

People want assurances before they'll feel safe returning to work, marketplaces

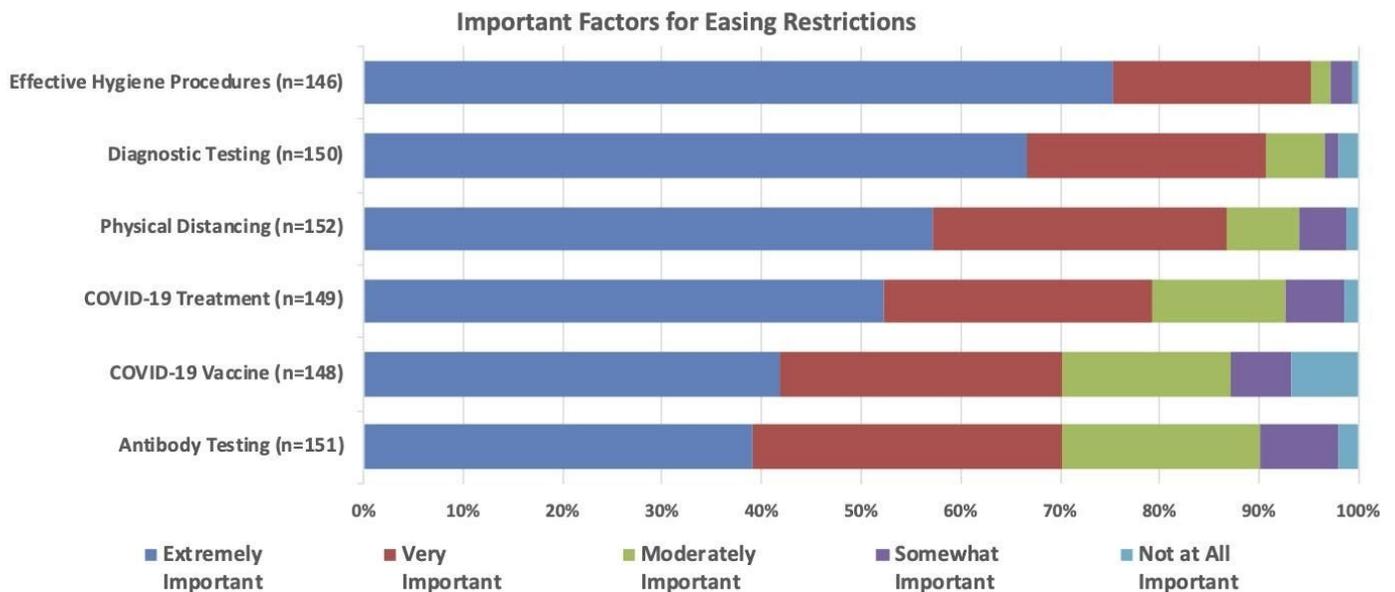
Behavioural science insights are key to sustainable epidemiological & economic outcomes

(MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO - May 8, 2020) -- New research is showing that as government leaders and public health experts continue to reveal plans for easing pandemic restrictions, people are scrutinizing leaders' words and actions. People are weighing the risks, benefits, and trade-offs of leaving self-isolation and want assurances that decisions about opening up have been made based on facts and future considerations that will keep them safe.

"The initial pandemic response guidelines to stay home and wash your hands were a direct, uniform, low-risk, high-reward proposition that most people accepted, and the result is that the curve in many jurisdictions is flattening. Now, as restrictions are easing and provinces, states and municipalities are reopening to varying degrees with differing guidelines it is a much-more-complex proposition. We're hearing people are struggling to make personal risk-benefit assessments about what is and isn't acceptable to them. They want to stay safe and they sure don't want another pandemic wave," said Sarah Thorne, President and CEO of Decision • Partners.

**COVID-19 Coping Survey:
April 27 – May 3**

Q: How important will the following be to you in making personal decisions about returning to activities that you have been limiting or avoiding during the pandemic?



Thorne, and her team of social scientists, researchers and management consultants, just released results from their 6th weekly COVID-19 Coping Survey (April 27 to May 3) which also show that most people continue to comply with public health and government restrictions to stop the spread of COVID-19. The survey is a voluntary, opt-in behavioural research initiative, and weekly results are shared online. (details below)

The bottom line from Survey #6 (April 27 to May 3):

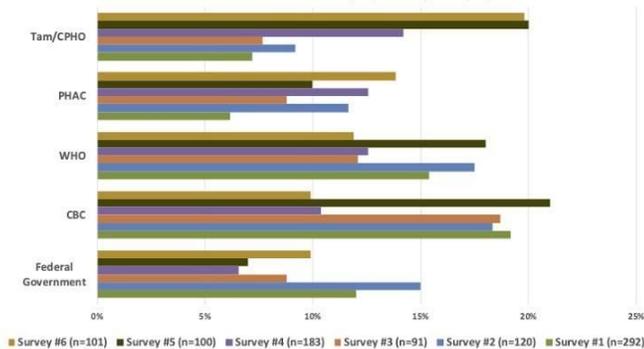
- Highlights from Survey #6 include **new data on how people feel about loosening restrictions and their specific advice to leaders.**
- Respondents are **becoming active risk assessors:**
 - Most believe **restrictions are appropriate** and they are working – “**we’re flattening the curve**”
 - Even those who think restrictions are too strict are doing risk assessment, noting in their area the number of cases are low and not growing, or that some activities are low risk and should be allowed
 - **Opening up too quickly is a significant concern** for many – they don’t want a second wave
 - Before things open up, people **want to know that the curve has flattened and the trend is downward**
- They **trust their public health and government leaders.** Trust in Dr. Tam and Dr. Fauci continues to be high and appears to be increasing.

**COVID-19 Coping Survey:
March 24 – May 3**

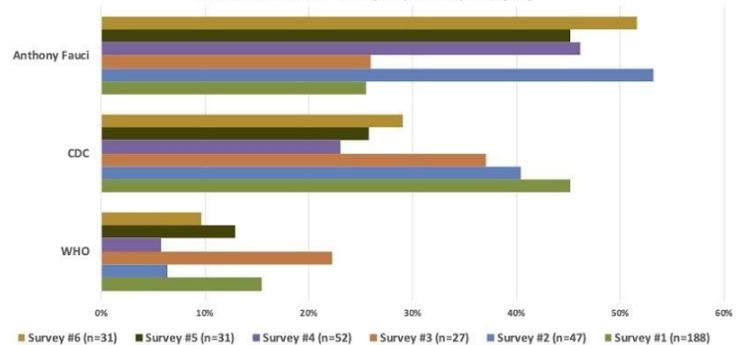
Q: Which organization or individual do you trust most when it comes to information related to the COVID-19 pandemic?



Most Trusted Sources – Canada Top 5 (Sorted by Survey #6)



Most Trusted Sources – US Top 3* (Sorted by Survey #6)



Canada: The order fluctuates from week to week, but **Dr. Tam and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) have trended higher over the past 6 weeks.**



- Respondents are judging the risks, benefits and tradeoffs of leaving the safety of their homes and participating in things that are opening up. They are assessing **Are We Safe?** and **Can We Trust You?**
- They **want assurance from leaders** – public health, government and business – to inform their assessment of whether it is **safe to go back to work** and resume some activities. They want assurance that **effective hygiene procedures, diagnostic testing and physical distancing are in place.**

“As we begin to transition to a “new normal” – whatever that will be – every individual will have to make decisions about what is acceptable to them personally, and what is not. The decisions they make and actions they take will be largely driven by who they trust and how they perceive risks and benefits of changing their behaviour,” Thorne said.

Thorne says next week’s survey portants insights about the broader decision-making context that many people are experiencing including their conditions for feeling safe and what they are and are not willing to do, and why, when it comes to participating in re-opening activities like going to work, taking public transportation or getting a haircut.

“Leaders who understand and acknowledge the challenges and complexity for employees and customers as they make decisions in the current dynamic situation will make better-informed decisions as they open up their businesses and operations. Navigating the transition to “the new normal” is stressful for all. We hope that our research provides valuable insight to leaders as they begin to open up and welcome employees and customers back,” Thorne said.

Please visit the COVID-19 Coping Survey initiative site: <http://decisionpartners.co/Survey.html>

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Media Inquiries and Interviews

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About Sarah Thorne, President and CEO, Decision • Partners

Thorne is recognized globally for her expertise in the field of behavioural research and its application to organizational decision making in the areas of strategy, policy and communication. She works with organizations across a broad range of areas including public health, emergency preparedness, energy and infrastructure, organizational transformation, stakeholder engagement, climate change, sustainability and resilience.

She is Executive in Residence at the Ivey School of Business, and a regular contributor to the scientific and management literature on decision and behaviour-focused strategy and communications. She was a member and co-author of the Canadian Standards Association’s Technical Committee on Risk Assessment and Communication, which developed the state-of-the-science *Q850 Risk Management: Guideline for Decision-Makers*, lead author of the Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada *Strategic Risk Communication Framework and Handbook* and co-author of the book *Mental Modeling Approach: Risk Management Application Case Studies*, which was published in 2017.

About the COVID-19 Coping Survey

Each week, Decision Partners’ COVID-19 Coping Survey asks what people are concerned about, what they are grateful for, their coping and protective behaviours, knowledge of and adherence to public health policies and what sources they trust for information about the pandemic.

Each Wednesday afternoon highlights from the previous week’s survey are posted online and participants are recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. As such, Decision Partners makes no claims about the representativeness of the survey of any specific population, but believes results provide meaningful insights into people’s experiences, beliefs and behaviour during these difficult times.

Decision Partners adheres to all standards for conducting research, confidentiality and ensuring people’s privacy. Each week the survey results are aggregated, and no one will be identified as the source of any responses. The firm does not retain, sell, or pass along any personally identifiable information that respondents may provide.

About Decision • Partners

The Decision Partners team believes our world is a better place when people make better decisions. The firm’s proven Mental Modeling Insight™ (MMI™) approach helps people do just that. MMI™ is an evidence-based, science-informed management process for systematically understanding the influences on people’s judgment, decision making and behaviour. By identifying the full range of people’s thinking on complex issues, the Decision Partners team works with their client partners to develop policies, strategies, interventions and communications that effectively address their stakeholders’ needs, values, interests and priorities. The results – based on insight into people’s judgment – are measurable and sustainable. Visit www.decisionpartners.co.