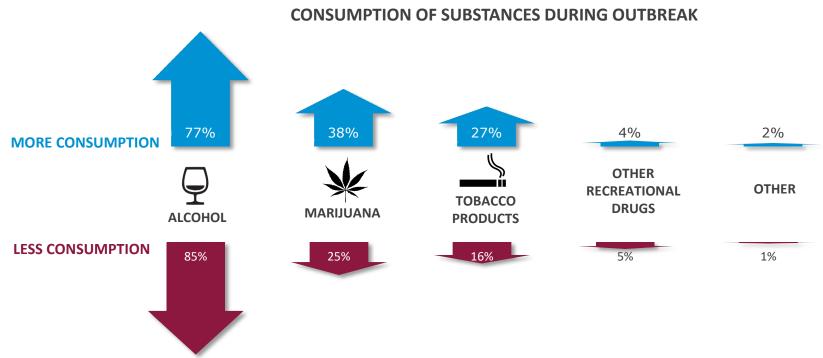
CONSUMPTION OF SUBSTANCES DURING OUTBREAK





For those who have increased or reduced their consumption of the substances, alcohol is most likely to have seen a change

While three quarters (77%) of the Ontarians increased their consumption of alcohol, more than four-fifths (85%) reduced the consumption. In the case of marijuana, almost two-fifths (38%) increased the consumption while only a quarter reduced it

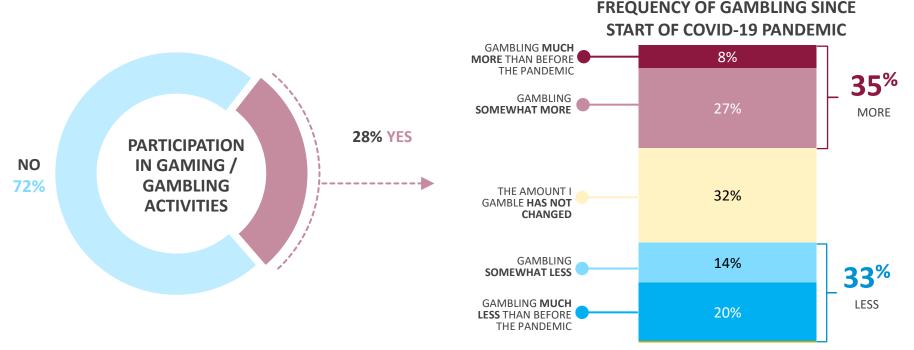




While a third of the Ontario gamblers reported to have been gambling more since the outbreak, another third has reduced doing so

A third (35%) reported having been gambling more since the outbreak, while 8% are doing much more and a quarter (27%) is doing somewhat more Another third (33%) said they are gambling less with a fifth doing much less and 14% doing it somewhat less

Profile of people gambling more: Younger (18-34); male; children under 18 in the house; employed Ontarians; increased substance consumption.





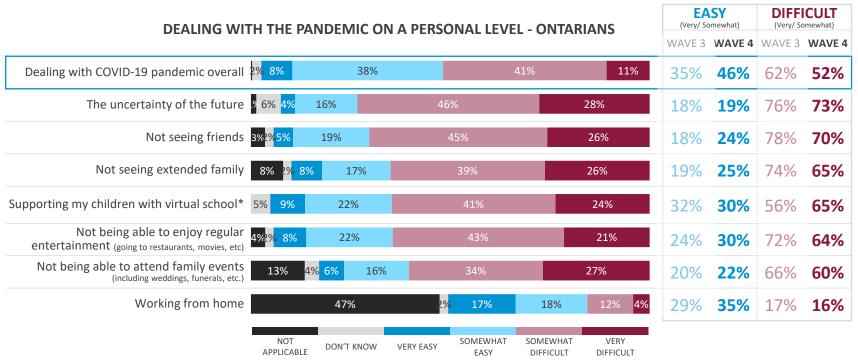
Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic



While Ontarians are finding the pandemic easier to deal with overall, there are many aspects that are still difficult

Half of Ontarians find dealing with the pandemic overall difficult (52% - down from 62% in Wave 3). While easier than February 2021, seven-in-ten still find the uncertain future and not seeing friends difficult, while two-thirds feel the same about not seeing family, virtual school and lack of regular entertainment

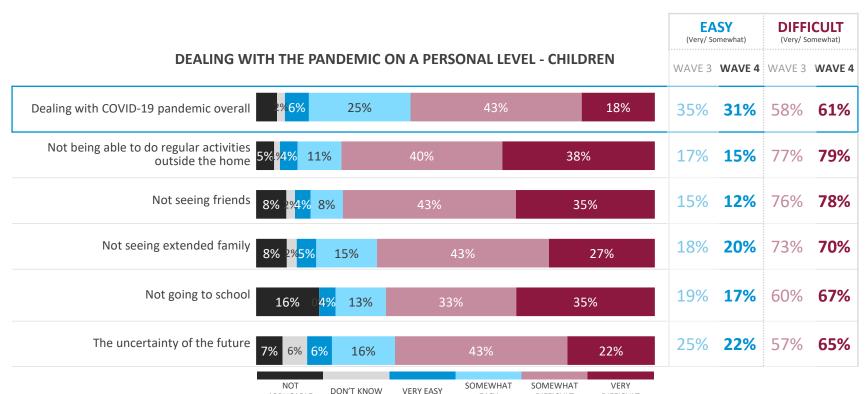
Profile of people facing most difficulty: Females; poor mental health; negative seasonal affect on both mental and physical health.





Parents believe dealing with the pandemic has not been easier on their children

Three fifths of parents say dealing with the pandemic overall has been difficult for their children (61% up from 58% last year). Not doing regular activities and not seeing friends and family have been most difficult



EASY

DIFFICULT

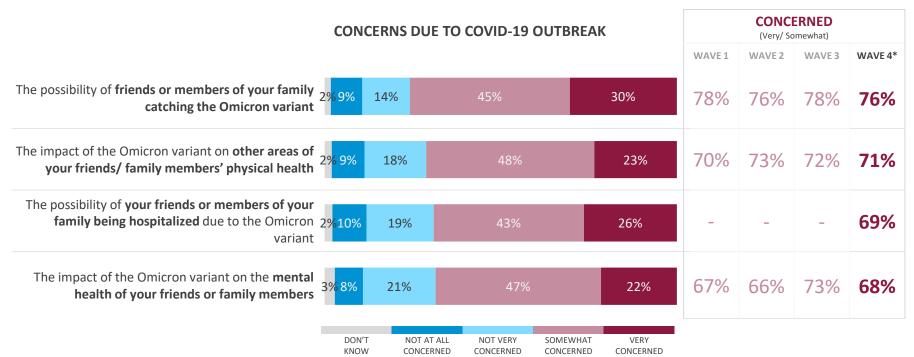
DIFFICULT



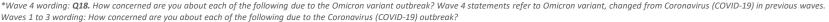
Fears that COVID-19 could potentially impact the health of friends/family continues but at a slightly lesser rate

A majority (76%) of Ontarians continues to worry about their friends or family catching the virus Concerns has decreased slightly (from 73% to 68%) about the mental health of friends and family

Profile of people concerned about the outbreak: Females; poor physical and mental health; vaccinated for COVID-19.



Base: (Wave 1 N=1,001; Wave 2 N=1,002, Wave 3 N=1,004; Wave 4 N=1,001)

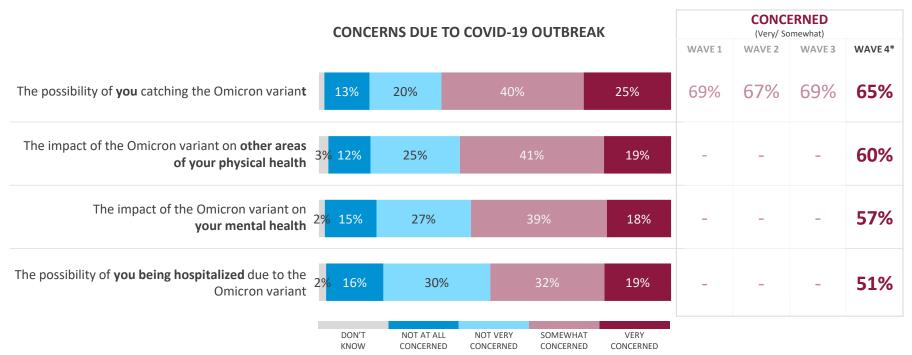




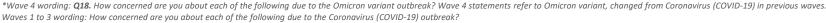
Fear of catching the new variant of COVID-19 continues but at a lesser rate compared to Wave 3

Two-thirds (65%) of the Ontarians are concerned about catching the Omicron variant themselves and 60% are worried about its impact on their physical health Three-fifths (57%) are also concerned about the impact of the variant on their mental health

Profile of people concerned about the outbreak: Females; vaccinated for COVID-19.



Base: (Wave 1 N=1,001; Wave 2 N=1,002, Wave 3 N=1,004; Wave 4 N=1,001)





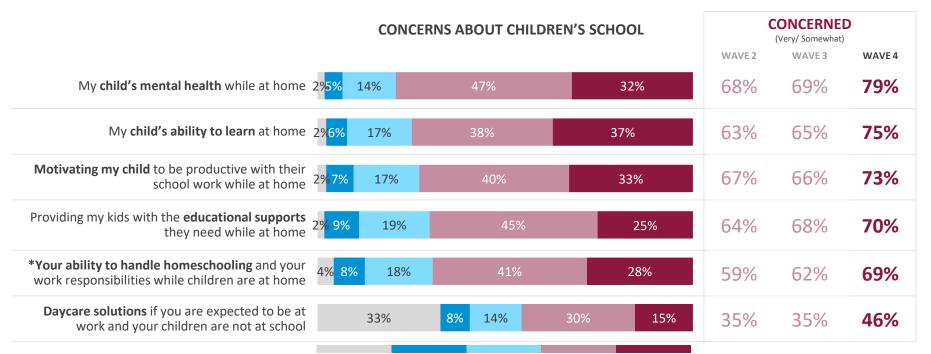
As COVID-19 continues, education presents learning challenges for children and parents both at home and in school

Parents' concern grew about their child's mental health (from 69% to 79%) and child's ability to learn at home (75% vs. 65%) in Wave 4

DON'T

KNOW

Profile of people concerned about their children's school: Mothers.



NOT VERY

CONCERNED

SOMEWHAT

CONCERNED

VERY

CONCERNED

NOT AT ALL

CONCERNED



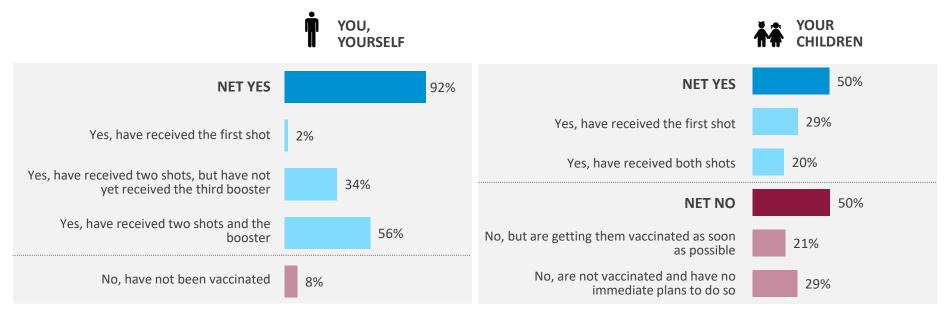
The majority of Ontarians have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and half of the children have received it

Nine-in-ten (92%) of the Ontarians have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccination with more than half (56%) receiving booster shots and a third (34%) receiving two shots

There is a split among children, half of them got at least one dose (a fifth receiving both the shots) while another half didn't get any shot with almost a third (29%) having no intention to get it any time soon

Profile of people not vaccinated: 35-54 year olds; children under 18 in the house; education only high school or less; income less than \$30k.

WHETHER RECEIVED COVID-19 VACCINATION







Access to Mental Health Support during the COVID-19 Outbreak



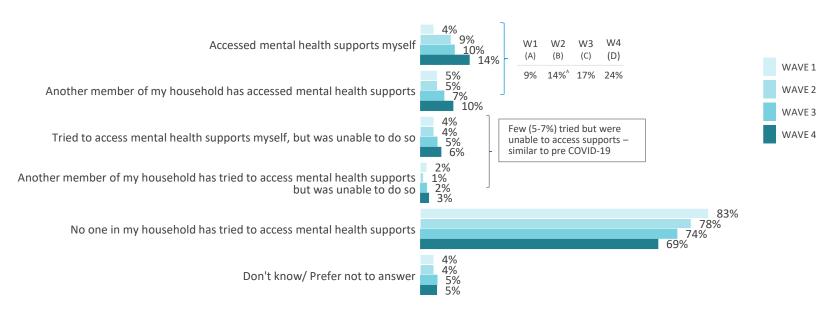
Increasing number of Ontarians are now accessing mental health as COVID-19 continues

The number of people accessing mental health supports has increased since Wave 1 of the study (from 9% to 24%), up by 7% since Wave 3.

The percentage of Ontarians that report that no one in the household tried to access support since the outbreak declined significantly since April (83% to 69%)

Profile of Ontarians accessing support: Younger (18-54); poor physical and mental health; children under 13 in the house; employed Ontarians; increased use of substances.

ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS POST COVID-19 OUTBREAK





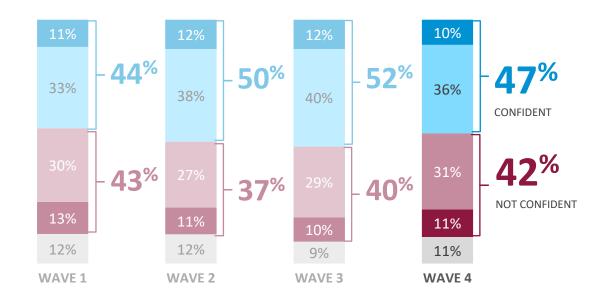
Confidence in ability to find mental health supports has declined since 2021

Almost half (47%) of Ontarians feel confident about finding mental health supports for themselves or family members if needed, a decrease of 5% since Wave 3 Although Ontarians are more confident than when the outbreak began, one in ten (11%) are not at all confident that they could find mental health supports

Profile of people not confident about finding mental health supports: Increased substance consumption.

CONFIDENCE IN FINDING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK





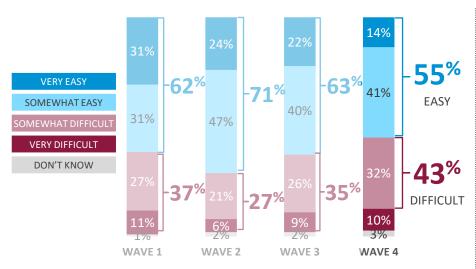


With Wave 4, the ease of accessing mental health supports declined significantly with the helpfulness dropping further

The ease of accessing mental health supports declined further this wave, bring it down to 55% from 63% in Wave 3. Additionally, the helpfulness of this support continued its decline from 77% in Wave 1 to 66% this wave

Profile of people not finding helpful supports: Younger (under 55 years); increased substance consumption.

ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SINCE THE OUTBREAK



HELPFULNESS OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

