

# Navigation of Mental Health and Substance Use Services Survey

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) is working with federal, provincial and territorial governments to understand Canadians' experiences when accessing mental health and substance use services through a self-reported survey. CIHI has engaged the Canadian research firm R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to conduct this survey on its behalf.

CIHI provides aggregated results to Canadian governments to help better understand challenges experienced when accessing mental health and substance use services, and how to improve access to these services within their jurisdictions.

Participation is completely voluntary, meaning that respondents can choose to take part and can skip any question they do not wish to answer. Individual responses are kept anonymous; the survey does not ask for a health card number or any information that would identify respondents. Survey responses are combined and not reported on individual basis. At the end of the survey, respondents are given the opportunity to enter a draw for a gift card valued at \$100.

## Survey questions

### **Do you have some time to discuss mental health in Canada?**

1. Yes
2. No (end survey)

To better understand the similarities and differences in the experiences of mental health and/or substance use among different groups of people, we would like to learn a bit about you.

### **What province or territory do you currently live in?**

- |                              |                          |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Alberta                   | 6. Northwest Territories | 12. Saskatchewan         |
| 2. British Columbia          | 7. Nova Scotia           | 13. Yukon                |
| 3. Manitoba                  | 8. Nunavut               | 99. Prefer not to answer |
| 4. New Brunswick             | 9. Ontario               |                          |
| 5. Newfoundland and Labrador | 10. Prince Edward Island |                          |
|                              | 11. Quebec               |                          |



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**To know which questions to ask, please select which age category you fall into:**

1. 12 or younger (end survey)
2. 13 (end survey)
3. 14 (end survey)
4. 15 to 17
5. 18 to 24
6. 25 to 44
7. 45 to 64
8. 65 and older

**Survey ending: Thank you for your time today. Unfortunately, you do not qualify to participate in this survey.**

**1. In the last 12 months, did you receive any services for mental health and/or substance use (for example, through a family doctor, nurse practitioner, peer support group services, school-based services, etc)?**

- Mental health services mean getting support from a professional to help with your overall state of mind, including your emotions, feelings, attention and behaviours.
- Substance use services mean getting support from a professional to help with your use of alcohol or drugs whether they are legal or illegal. Drugs can include cannabis, prescription medication, over-the-counter products, inhalants and illegal drugs.
- You could have received services for either mental health or substance use, or you could have received support for both mental health and substance use.
- You could have received services either in person or virtually (through a video call such as Zoom or FaceTime, a telephone call, instant messaging or chat).

1. Yes
2. No (end survey)
98. Don't know (end survey)
99. Prefer not to answer (end survey)

**Survey ending: Thank you for your time today. Unfortunately, you do not qualify to participate in this survey. If you would still like to enter the prize draw, please review the contest rules at the following website to learn how: [CIHrules.Malatest.net](https://www.cihrules.malatest.net).**

The next set of questions will ask about different types of services for **mental health and/or substance use** that you may have accessed in the last year, which may cause emotional difficulties. Help is available from the Public Health Agency of Canada online at [Get Help Here: Mental health support](#). You can access immediate crisis support by texting 741741 (for adults) **or** 686868 (for youth). Youth can seek additional support 24/7 online at [Kids Help Phone](#) or by phone at 1-800-668-6868.

**2. Was this the first time ever that you received any services for mental health and/or substance use?**

1. Yes
2. No
99. Prefer not to answer

**3. Thinking about the mental health and/or substance use services you received in the last 12 months, did you access any...**

Thinking about the mental health and/or substance use services you received in the last 12 months, did you access any...	Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to answer
a. Family doctor, nurse practitioner or specialist visit services?	1.	2.	98.	99.
b. Counselling or therapy services (including individual, family, relationship or group counselling/therapy)?	1.	2.	98.	99.
c. Trained peer support group services (such as group and one-on-one support)?	1.	2.	98.	99.
d. Emergency department or urgent care services?	1.	2.	98.	99.
e. Overnight care in a hospital or health centre (including sober-living facilities and psychiatric care)?	1.	2.	98.	99.
f. Crisis support services (including help lines and mobile outreach teams)?	1.	2.	98.	99.
g. Withdrawal management services, drug-replacement therapies (such as methadone and Suboxone) or detoxification services?	1.	2.	98.	99.
h. Case management, youth worker or essential needs services (including regular consultations that address medical decision-making, housing issues, financial issues or legal concerns)?	1.	2.	98.	99.
i. Indigenous-focused services, such as Elder-led and land-based care?	1.	2.	98.	99.
j. Culturally based services for immigrant, refugee, ethno-cultural and/or racialized individuals?	1.	2.	98.	99.
k. Services that use a harm reduction approach including supervised injection services, safe consumption sites and anger management?	1.	2.	98.	99.
l. School-based services (including counsellors, social workers and school nurses)?	1.	2.	98.	99.

**Survey ending: Thank you for your time today. Unfortunately, you do not qualify to participate in this survey. If you would still like to enter the prize draw, please review the contest rules at the following website to learn how: [CIHlrules.Malatest.net](https://www.cihr.ca/en/contests-and-prizes/malatest-net).**

**4. What was the first mental health and/or substance use service you ever received (you may have received this service more than 12 months ago)?**

1. Family doctor, nurse practitioner or specialist visit services
2. Counselling or therapy services (including individual, family, relationship or group counselling/therapy)
3. Trained peer support group services (such as group and one-on-one support)
4. Emergency department or urgent care services
5. Stay overnight in a hospital or health centre (including sober-living facilities and psychiatric care)
6. Crisis support services (including help lines and mobile outreach teams)
7. Withdrawal management services, drug-replacement therapies (such as methadone and Suboxone) or detoxification services
8. Case management, youth worker or essential need services (including regular consultations that address medical decision-making, housing issues, financial issues or legal concerns)
9. Indigenous-focused services, such as Elder-led and land-based care
10. Culturally based services for immigrant, refugee, ethno-cultural and/or racialized individuals
11. Services that use a harm reduction approach including supervised injection services, safe consumption sites and anger management
12. School-based services (including counsellors, social workers and school nurses)
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

The next set of questions will be used to better understand the **navigation of mental health and/or substance use services** across Canada.

Many people will receive the care they need from the first professional they seek support from, but sometimes it is necessary to speak with someone else in order to get the right services when you need them. Navigation refers to moving within and between mental health and/or substance use services once you have first accessed services.

For example, navigating services could mean that

- You saw your family doctor and they referred you to a psychiatrist for care
- You went to the emergency department and the doctor there recommended and helped you enroll in a substance withdrawal program in your community, or
- You saw a peer support worker at the university and they connected you to a mental health counsellor

**5. In the last 12 months, how often did you have the necessary support\* from professionals to navigate between services? [\*Support refers to guidance, assistance or resources from someone whose job it is to help you.]**

1. Always (go to question 8)
2. Usually
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never
6. I moved within and between mental health and/or substance use services without needing support (go to question 8)
7. I did not need another service (go to question 8)
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**6. In the last 12 months, what supports would have helped you navigate the mental health and/or substance use services you needed? You can select one or more than one, however many apply.**

1. Choice of where, when and how my services were provided
2. More communication from and between my providers
3. Communication between my service provider and family members
4. Availability of services in my preferred language
5. Availability of culturally competent care/culturally appropriate services
6. Non-judgmental, safe spaces, including privacy and service providers who share and/or understand my identities (such as gender identity, and ethnic and cultural identity)
7. Information on and personnel to navigate services
8. Financial support
9. Scheduling support (for example, shorter wait time, services provided when needed)
10. Availability of primary care services
11. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
12. None of the above supports would have helped
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**7. Please rate your agreement with the following 2 statements. In the last 12 months, a lack of support...**

Please rate your agreement with the following 2 statements. In the last 12 months, a lack of support...	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree	98. Don't know	99. Prefer not to answer
a. Delayed, discouraged or stopped me from accessing or continuing with services for mental health and/or substance use	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	98.	99.
b. Caused my mental health and/or substance use to worsen	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	98.	99.

**8. Were the mental health and/or substance use services you received in the last 12 months provided in person or virtually (through a video call such as Zoom or FaceTime, a telephone call, instant messaging or chat)?**

1. In person only
2. Virtually only
3. Mostly in person, with some virtually
4. Mostly virtually, with some in person
5. About the same amount in person and virtually
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**9. Were there out-of-pocket expenses\* for you, your family members or your care providers for any of the mental health and/or substance use services you received in the last 12 months? [\*Out-of-pocket means paying with your own money, and expenses include costs for visits, travel, medications, tests and services associated with mental health and/or substance use.]**

1. Yes
2. No
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**10. Do you, your family members or care providers have insurance or a government plan that covers all or part of the expenses\* for any of the mental health and/or substance use services you received in the last 12 months? You can select one or more than one, however many apply. [\*Expenses include costs for visits, travel, medications, tests and services associated with mental health and/or substance use.]**

1. Yes, from a government-sponsored plan (including Non-Insured Health Benefits [NIHB])
2. Yes, from an employer-sponsored benefit plan
3. Yes, from a plan sponsored through an association such as a union, trade association or student organization
4. Yes, from my own private plan purchased from an insurance company
5. No
6. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**11. Did you mostly access mental health and/or substance use services?**

1. Mental health
2. Substance use
3. Mental health and substance use
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**12. If you had a hospital stay for your mental health and/or substance use issue (pick the most recent hospital stay if you had more than one), who did you receive follow-up care from?**

1. Family doctor
2. Psychologist or psychiatrist
3. Nurse or nurse practitioner
4. Social worker, counsellor or therapist
5. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
6. I did not receive follow-up care
7. I did not have a hospital stay for a mental health and/or substance use issue
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**13. If you received follow-up care after a hospital stay for mental health and/or substance use, how quickly were you able to receive follow-up care?**

1. Within 7 days
2. Between 8 and 30 days
3. More than 30 days
4. I did not receive follow-up care
5. I did not have a hospital stay for a mental health and/or substance use issue
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer



This final set of questions asks about you. This will help us understand how similar or different the experiences of mental health and/or substance use are among different groups. This information can be used to address gaps in care, access and quality of services among people across different population groups and from different backgrounds.

The first 2 questions ask about your gender identity and assigned sex at birth. A person's gender identity may be the same as, or different from, their assigned sex at birth, and it may change over time. Identifying as a gender that is different from assigned sex at birth can impact how a person interacts with the health system and the quality of care they receive. If you are not comfortable sharing this information, you do not have to answer either or both of these questions.

**14. The first question asks about gender identity. Gender identity refers to your sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. What is your gender identity? You can select one or more than one, however many apply.**

1. Nonbinary
2. Female
3. Male
4. Another gender, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**15. The next question asks about sex at birth. Sex at birth refers to the sex you were assigned at birth, such as what was recorded on your original birth certificate. What was your sex at birth?**

1. Female
2. Male
3. Intersex\* [\*People who are born *intersex* have developed characteristics, such as anatomy, chromosomes and hormones, that do not fit a doctor's expectation of a male or female body.]
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**16. This next question asks about your sexual orientation. *Sexual orientation* refers to how someone thinks of themselves in terms of their emotional, romantic or sexual attraction, desire or affection for another person. What is your sexual orientation?**

1. Heterosexual or straight
2. Homosexual, or gay or lesbian
3. Bisexual or pansexual
4. Questioning or don't know
5. Another sexual orientation, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
99. Prefer not to answer

**17. In the past 12 months, how often did you or your household have difficulty making ends meet\* financially? [*\*Making ends meet* means earning enough money to provide yourself and your family with essentials like housing, food, clothing and medicine.]**

1. Always
2. Usually
3. Sometimes
4. Rarely
5. Never
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

There are 2 questions that ask about whether you identify as First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk/Inuit and what racial or ethnic communities you belong to. Choose the option or options that most resonate with you, even though they may not exactly match how you would describe yourself. In accordance with CIHI's policy, Indigenous-identifiable data is not released for public use or disclosed without approval from appropriate Indigenous authorities.

**18. Do you identify as First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk/Inuit? Which category or categories best describe you? You can select one or more than one, however many apply.**

1. Yes, First Nations
2. Yes, Inuk/Inuit
3. Yes, Métis
4. Another Indigenous identity, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
5. No
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**19. In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. These are not based in science, but our race may influence the way we are treated by individuals and institutions, and this may affect our health. Which category or categories best describe you? You can select one or more than one, however many apply.**

1. Black (for example, African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
2. East Asian (for example, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
3. Indigenous (for example, First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit descent)
4. Latin American (for example, Latino/Latina/Latinx, Hispanic descent)
5. Middle Eastern (for example, Arab, Persian, West Asian descent such as Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish)
6. South Asian (for example, South Asian descent such as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean)
7. Southeast Asian (for example, Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian or other Southeast Asian descent)
8. White (for example, European descent)
9. Another race category, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do not know
11. Prefer not to answer

**20. What language do you speak most often at home?**

1. English
2. French
3. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**21. Were you born in Canada?**

1. Yes (go to question 23)
2. No
98. Don't know (go to question 23)
99. Prefer not to answer (go to question 23)

**22. How many years have you lived in Canada?**

1. 0 to 5 years
2. 6 to 10 years
3. 11 or more years
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**23. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

1. Elementary school
2. Some high school, but have not graduated/did not graduate
3. High school or high school equivalency certificate
4. College, CEGEP or non-university certificate or diploma
5. Undergraduate degree or some university
6. Post-graduate degree or professional designation
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**24. How would you describe the community you live in?**

1. Rural (fewer than 1,000 people)
2. Small population centre (1,000 to 29,999 people)
3. Medium population centre (30,000 to 99,999 people)
4. Large population centre (100,000 to 999,999 people)
5. Urban centre (1 million people or more)
98. Don't know
99. Prefer not to answer

**25. How did you hear about this survey?**

1. Facebook
2. Instagram
3. Messenger (on Facebook)
4. Stories (on Facebook or Instagram)
5. X (formerly known as Twitter)
6. TikTok
7. Snapchat
8. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**26. Please verify your age by selecting which age category you fall into:**

1. 12
2. 13
3. 14
4. 15 to 17
5. 18 to 24
6. 25 to 44
7. 45 to 64
8. 65 and older

**27. Those were all of our questions. However, if you have the time, we do have some questions about your experiences accessing mental health and/or substance use. Would you be interested in answering these questions? *[Only if the response to question 26 is 2, 3, 4 or 5]***

1. Yes (go to question 28)
2. No (end survey)

**28. In the past 6 months, have there been any issues or concerns in your mental health and/or substance use, such as changes in your mood, feelings of sadness, anxiety or irritability, or changes in your use of alcohol or drugs?**

1. Yes (go to [Early Intervention for MHSU Among Youth and Children Survey](#))
2. No (end survey)
3. Don't know (end survey)
4. Prefer not to answer (end survey)

Thank you for your time. Your responses will not identify you in any way and will be used to inform improvements to mental health and/or substance use services.

Results based on the survey are available in the [Your Health System: In Brief](#) web tool. If you have questions about the survey, please email [indicators@cihi.ca](mailto:indicators@cihi.ca).

If you are experiencing any distress after the survey, you can get help from the Public Health Agency of Canada online at [Get Help Here: Mental health support](#), or you can access immediate crisis support by texting 741741 (for adults) **or** 686868 (for youth). Youth can seek support 24/7 online at [Kids Help Phone](#) or by phone at 1-800-668-6868.