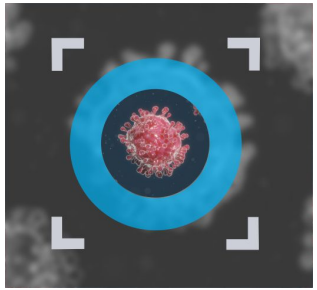
Canadian Reactions to Coronavirus (COVID-19): Attitudinal and Behavioural Tracking, Wave 1



pollara
strategic insights

Wave 1

Methodology

Methodology: Online survey of randomly-selected sample of **1,531** adult (18+) Canadians

Field Window: March 26-30, 2020

Reliability: As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of ± 2.5%, 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 Canadians.

Region	Number of Interviews (Unweighted)	Number of Interviews (Weighted)	Margin of error
Atlantic Canada	102	100	±9.7%
Quebec	260	353	±6.1%
Ontario	603	591	±3.9%
Manitoba	76	54	±11.2%
Saskatchewan	78	50	±11.1%
Alberta	204	181	±6.9%
British Columbia	208	202	±6.8%
Canada	**1,531**	**1,531**	**±2.5%**

Methodology

Age	Number of Interviews (Unweighted)	Number of Interviews (Weighted)	Margin of error
18-34	429	426	±4.7%
35-44	260	253	±6.1%
45-54	251	254	±6.2%
55-64	274	276	±5.9%
65+	317	322	±5.5%
Canada	**1,531**	**1,531**	**±2.5%**

Gender	Number of Interviews (Unweighted)	Number of Interviews (Weighted)	Margin of error
Female	769	772	±3.5%
Male	762	759	±3.5%
Canada	**1,531**	**1,531**	**±2.5%**

Executive Summary 1 of 2

- Most Canadians are **worried** about the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, but they express notably less negative emotion and more positive emotion about their governments' response to the pandemic.
- Two-thirds **approve** of the Trudeau Government's overall management and response to COVID-19.
- Canadians are not taking the outbreak lightly – more than eight-in-ten believe it is **a real crisis**, and just one-in-ten feel it has been blown out of proportion either by governments, media, or the public.
- On average, Canadians **expect about a third of Canadians to catch** the coronavirus.
- Two-thirds of Canadians are **concerned about catching** the coronavirus, but higher proportions are concerned about the elderly, family, friends, and other Canadians outside of their social circle. Concern about youth is significantly lower.
    - At least seven-in-ten are **concerned about going out** in public because of the risk of catching COVID-19. High proportions are also concerned about taking public transit and going to work.
- Four-in-ten feel they are **likely to catch the** virus, generally speaking. However, half or more feel someone in their social circle (friends, family, neighbours) is likely to catch COVID-19.
- Nine-in-ten Canadians are **concerned about COVID-19's impact on the economy** – including two-thirds who are very concerned. And six-in-ten feel that the pandemic has **already harmed Canada's economy**.
- About two-thirds are also **concerned about their investments, retirement savings, job security, and students' education**, with three to four-in-ten reporting that they have **already seen negative impacts on these aspects of their personal financial health**.
    - A quarter report suffering a **job loss** within their immediate family due to COVID, and a quarter have seen pay cuts or reduced hours.

Executive Summary 2 of 2

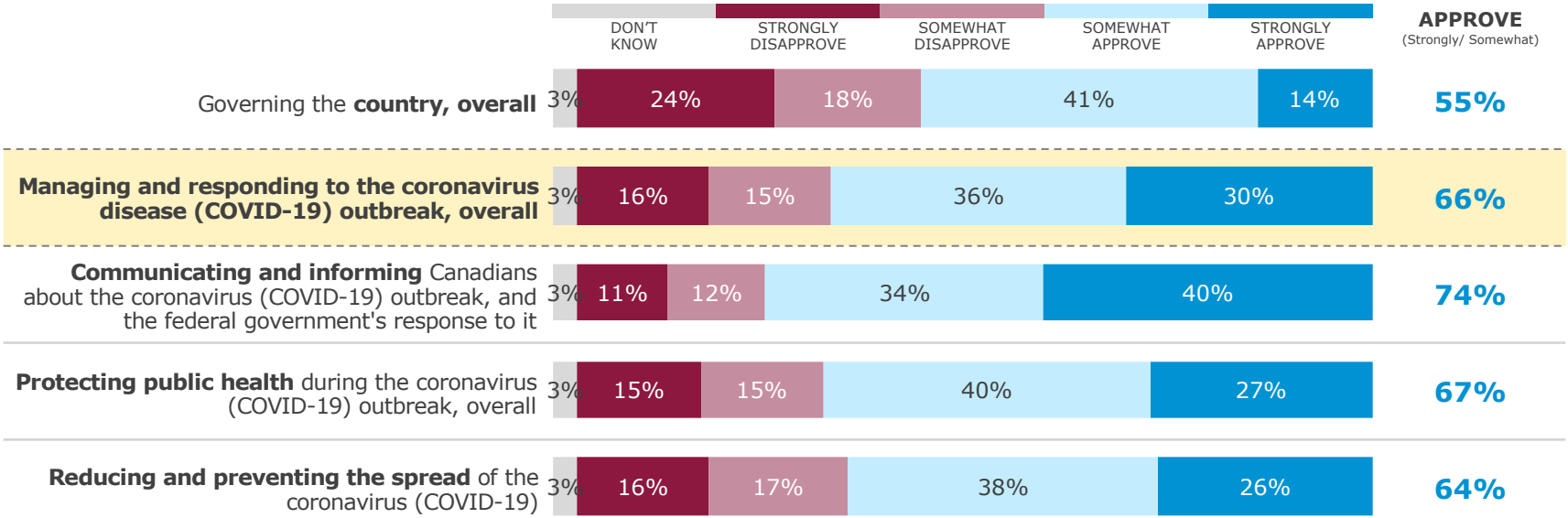
- In terms of COVID-19's **behavioural impacts**, **handwashing** and **sanitizer** use are up significantly. Three-in-ten are **buying more food** as well as doing **more cooking** and **housework** than usual. One-in-ten are buying **more grocery/food deliveries**. Less than one-in-ten (7%) say they are buying **more toilet paper** than usual.
- About half of Canadians are **communicating with family and friends** – as well as **watching shows/movies** – more than usual.
- Eight-in-ten Canadians have **reduced how often they go out in public**. Many have cancelled social gatherings and trips. Nevertheless, a quarter are buying groceries for family.
    - One-in-ten have worn a face mask.
- Seven-in-ten Canadians are **self-isolating** – staying at home as much as possible, only going out for necessities. Three-quarters are **social distancing** from strangers.
    - **Areas of potential concern: Although 80% of parents of children aged 18 and under are concerned about their kids catching the virus, only 60% have prohibited their kids from having any in-person playdates/get-togethers**. (These figures are 65% for parents of kids under the age of 13 and 51% for parents of kids 13-17.) Also, **only 63% of Canadians say they have not seen/met in-person any friends during the outbreak.** This relatively low figure may be due to get-togethers in the early days of the outbreak or interactions that incorporate social distancing, but it may also include interactions that do not include proper social distancing.
- Six-in-ten of those who are self-isolating **cannot estimate an endpoint**, and three-quarters feel it is **not okay to stop self-isolating until the government and health authorities say it is safe.**
    - In general, social distancing and/or self-isolating behaviour is more diligently being practised by Boomers and Gen X, and less so by Millennials and Gen Z. The latter groups are least likely to self-isolate, maintain distance from strangers in public, or avoid meeting friends in-person.
- Half of **currently employed Canadians are working from home**. A quarter are working at the workplace – mostly because it is not possible to perform their job at home.

Government Approval Ratings

pollara
strategic insights

Two-thirds approve of the Trudeau Government management and response to COVID-19 outbreak

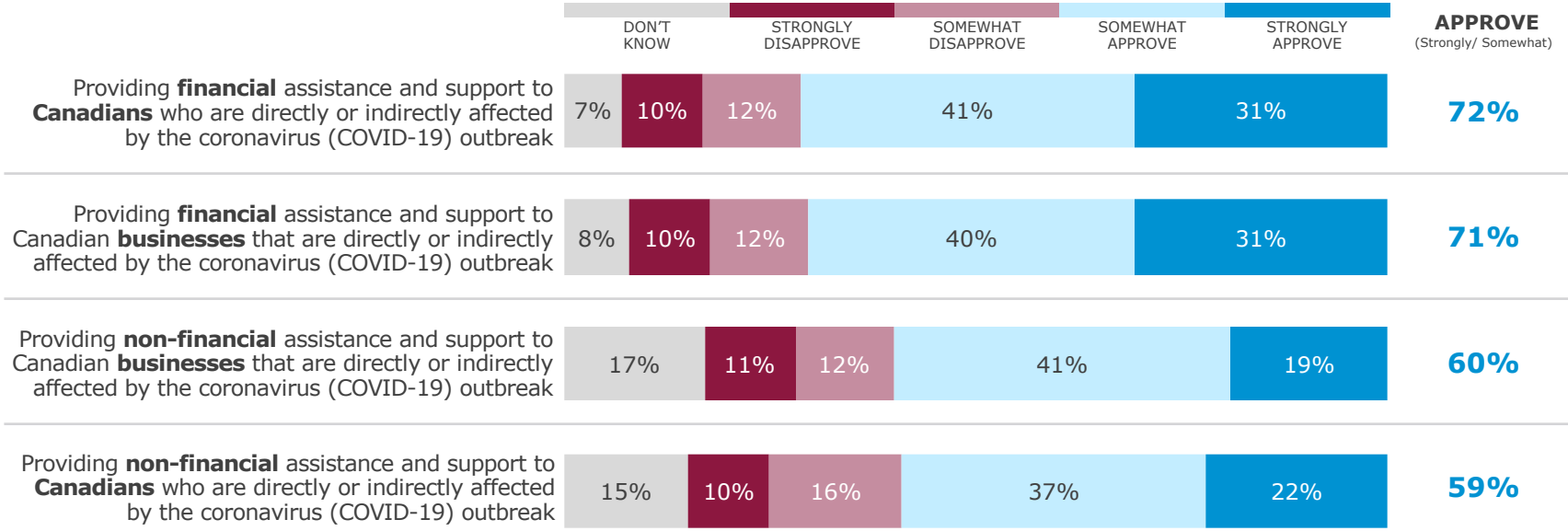
- In particular, the public feels the Trudeau Government has done a good job on communications (74%; 40% strongly approve).
- Regionally, Atlantic Canadians (79-83%), Ontarians (67-79%) and British Columbians (67-80%) are most likely to approve of the federal government's management of the pandemic, whereas, Quebec residents, though still a majority, are least likely to approve (54-62%).
- In the current situation, majority approve of the job done by the federal government in governing the country overall (55%).



X2. Overall, how much do you approve or disapprove of the job that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal Government are doing in the following areas? (Base: N=1531)

Seven-in-ten feel Trudeau Government is doing a good job in providing financial assistance to Canadians and businesses affected by the COVID-19 outbreak

- Approval ratings are moderately high even when it comes to providing non-financial assistance and support to Canadians and businesses that are affected by the outbreak.
- Residents of Alberta and Manitoba give lower approval ratings for non-financial assistance provided to businesses and those affected by the outbreak.

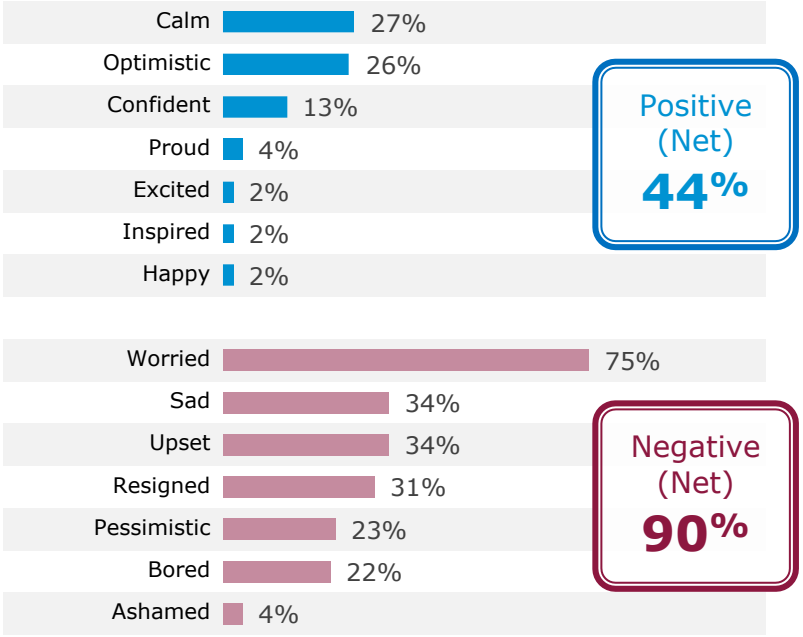


X2. Overall, how much do you approve or disapprove of the job that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal Government are doing in the following areas?
(Base: Those answering N=765-766, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

Nine-in-ten Canadians feel at least one negative emotion about the outbreak – primarily anxiety. Four-in-ten feel at least one positive emotion, primarily rooted in calm and optimism

- Notably, 53% of Canadians have only negative feelings about the outbreak.

Feelings about Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada



Positive (Net) 44%

BC	AB	SK*	MN*	ON	QUE	ATL*
52%	35%	28%	50%	46%	48%	34%

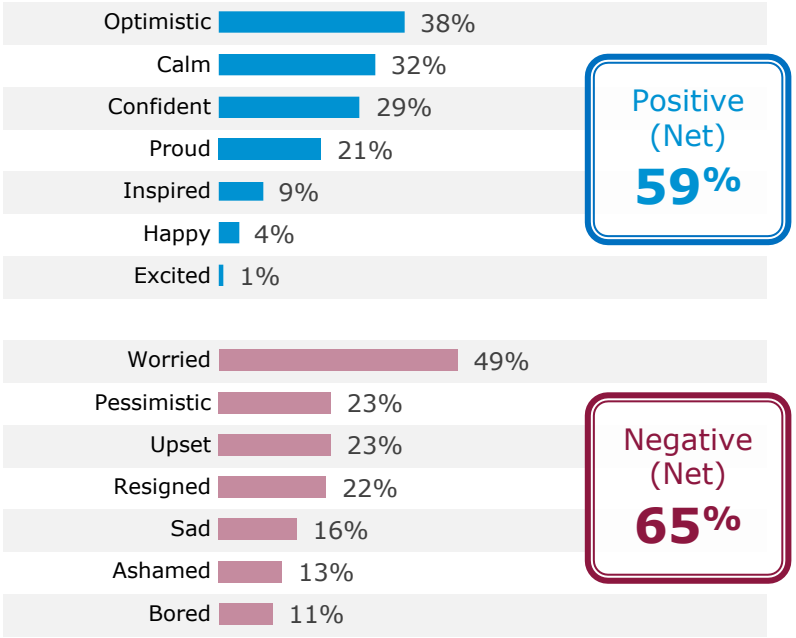
Negative (Net) 90%

BC	AB	SK*	MN*	ON	QUE	ATL*
89%	93%	96%	97%	87%	94%	95%

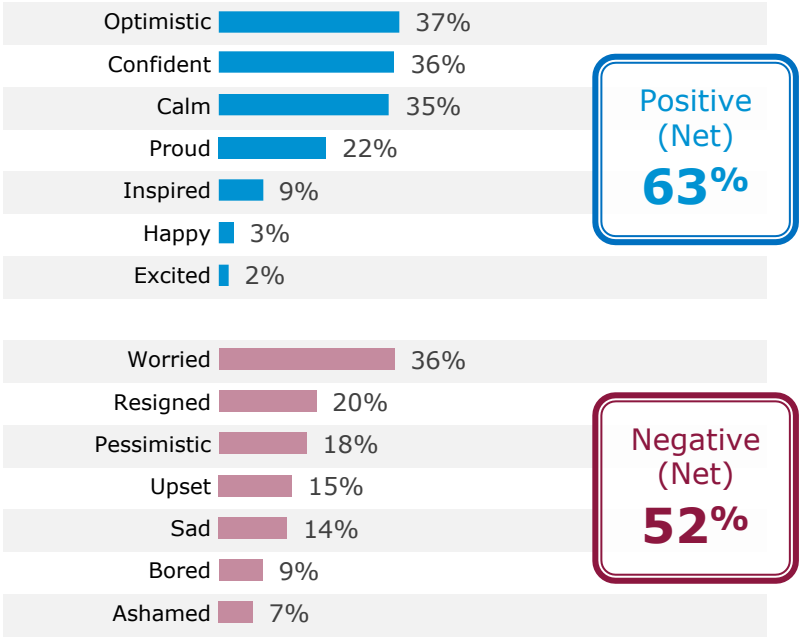
*X3. Please click up to a maximum of 4 words that best describe the feelings that you have about… The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada (Base: Total Answering N=500, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample. *Caution: Provincial base sizes are small.)*

Despite the high level of COVID-19 anxiety, Canadians are less negative and more positive about their governments' handling of the outbreak as compared to the pandemic in general

Feelings about the federal government's handling of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada



Feelings about your provincial government's handling of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada



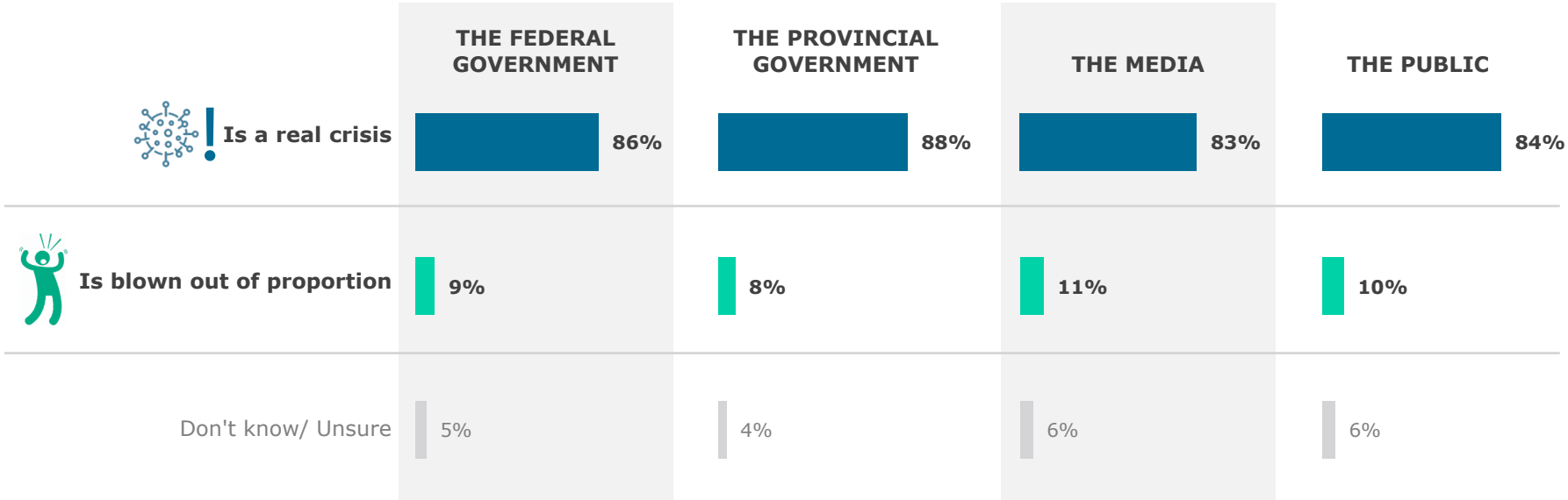
X3. Please click up to a maximum of 4 words that best describe the feelings that you have about… The federal government's handling of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada (Base: Total Answering N=501, randomly split sampled and selected from total sample.)
X3. Please click up to a maximum of 4 words that best describe the feelings that you have about… Your provincial government's handling of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Canada (Base: Total Answering N=499, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

Concerns & Expectations

pollara
strategic insights

More than eight-in-ten Canadians believe that the Coronavirus outbreak is a real crisis and is not being blown out of proportion by governments, media or the public

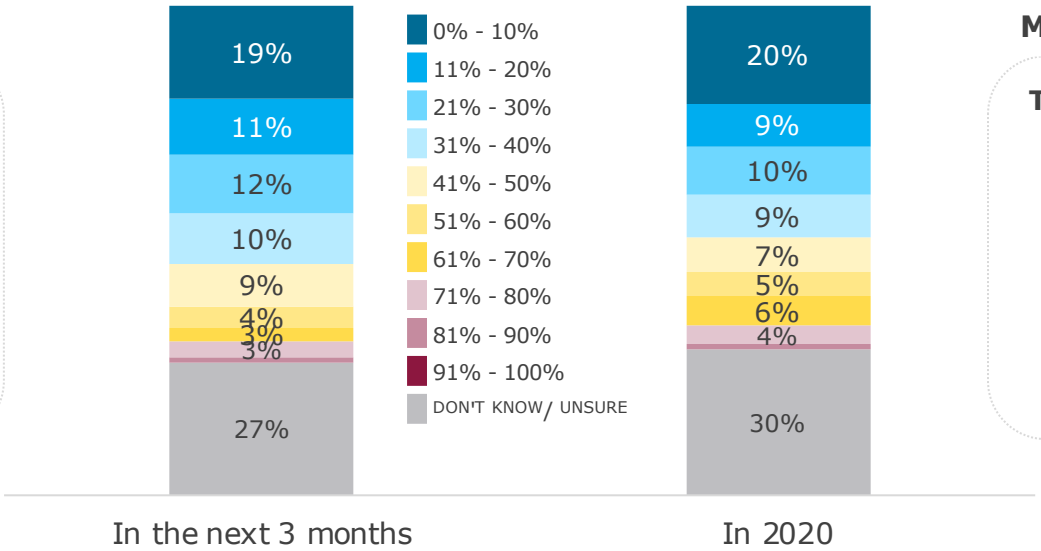
- Similar sentiments are reflected across provincial and demographic cohorts – on an overall basis, those feeling it is a real crisis somewhat increases with age, with the older age groups much more likely to feel it is a crisis than the younger age groups.
- Regionally, Quebec is most likely to feel it is a real crisis and not being blown out of proportion by the governments, the public or media, while Alberta is least likely to feel it is a real crisis and more likely to feel it is blown out of proportion.



X5. Overall, do you feel that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is a real crisis in Canada, or that [the federal government / the provincial government / the media / the public] is blowing it out of proportion. (Base: Total Answering: Total sample, randomly split-sampled so that 4 sub-samples of N=375 were shown either Federal Government, Provincial Government, Media, or Public)

On average, Canadians expect about a third of the public to catch coronavirus – regardless of whether contemplating a 3-month or 2020 timeframe

PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS OF PROPORTION OF CANADIANS THAT WILL CATCH CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Mean Average %

Total	**(n=749)**	**31.1**
BC	(n=101)	34.8
AB	(n=99)	29.8
SK	(n=42)	28.1
MN	(n=39)	28.7
ON	(n=299)	33.4
QUE	(n=115)	26.1
ATL	(n=54)	33.6

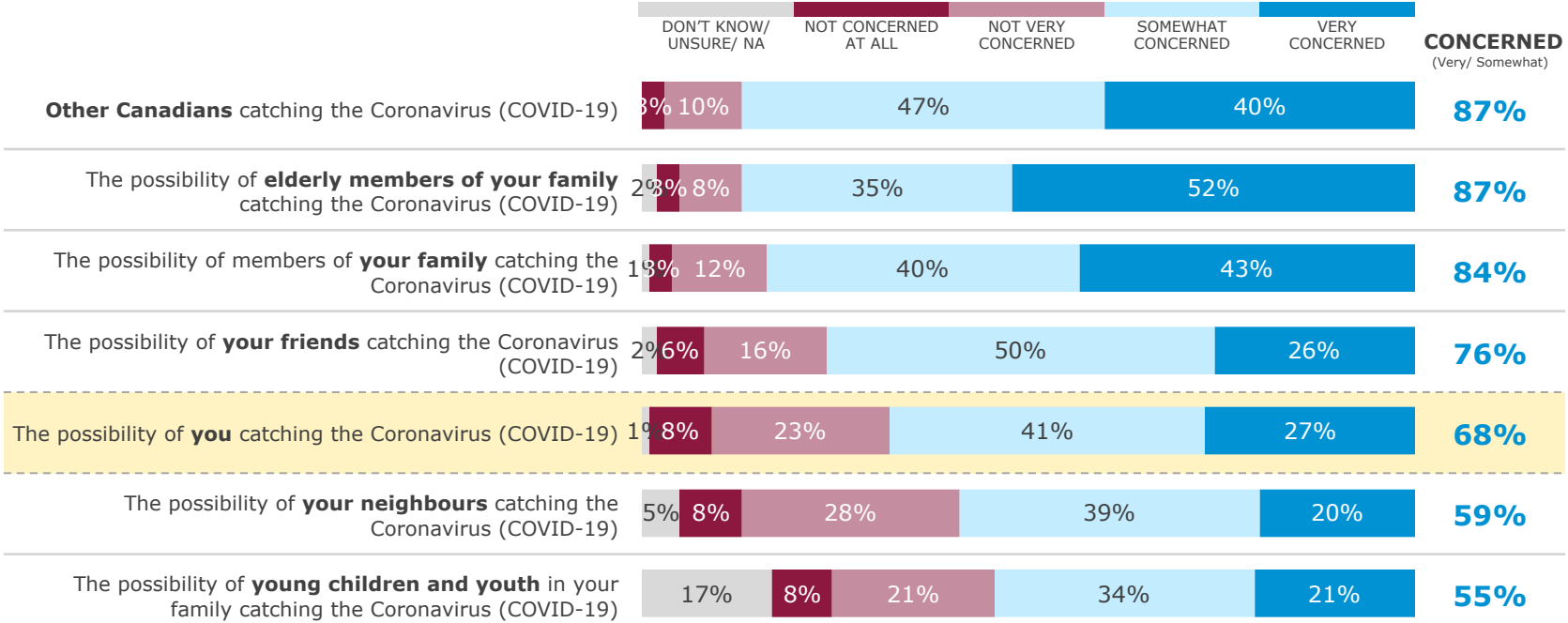
Mean Average %

Total	**(n=751)**	**33.4**
BC	(n=107)	35.0
AB	(n=105)	31.7
SK	(n=36)	41.1
MN	(n=37)	31.1
ON	(n=304)	31.5
QUE	(n=114)	35.3
ATL	(n=48)	36.8

X5B. Overall, what percentage of Canadians do you expect will catch the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the next 3 months? (Base: Total Answering N=749, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)
X5C. Overall, what percentage of Canadians do you expect will catch the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020? (Base: Total Answering N=751, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

Two-thirds of Canadians are concerned about catching the coronavirus, but higher proportions are concerned about elderly, family, friends, and other Canadians outside of their social circle

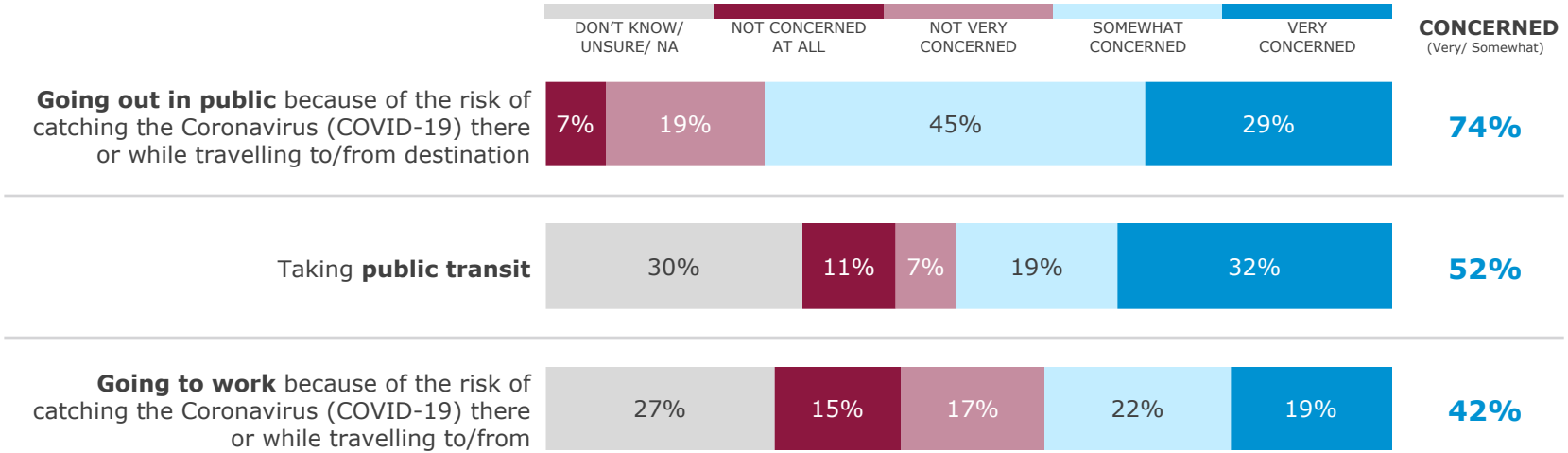
- Overall parents of kids of all ages are relatively more concerned about young children and youth getting infected (71%), more so among those with kids under 18 years (80%) - comparatively those who don't have children are less concerned (49%).



X6. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how concerned – if at all – are you about the following?

At least seven-in-ten are concerned about going out in public. High proportions also concerned about taking public transit and going to work

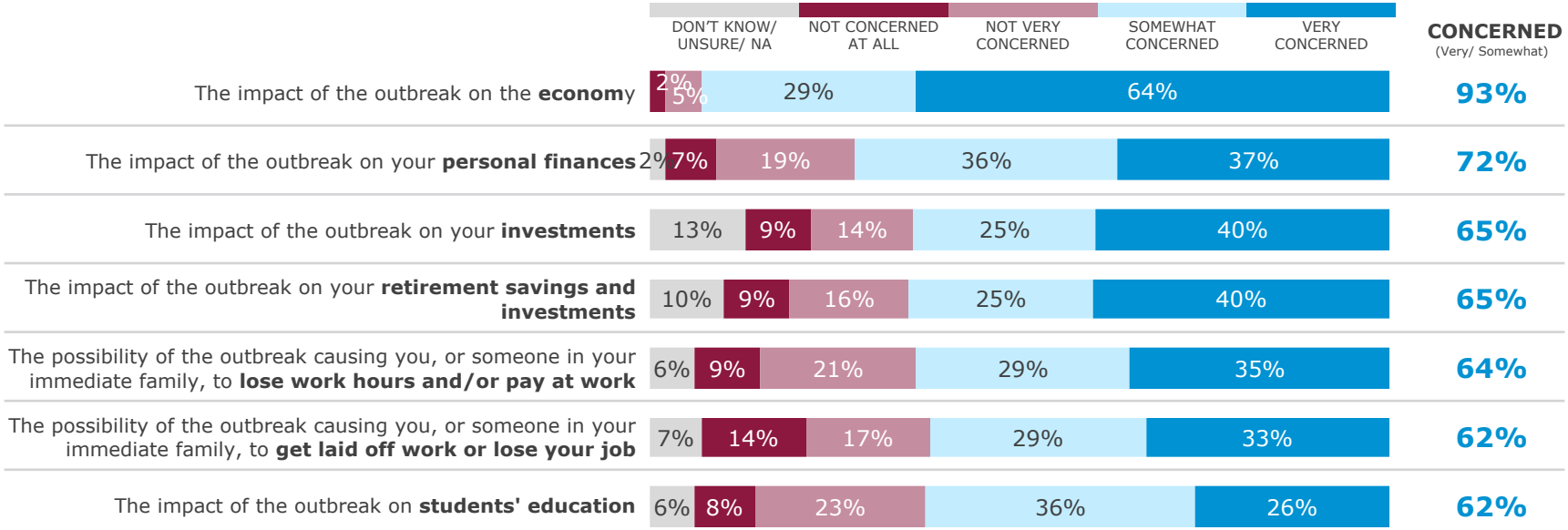
- Among Canadians who take public transit or view it as an option, 74% are concerned about taking this mode of transportation due to the risk of catching the virus.
- Among Canadians who are employed outside of the home, 58% are concerned about going to work – a relatively low level of concern, likely due to the high rate of work-from-home activity currently occurring.



X6. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how concerned – if at all – are you about the following?

Nine-in-ten Canadians are concerned about COVID-19's impact on the economy– two-thirds very concerned. High proportions also concerned about investments, savings, jobs, and education

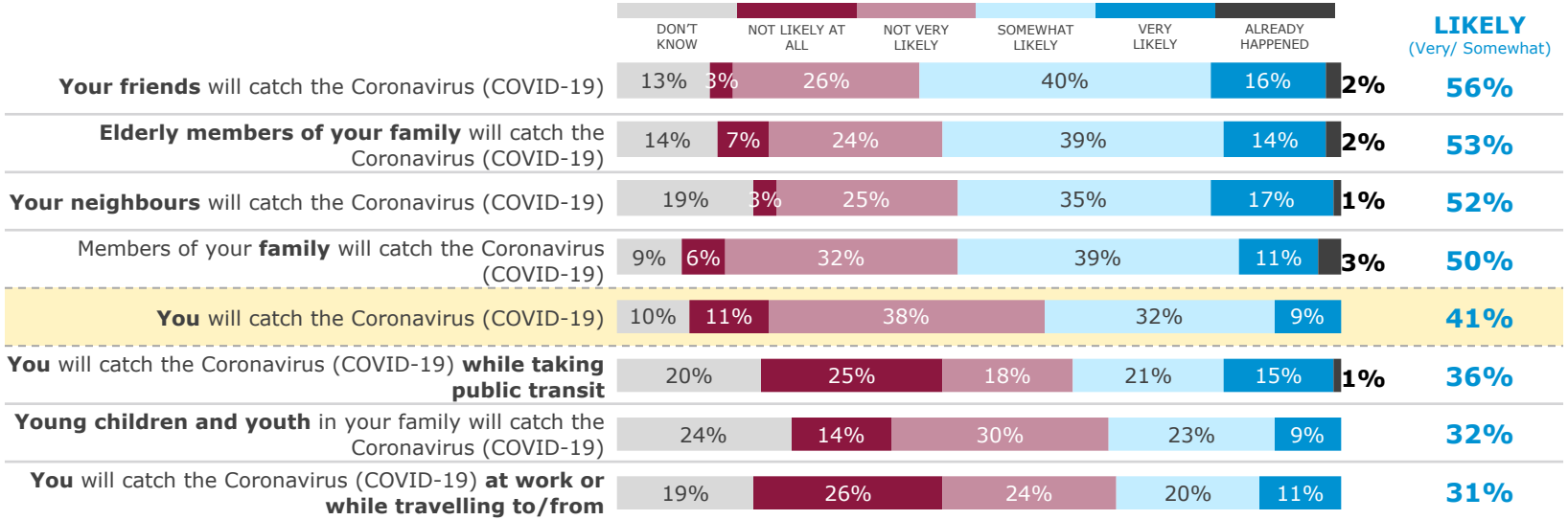
- Seven-in-ten are worried about the impact on their personal finances (72%), and two-thirds (65%) are concerned about their investments and retirement savings. At least six-in-ten are also concerned about losing pay/hours at work and losing their job.
- Among parents of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary aged children, 76% are concerned about the crisis' impact upon their childrens' education. Even Canadians outside this cohort are concerned about this (64% with children aged 30 and above; 57% without kids).



X6. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how concerned – if at all – are you about the following?

Four-in-ten Canadians feel they are likely to catch the coronavirus, although just 9% feel they are *very* likely. Somewhat higher proportions feel friends, family, and neighbours are likely

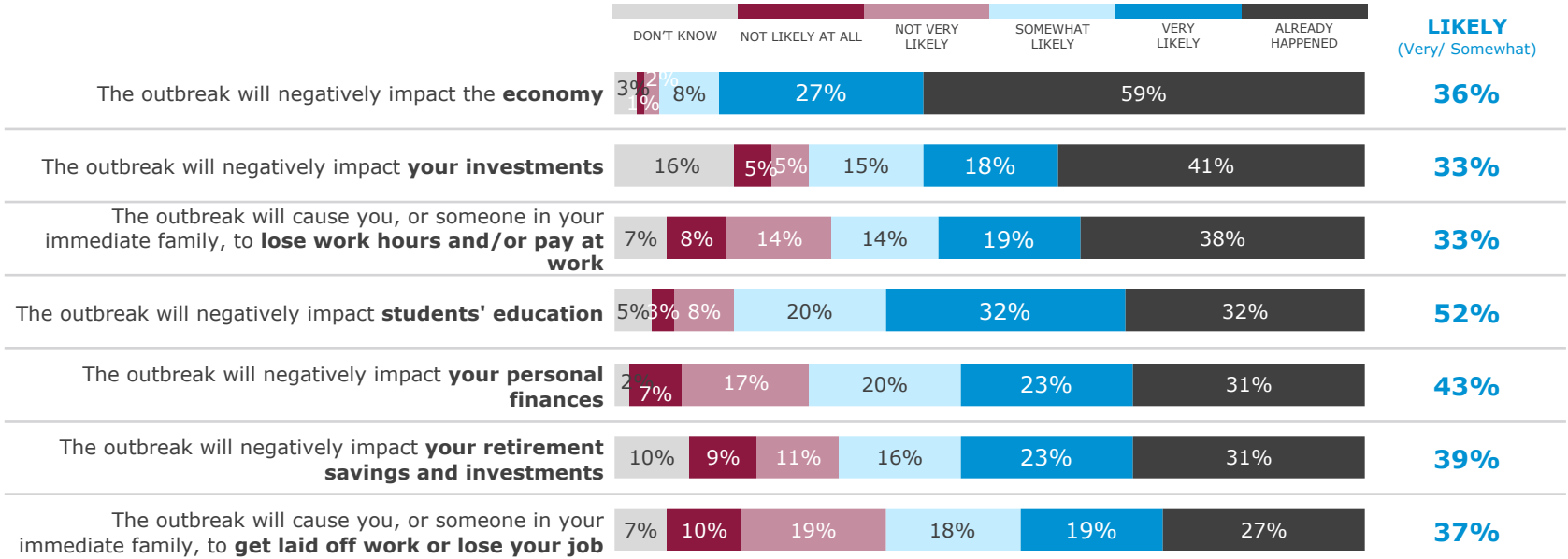
- Almost half (45%) of those who take public transit or view it as an option feel it is likely that they will catch the virus when/if on this mode of transport. Among those who work outside of the home, 38% feel they will get exposed when/if at work or commuting to/from work.
- Between 1-3% of survey respondents report that they or someone in their social/familial circle has caught the virus.
- Just a third feel that young children or youth are likely to catch the virus (32%), perhaps misinterpreting reports that youth are less likely to suffer severe symptoms despite being as likely to catch the virus. Parents with children under 18 years (41%) are more likely to feel their children and youth in their family are likely to catch the virus, higher concern among those with kids under 13 years (43%). Whereas, those who don't have kids feel the youth are less likely to catch the virus (29%).



X7. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how likely do you feel it is that each of the following will happen – if at all?

Six-in-ten feel the pandemic has already harmed the economy. Between three to four-in-ten report negative impacts on investments, work pay/hours, finances, retirement savings. A quarter report job loss in family

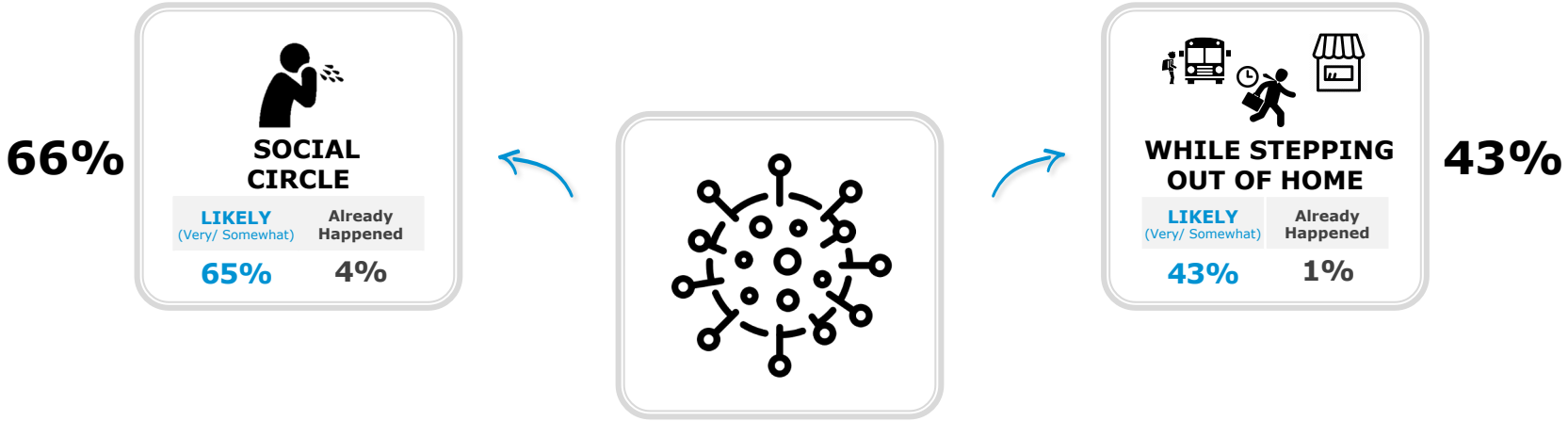
- Among parents of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary aged children, 41% already perceive a negative impact on student's education, while 42% feel it is likely to happen.



X7. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how likely do you feel it is that each of the following will happen – if at all?

Overall, two-thirds feel someone in their social circle is likely to catch coronavirus and two-fifths feel they themselves will while stepping out of the home

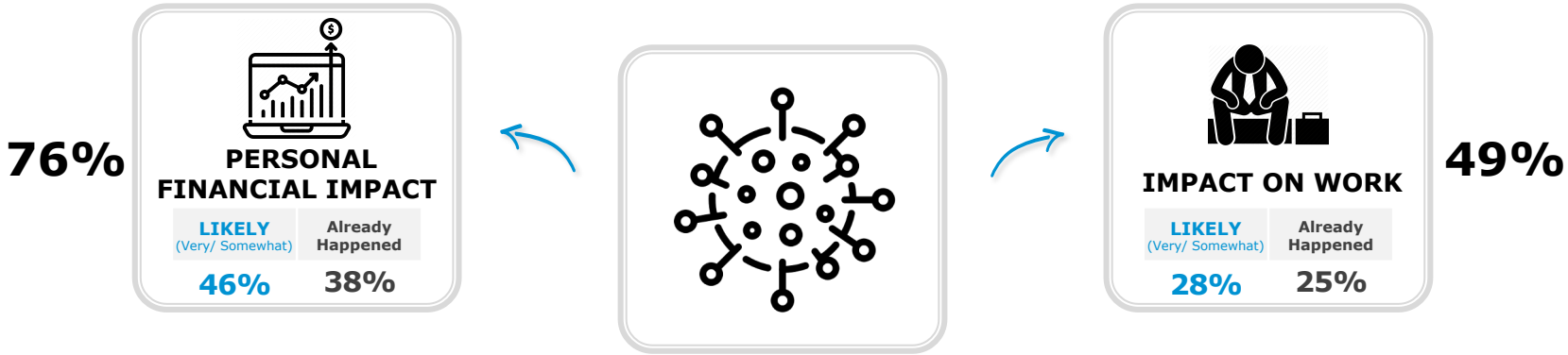
- 4% mentioned that at least someone among their family or friends or neighbours, or they themselves, ***have already caught the virus***.
- 65% feel that someone among their social circle (i.e. family, friends, neighbours) or they themselves is ***likely to catch the virus***.
- QC (6%) and ON (4%) are among the most likely to say someone has already caught it, while BC (77%) and ON (71%) are among the most likely to feel that they or someone they know will likely get infected.
- 1% of survey respondents mentioned that they ***have already caught the virus*** while outside of the home.
- 43% feel they are ***likely to catch the virus*** while they are stepping out of their home for any of these activities.
- BC (52%), AB (45%) and ON (44%) most likely to feel they will get infected when stepping out of their home.



X7. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how likely do you feel it is that each of the following will happen – if at all?

Three-quarters overall are seeing or expecting a negative impact on personal finances, and half are seeing these impacts on their work front

- 38% say they are ***already feeling the negative impact*** of the outbreak on their personal finances or investments or retirement savings. Another 46% say ***they are likely to***.
- The 35-54 age cohort is the most likely to report a negative financial impact (42-48%). The 18-34 cohort are least likely (28%), but they are most likely to *expect* such impacts (51%).
- While half in AB (48%) and two-fifths in BC (42%), and ON (41%) are already seeing a negative financial impact, fewer in QC (28%), Atlantic Canada (30%) are seeing the same. However, residents of these latter two provinces say they are likely to see such negative impacts on their finances (50% and 49% respectively).
- Half of Canadians (49%) have either ***already had*** (25%) pay cuts or reduced hours or layoffs, or feel it is ***likely to happen*** (28%).
- The 55-64 age cohort is most likely to report already experiencing such negative employment impacts (33%) compared to one-fourths of the other age groups. The 18-34 age cohort is the most likely to expect such negative impacts in the future (30%).
- Regionally, AB residents (32%) are the most likely to report a negative impact upon their employment situation, while BC (17%) is the least impacted. Atlantic Canadians (32%) are among the most likely to expect pay cuts or reduced hours or layoffs.



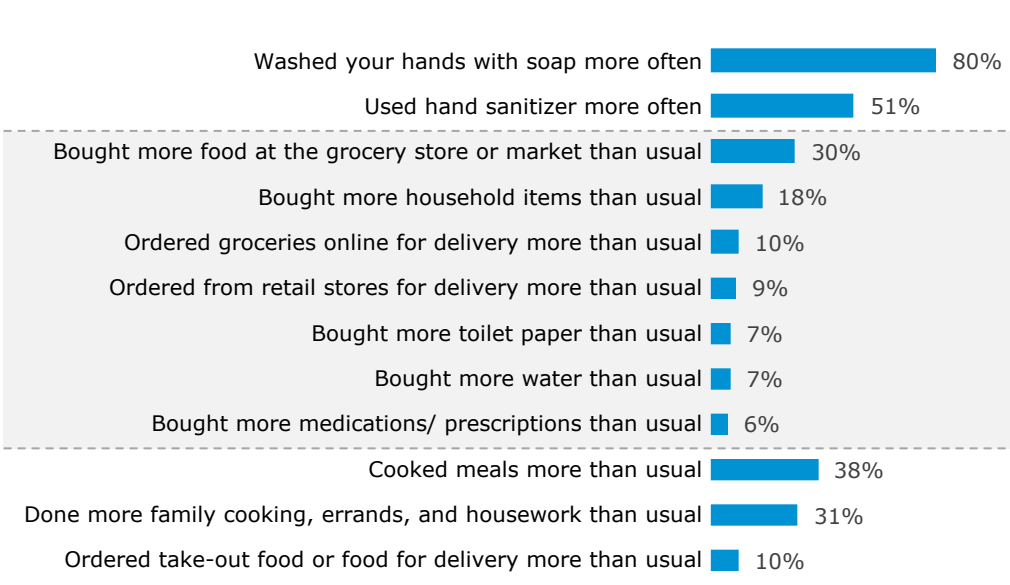
X7. And, during this Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak... Overall, how likely do you feel it is that each of the following will happen – if at all?

Behaviours

pollara
strategic insights

Handwashing and sanitizer use up significantly. Three-in-ten are buying more food, cooking, doing more housework than usual. One-in-ten getting more grocery/food deliveries. 7% are buying more toilet paper.

- Two to three-in-ten Canadians say that they have bought more grocery and household items than usual, and one-tenth have ordered groceries and other retail items online. Three to four-in-ten are cooking meals and doing more house related work that what they usually do. Only 10% are ordering take-out or getting food delivered more than usual.
- Compared to the 55+ age cohort, 18-54 year olds have been stocking up on grocery and household items, cooking home meals as well as ordering take out and food deliveries much more than usual. Those with kids at home have also purchased more food items and cooked more meals at home.

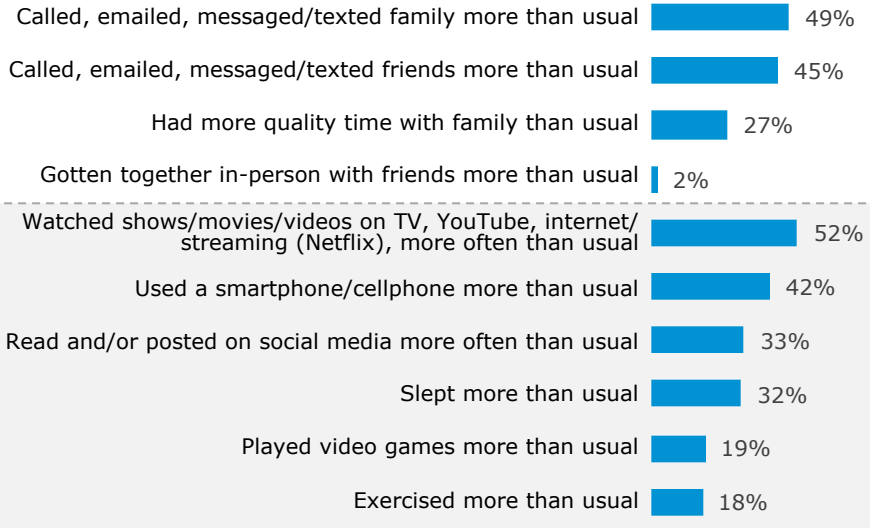


	BC	AB	SK	MN	ON	QUE	ATL
Washed your hands with soap more often	82%	79%	67%	87%	81%	79%	85%
Used hand sanitizer more often	56%	46%	55%	44%	50%	52%	47%
Bought more food at the grocery store or market than usual	29%	24%	38%	27%	31%	27%	40%
Bought more household items than usual	16%	12%	11%	17%	19%	21%	23%
Ordered groceries online for delivery more than usual	8%	4%	16%	5%	10%	13%	8%
Ordered from retail stores for delivery more than usual	13%	8%	3%	2%	10%	11%	5%
Bought more toilet paper than usual	5%	5%	1%	2%	8%	10%	5%
Bought more water than usual	6%	4%	6%	14%	7%	10%	8%
Bought more medications/ prescriptions than usual	6%	6%	6%	-	7%	3%	8%
Cooked meals more than usual	36%	31%	31%	34%	45%	33%	30%
Done more family cooking, errands, and housework than usual	34%	24%	15%	37%	37%	24%	32%
Ordered take-out food or food for delivery more than usual	14%	10%	13%	15%	9%	10%	8%

X9. Please indicate if you have done any of the following because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Base: N=750, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

About half of Canadians are communicating with family and friends – as well as watching shows/movies – more than usual

- Although a very small number (2%) have **gotten together in-person with friends** more than usual, this rises to 4% claim in BC. Additionally, 3% among 18-34 year olds say they've met in-person with friends more, particularly those belonging to Gen Z (4%).
- Many say they have increased their smartphone usage, and are reading/posting more on social media than usual.
- Women claim to have contacted family (58%) and friends (54%) and have increased their time with family (31%) than compared to men (39%, 37%, 23% resp.). They are also more likely to have increased their smartphone usage and reading/posting frequency on social media.

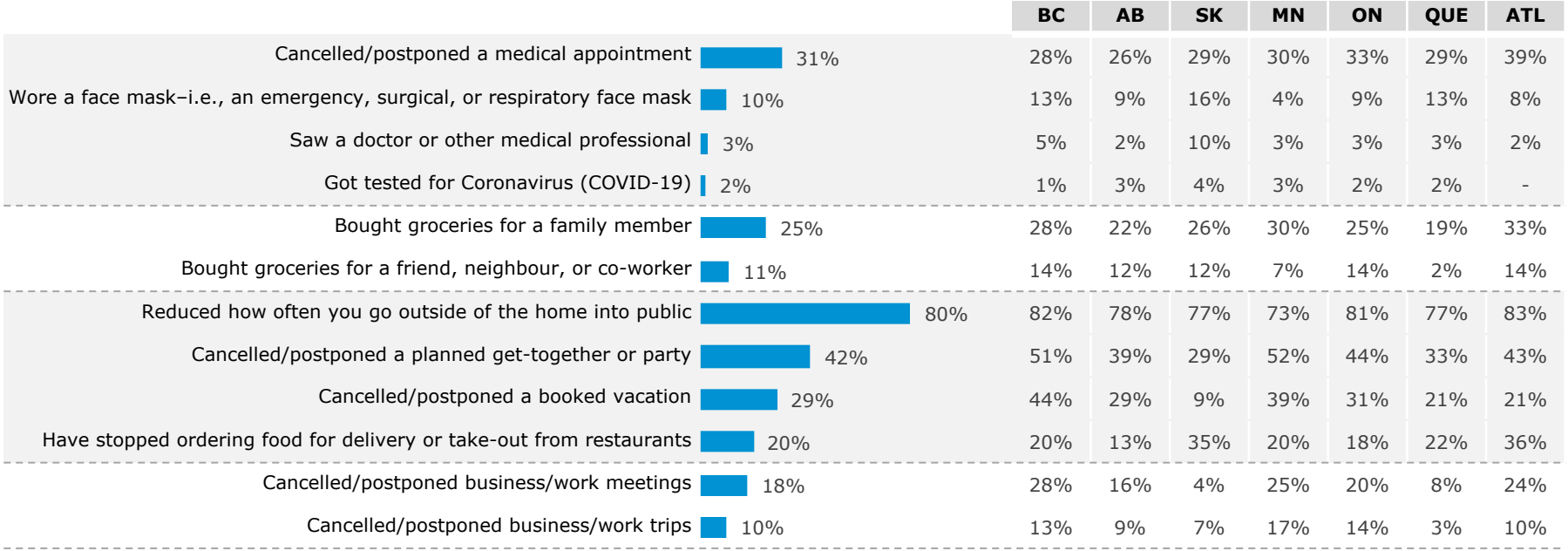


	BC	AB	SK	MN	ON	QUE	ATL
Called, emailed, messaged/texted family more than usual	48%	39%	44%	48%	53%	48%	51%
Called, emailed, messaged/texted friends more than usual	40%	42%	38%	49%	46%	53%	39%
Had more quality time with family than usual	26%	25%	24%	25%	29%	25%	29%
Gotten together in-person with friends more than usual	4%	2%	-	-	2%	0%	2%
Watched shows/movies/videos on TV, YouTube, internet/ streaming (Netflix), more often than usual	46%	44%	47%	66%	56%	50%	66%
Used a smartphone/cellphone more than usual	40%	42%	38%	48%	44%	37%	48%
Read and/or posted on social media more often than usual	31%	24%	27%	38%	32%	38%	49%
Slept more than usual	33%	36%	20%	37%	34%	29%	20%
Played video games more than usual	16%	15%	17%	11%	22%	19%	14%
Exercised more than usual	12%	19%	7%	10%	18%	25%	18%

X9. Please indicate if you have done any of the following because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Base: N=750, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

Eight-in-ten Canadians have reduced how often they go out in public. One-in-ten have worn a face mask. Many have cancelled social gatherings and trips. A quarter are buying groceries for family.

- 2% of survey respondents say they have gotten tested for COVID-19.
- 90% of Boomers have reduced how often they go out, and Gen X (81%) too are being cautious – but fewer among the Millennials (72%) and Gen Z (71%) have reduced their frequency.

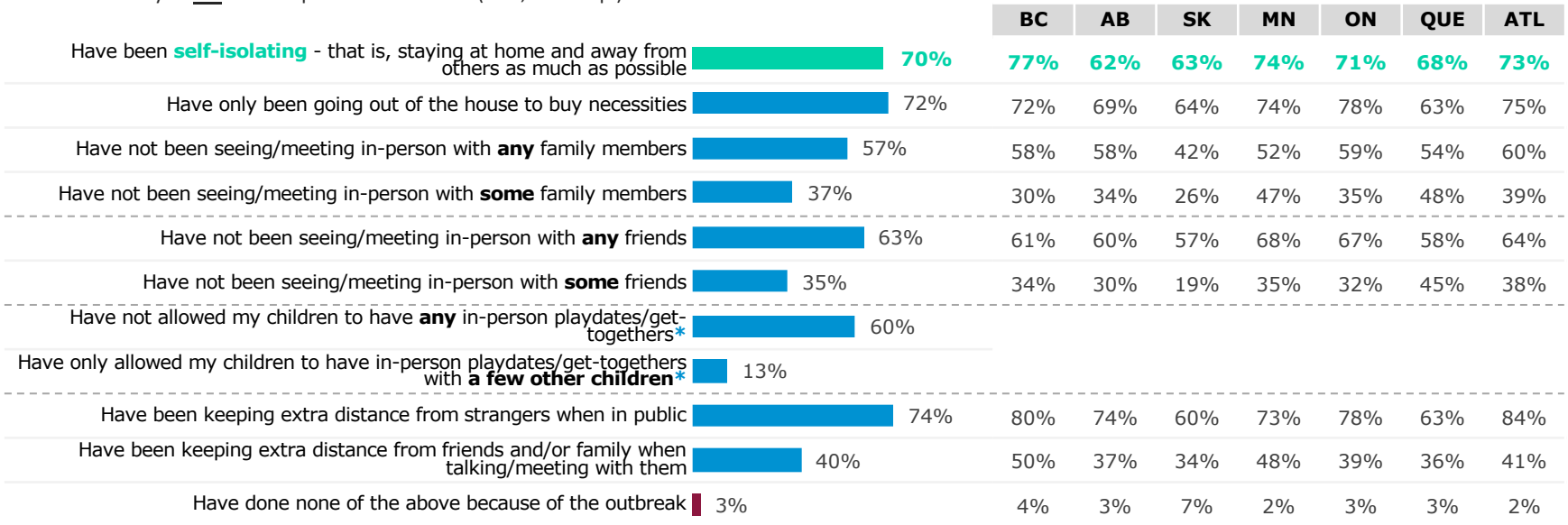


		BC	AB	SK	MN	ON	QUE	ATL
Cancelled/postponed a medical appointment	31%	28%	26%	29%	30%	33%	29%	39%
Wore a face mask–i.e., an emergency, surgical, or respiratory face mask	10%	13%	9%	16%	4%	9%	13%	8%
Saw a doctor or other medical professional	3%	5%	2%	10%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Got tested for Coronavirus (COVID-19)	2%	1%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	-
Bought groceries for a family member	25%	28%	22%	26%	30%	25%	19%	33%
Bought groceries for a friend, neighbour, or co-worker	11%	14%	12%	12%	7%	14%	2%	14%
Reduced how often you go outside of the home into public	80%	82%	78%	77%	73%	81%	77%	83%
Cancelled/postponed a planned get-together or party	42%	51%	39%	29%	52%	44%	33%	43%
Cancelled/postponed a booked vacation	29%	44%	29%	9%	39%	31%	21%	21%
Have stopped ordering food for delivery or take-out from restaurants	20%	20%	13%	35%	20%	18%	22%	36%
Cancelled/postponed business/work meetings	18%	28%	16%	4%	25%	20%	8%	24%
Cancelled/postponed business/work trips	10%	13%	9%	7%	17%	14%	3%	10%

X10. Please indicate if you have done any of the following because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Base: N=750, randomly split-sampled and selected from total sample.)

Seven-in-ten Canadians are self-isolating – staying at home as much as possible, only going out for necessities. Three-quarters are social distancing from strangers, but only four-in-ten from family/friends.

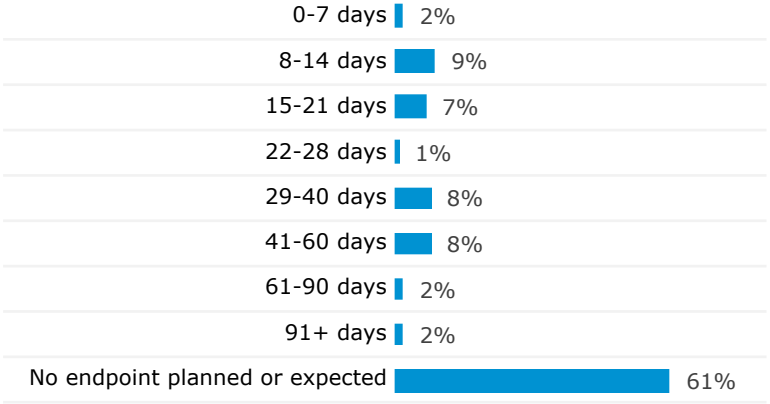
- However, the lower social distancing figure amongst family and friends may be due to respondents considering their own household family unit.
- Potential areas of concern: Only 60% of parents with children 18 and under have stopped all in-person playdates/get-togethrs for their kids. Also, only 63% of Canadians say they have not seen/met in-person any friends during the outbreak – this relatively low figure may be due to get-togethers in the early stages of the outbreak or interactions that incorporate social distancing, but it may also include interactions that do not include proper social distancing.
- Alberta and Saskatchewan residents are self-isolating to a lesser extent than the other provinces. Millennials (62%) are least likely to be self-isolating, as are Gen Z (67%) and Gen X (67%), compared to the Boomers (80%). Gen Z (64%) and Millennials (66%) are also least likely to maintain extra distance from strangers in public. Additionally, they are least likely to not meet in-person with friends (48%, 53% resp.).



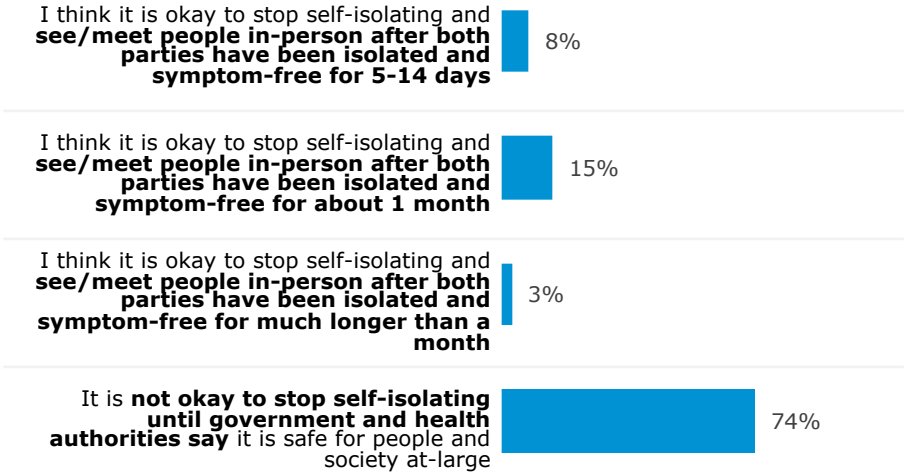
*X11. Please indicate if you have done any of the following because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Base: N=1531; *Base: Parents of children aged 18 and under N=306)*

Six-in-ten of those who are self-isolating cannot estimate an endpoint, and three-quarters feel it is not okay to stop self-isolating until the government and health authorities say it is safe

- Of those who anticipate an endpoint, the average estimate is 37 days. 6% say a minimum of 2 weeks, while 7% say 30 days, and 7% say at least 2 months.
- 15% feel it is okay to stop self-isolating and meet people in-person after both parties have been isolating and are symptom free for about a month. Though majority of Gen Z (67%) and Millennials (66%) agree that they would wait for the go ahead from the government, they are more likely to feel that a 1-month isolation is enough (20%). Regionally as well, more than seven to eight-in-ten echo the same sentiment, with the exception of Saskatchewan (65%).



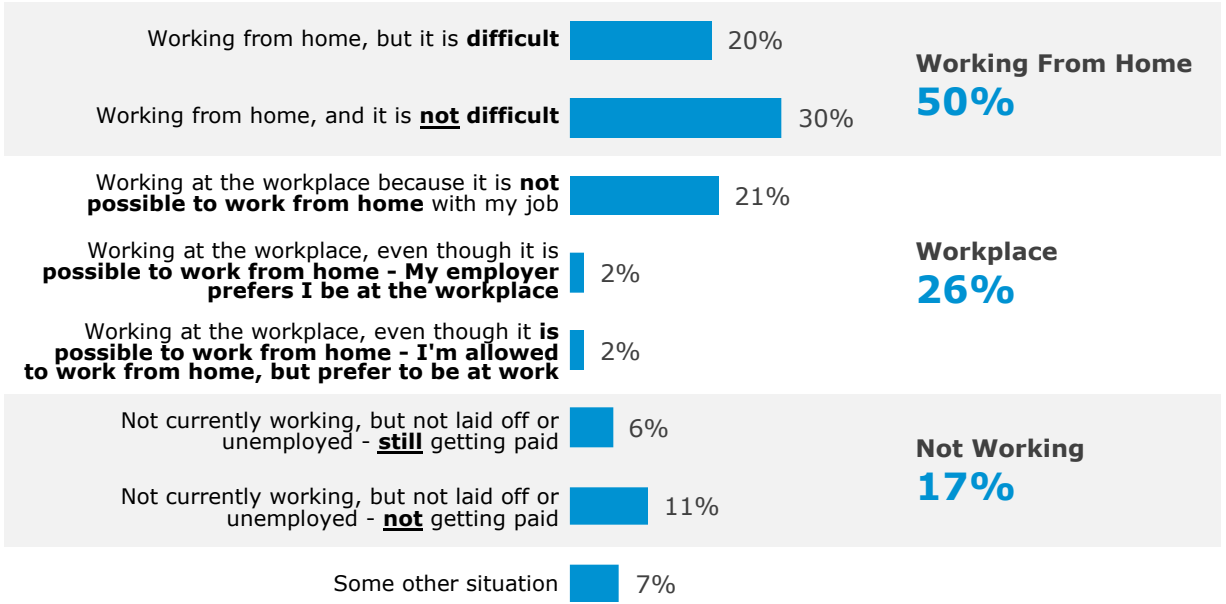
1 week (7 days)	1%
2 weeks (14 days)	6%
1 month (30 days)	7%
2 months (60 days)	5%
3 months (90 days)	2%



X12. And approximately how many days do you plan or expect to continue your self-isolating behaviors? (Base: Selected 1st 8 Items at X11 N=1447)
X13. Overall, which of the following best represents your view on when it is okay to stop self-isolating behaviors? (Base: Selected 1st 8 Items at X1 N=1447)

Half of currently employed Canadians are working from home. A quarter are at the workplace – mostly because it is not possible to perform their job at home.

- Ontario (54%), Alberta (51%), Quebec (49%) and BC (49%) have half their residents working from home, fewer in Manitoba (44%) and Atlantic Canada (41%) are doing the same, while just one third in Saskatchewan (33%) are working from home - almost half (49%) in SK are going to their workplace. 40% in Manitoba and 34% in Alberta are at their workplace. Alberta (31%) and Saskatchewan (35%) employees are working at their workplace because it is not possible to work from home with their kind of job.
- Quebec has the highest number of people not currently working (27%), of which 19% are not getting paid.



Among Regions

	BC	AB	SK	MN	ON	QUE	ATL
Working From Home	49%	51%	33%	44%	54%	49%	41%
Workplace	28%	34%	49%	40%	22%	20%	30%
Not Working	16%	7%	16%	15%	16%	27%	17%

X8. Which of the following best represents how/where you are currently working during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak? (Base: Full-Time, Part-Time, Seasonal or Self-employed N=911)

Media Spokesperson:
Craig Worden, President

craigworden@pollara.com
416.921.0090 ext. 2235

pollara
strategic insights
www.pollara.com