



# How Are You Coping with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Moving beyond initial anxiety to adopting new behaviours

Highlights from Coping Survey #4: April 13 – 19

Decision • Partners Canada Inc.

Dunn & Associates Communications and Public Affairs Inc.

# Coping Survey #4 – Top Line

This week we're reporting highlights from **Survey #4** plus new data from the past 4 weeks.

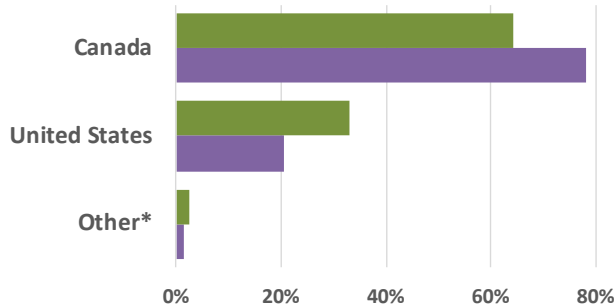
- There are some new questions in **Survey #5** that respond to what we are hearing and changes in the COVID-19 situation. **We hope you'll keep doing the weekly survey – and sending it to your family and friends. [Everyone is welcome to participate.](#)**
- We're hearing the survey helps people cope a bit better: *“This survey is a helpful tool for me to reflect on how I am personally coping during this pandemic and to honour how my experiences are evolving (positively and otherwise).”*
- **How is everyone coping this week? Here is what we are hearing:**
  - » People are **resigned** that we are in it for the long haul.
  - » Several are reporting they **are tired, frustrated, bored and anxious**. Some say they are **good, fine and hopeful**. But most people are **coping**.
  - » People are concerned about their **mental health** and that of others – they are struggling to stay positive. But almost all report they are prepared to handle the impacts of social isolation.
  - » For the fourth week in a row, **people are most grateful for “family” and “health”**. The top thing they are looking forward to – **spending time with friends and family**.



# Survey Overview

## Survey Responses

- » COVID-19 Coping Survey #4 was active from April 13 through April 19, 2020.
- » **357 people responded** in total. Participation was limited to people 18 and over.
- » **38% of respondents had participated in previous surveys.** 62% were new participants this week.



■ Survey #4 (n=352)
 ■ Survey #1 (n=662), #2 (n=238), & #3 (n=143)

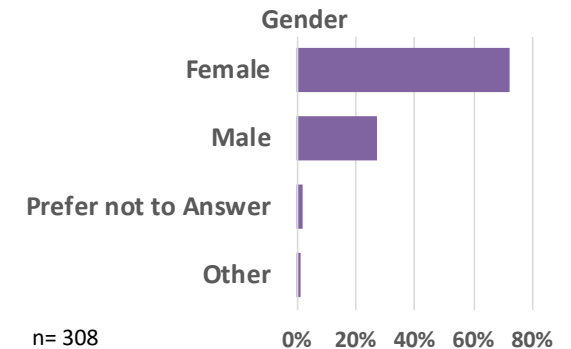
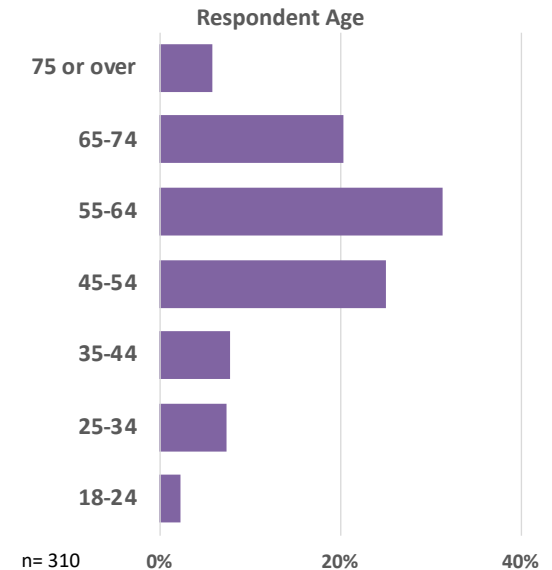
### Other countries represented in Survey #4 include:

- France, Norway, Ireland, United Kingdom

The number of people who responded to each question varied and is specified as “n” for each question. When the results are presented as a % of respondents this is the percentage of those responding to that question.

### Additional Demographics included at end of presentation

[COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #4 Highlights](#)



# What one word would you use to describe how you are feeling today?

- Respondents' mood continues to be diverse, with “tired” being the most frequent word used with “bored” and “exhausted” also in the top 5 along with “good” and “fine”. Some are saying they are “anxious”, “apprehensive” and even outright “scared”.

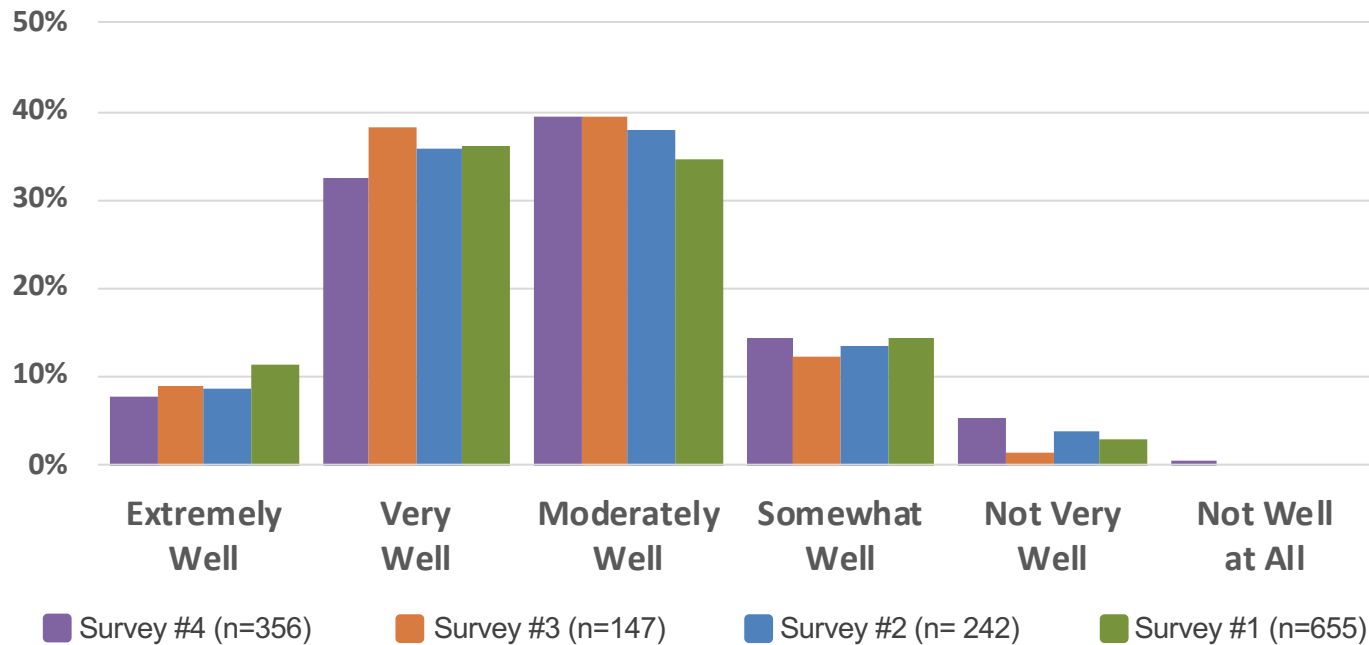
April 13 - 19





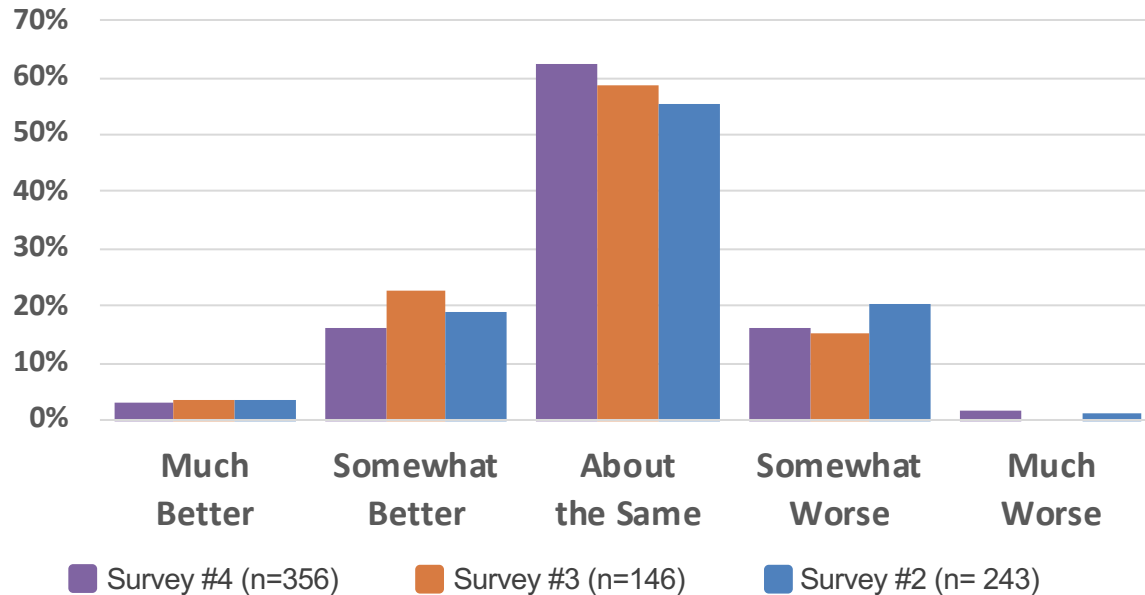
# How well are you coping with the COVID-19 outbreak today?

- The range of how well respondents are coping has been consistent over the past 4 weeks and continues to reflect the broad range of emotions people are feeling.



# How are you coping compared to last week?

- Most respondents are reporting that there is little change from week to week in how they are coping.





# Notable Changes

*What are the biggest changes you've noticed around you in the past week (in people, places, businesses, government, etc.)?*

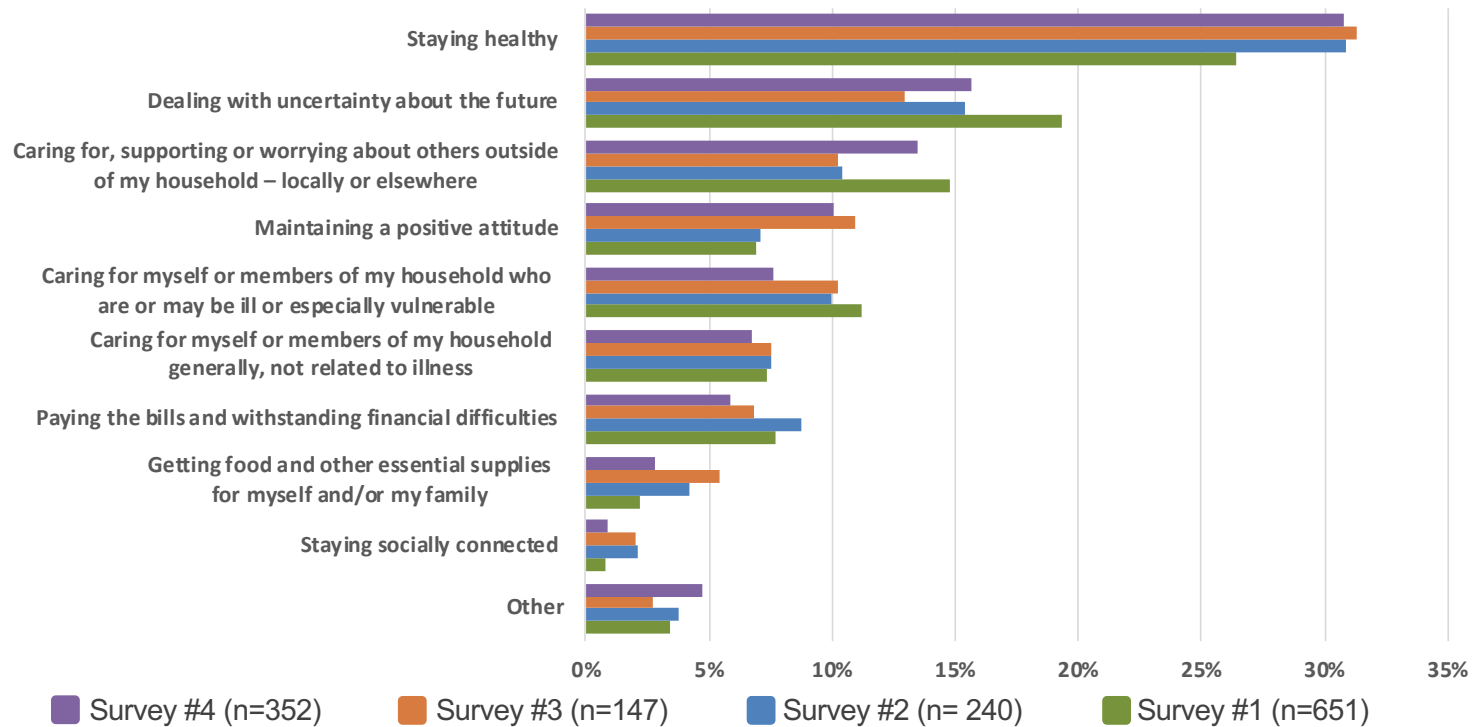
- **Increased resignation and/or acceptance of the “new normal”:**
  - » *“People have started to realize that they will not get back to normal as we used to know it. Things have changed and a ‘new normal’ is [being] established.”*
  - » *“People are generally more nonchalant between moments of panic.”*
- **Increased emotions: anxiety, frustration, anger, impatience, rudeness, tiredness, boredom and depression:**
  - » *“Miss my family, friends and my partner is checking out emotionally.”*
  - » *“Everyone treats everyone else like a leper. Some people won't even nod or say hello when you pass them.”*
- **A few, however, noted greater concern for others, compassion and hopefulness:**
  - » *“People are more friendly, saying hi and asking how you are doing, at a safe distance.”*

# Notable Changes

- **Changes (increases and decreases) in compliance with social distancing and mask wearing:**
  - » *“The streets are really empty. If you are out walking the dog, people take great pains to cross the street to be far away from each other.”*
  - » *“Way more people are out and about than the last couple weeks. I think people are starting to feel invincible if they haven't gotten COVID yet.”*
- **Increasing frustration with government policies and decision-making (‘bickering’ and ‘finger pointing’) related to the pandemic and to reopening the economy:**
  - » *“I am hearing more speculation on the whys and wherefores of the pandemic and ‘Monday Morning Quarterbacking’ on the actions, or non-action, of various authorities.”*
  - » *“People starting to pick on governments, governments starting to criticize each other -- less ‘teamwork’ across party lines.”*
- **Changes in businesses and at stores, redesigning themselves to address needs:**
  - » *“Additional restrictions at the grocery store (one-way aisles, separate entrance/exits, limiting the number of shoppers).”*

# What would you say is your greatest concern today?

- Respondents' concerns continue to fluctuate, although **“staying healthy”** has stayed the top concern by a large margin. Only 16% reported that their greatest concern has changed from the previous week.



# What would you say are your greatest concerns today?

## ■ Staying healthy

- » *“Difficulty managing my mental state. I have anxiety issues.”*
- » *“I have regular bloodwork every other month and I am starting to get anxious about going in this week. I have a mask and a plan to disrobe in my garage and step into a bathrobe and go straight into the shower.”*
- » *“We've been trying to get pregnant for over a year, and I'm concerned about the affect this pandemic will have if we do become pregnant during this crisis. (Can't exactly afford to stop trying at this point, considering our age is a factor).”*
- » *“Fearful to go to doctor for less severe ailments, schedule overdue yearly medical tests done in hospital. Wanted to improve parts of my life this year but now feel unable to.”*

# What would you say are your greatest concerns today?

- **Dealing with uncertainty about the future**
  - » *“Wondering if people can continue to keep up the social distancing as the good weather is upon us.”*
  - » *“I wasn't particularly unrealistic going into this. I knew it would take time, but I didn't think we'd be looking at restrictions into the fall.”*
  - » *“Thinking more about the future than the present. The uncertainty is more palpable.”*
  - » *“Less concerned about protecting my family from the virus, and more concerned about what will come next in terms of maintaining self-isolation and the duration. More stressed and anxious.”*
- **Caring for, supporting or worrying about others outside of my household (family, friends, neighbours, others) – locally or elsewhere**
  - » *“Worried for my sons who are first responders.”*
  - » *“More alarmed about economic and health impacts to the more vulnerable in our society”*
  - » *“Actually I am just thinking of all those single parents with young children in apartments and if they can get outside for some fresh air.”*
  - » *“Those I reach out to who are alone are really feeling the isolation. It's impossible to replace human touch or proximity.”*

# What would you say are your greatest concerns today?

- **Maintaining a positive attitude**

- » *“Feelings of grief for all the suffering in the world right now.”*
- » *“Starting to get down about not being able to physically see anyone.”*
- » *“Missing physical contact with grandchildren.”*
- » *“Last time it was staying healthy. This time, it's less about physical health as it is about mental health.”*
- » *“How long will this last? What are the long-term implications on our psyches, mental health?”*

- **Caring for myself or members of my household generally, not related to illness**

- » *“Your surveys don't deal with those of us who are suffering through this alone.”*

- **Paying the bills and withstanding financial difficulties**

- » *“Terrified of being fined. I follow the rules but all it takes is not having eyes at the back of your head and accidentally being within 6 feet from another person. They have to give a fine to someone so the fine will go to the one not acting victimized usually an older female.”*

# Other concerns

- **Getting back to “normal” and reducing economic impact**

- » *“We need to isolate those who are at risk and let the rest of us go back to work and school. Fear has been such a driving force in this virus that many may find it difficult to cope in the real world at all if we don't open our doors and go back very soon.”*
- » *“Economic impact has potential for more devastation than the virus.”*
- » *“The economy, pending recession and unemployment.”*

- **Politics**

- » *“Annoyance with Democrats and the fear spreading media.”*
- » *“President Trump's erratic behavior.”*

- **Other Concerns**

- » *“In general none of the things you've listed are of any concern to me. Things are what they are. This won't last forever, we will eventually find a proven treatment, a vaccine or a cure. Until then, I plan to just keep following the guidance of the professionals in healthcare, and the government.”*

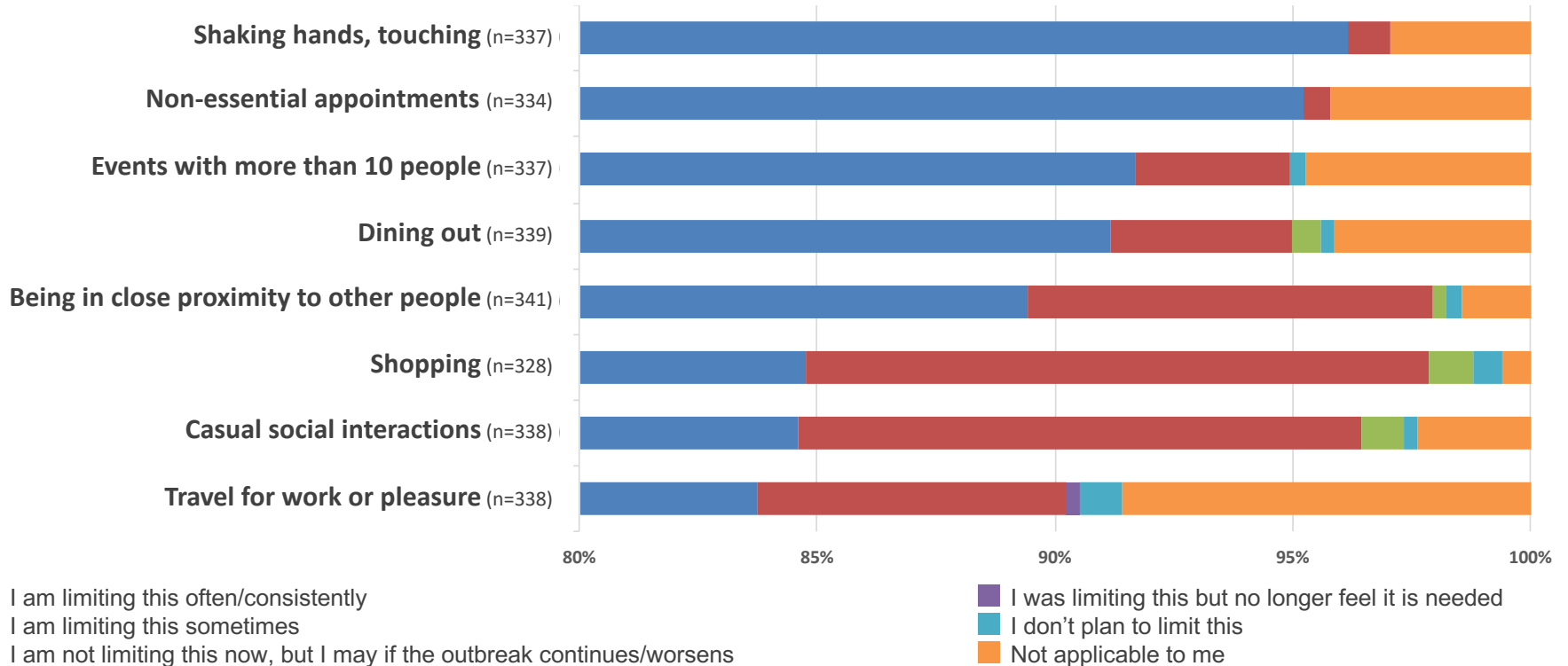






# Which of the following actions or activities are you limiting/avoiding as a part of physical distancing to reduce exposure to the virus?

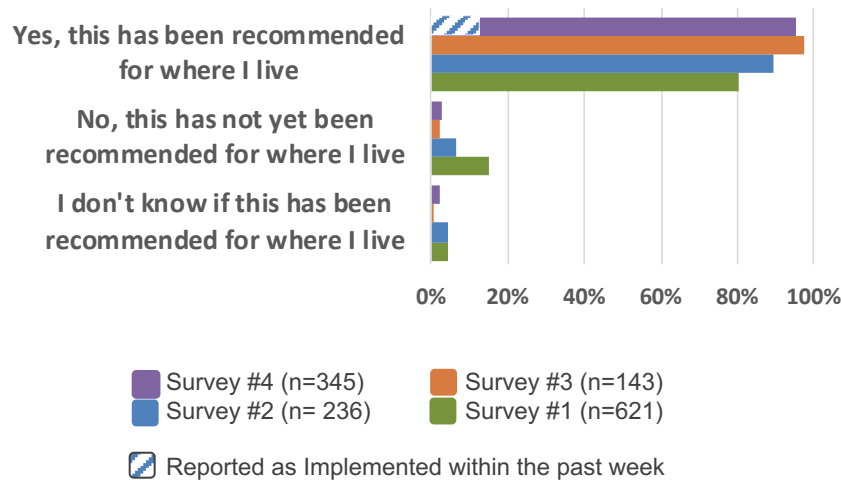
- Very little change in reported limiting/avoiding behaviour over the first 4 surveys. The biggest change relates to activities, like travel, which are no longer available.



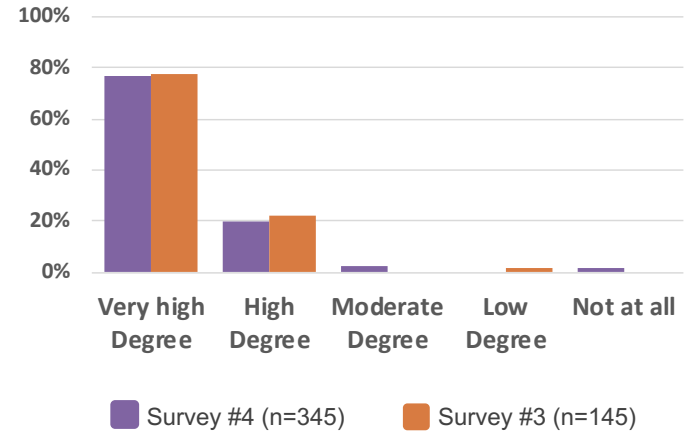
# “Stay at Home”, “Shelter in Place” Orders

- Essentially all respondents reported some form of “stay at home” order in their area now and are self-reporting a high level of compliance.

*In some areas, officials are recommending or mandating that individuals “stay at home” or “sheltering in place”. Has this been recommended for your area?*



*To what degree would you say that you are following the recommendations in your area?\**

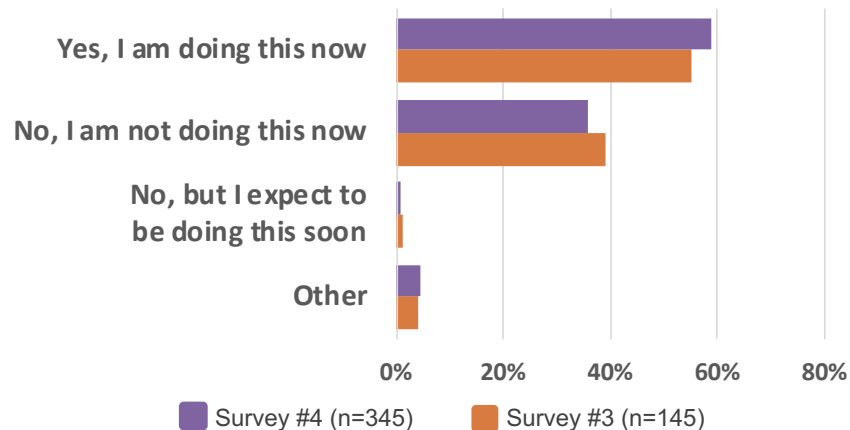


\* New Question in Survey #3

# Self-Isolation

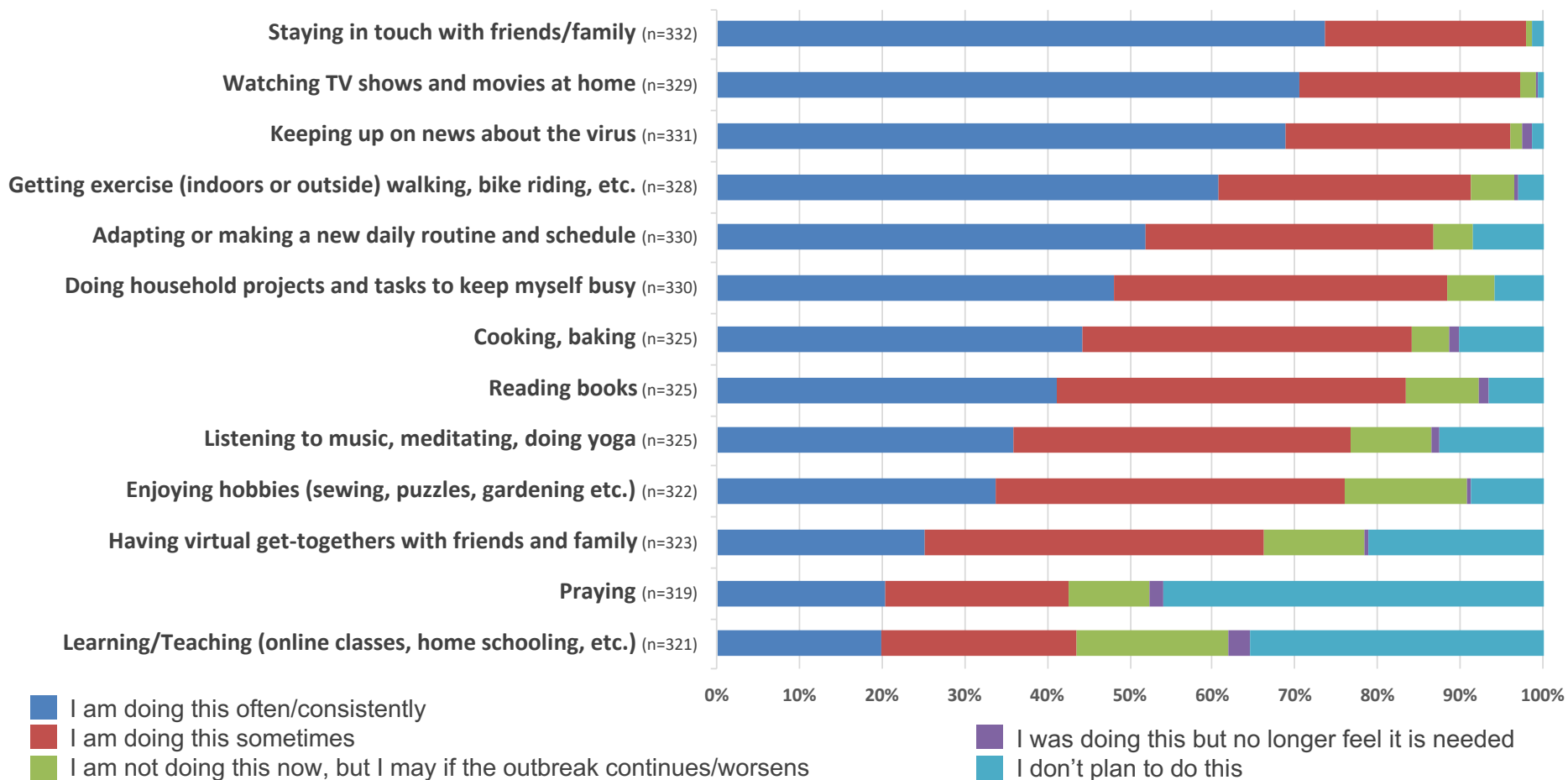
*Some individuals are taking more extreme physical distancing actions sometimes called “self-isolate” – Are you doing this?\**

- A significant number of survey respondents are reporting that they are self-isolating, going beyond the stay at home recommendations of their areas.



\* New question wording used in Survey #3 and #4 with “self-isolation” described as “more than just limiting your travel outside the home, but staying at home except for the most essential reasons, going beyond the minimum recommendations of ‘stay at home’ and ‘shelter in place’”

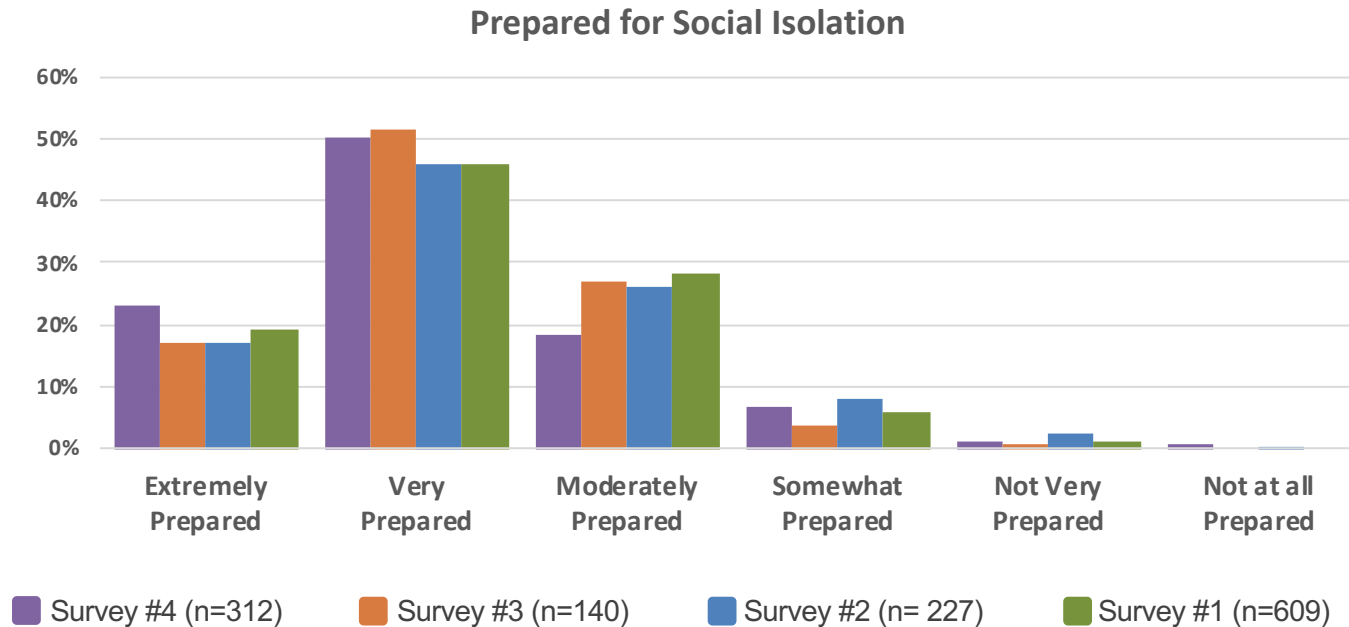
# To what extent are you taking each of the following actions to cope and maintain your spirit and mood and/or that of your friends and family?



COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #4 Highlights

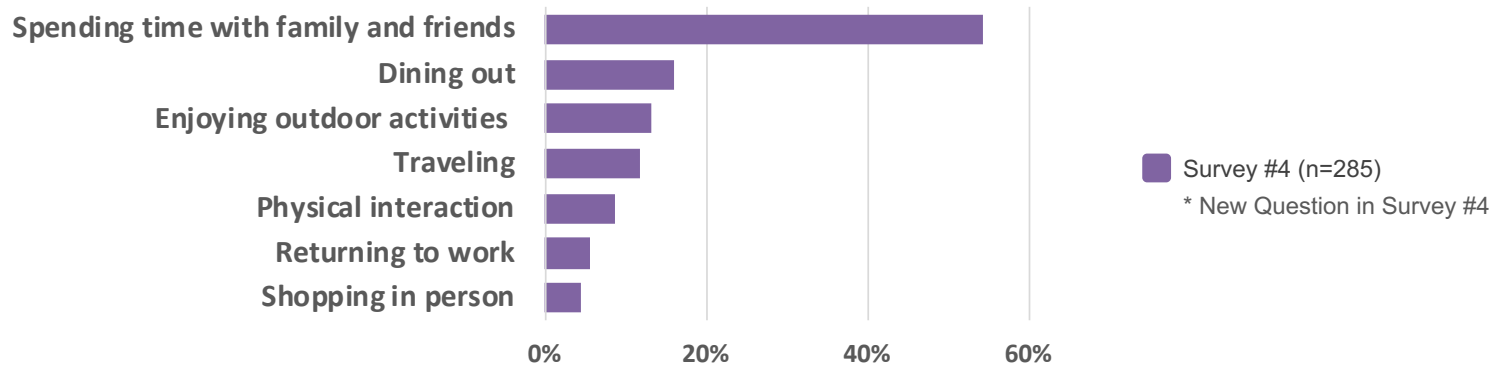
# How prepared do you feel that you (and those in your household) are to handle the impacts of social isolation over the next four weeks?

- Respondents have been consistently and increasingly reporting that they are prepared to handle the impacts of social isolation



# What is the one thing you're looking forward to doing ...

*... once distancing restrictions are lifted and you feel more comfortable doing things that you used to do before the outbreak?\**



## ■ Spending Time with Family and Friends

- » *“Visiting my family and giving them the biggest hugs I can. Seeing my mother in the nursing home and taking her for a car ride and a meal.”*
- » *“Seeing my kids and grandkids and having a drink with my friends.”*
- » *“Being able to hug all my children and grandchildren.”*

# What is the one thing you're looking forward to doing ...

- **Dining out**

- » *“I can't wait to go out to eat at a restaurant and going for a glass of wine at the bar.”*
- » *“Getting a McDonald's coffee and pad thai.”*

- **Enjoying outdoor activities, including boating, hiking, cycling, swimming, camping, fishing, golfing, gardening and going to the beach.**

- **Travelling, to visit family, to the cottage and internationally.**

- **Physical interaction**

- » *“Getting/giving a hug”*
- » *“Hugging everyone I know”*

- **Returning to work**

- **Shopping, including going to a mall and grocery shopping without having to wear a mask**

- **Others:**

- » Returning to school, kids programs, daycare
- » Having the “freedom” to return to “normal life”
- » Events, including theatre, major sports events, car meets, festivals, etc.
- » Going to see a movie
- » Returning to religious institution (church, synagogue, mosque etc.)
- » Returning to the gym
- » Getting a hair cut





# Trusted Sources – US Respondents (Surveys #1 - #4 combined)

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

- In the US, the story is quite different with less frequent citation of Federal government in general. The **CDC and Dr. Anthony Fauci** are most frequently cited, followed by WHO, State Governments (and their governors) and the New York Times and CNN.

March 13 –  
April 19

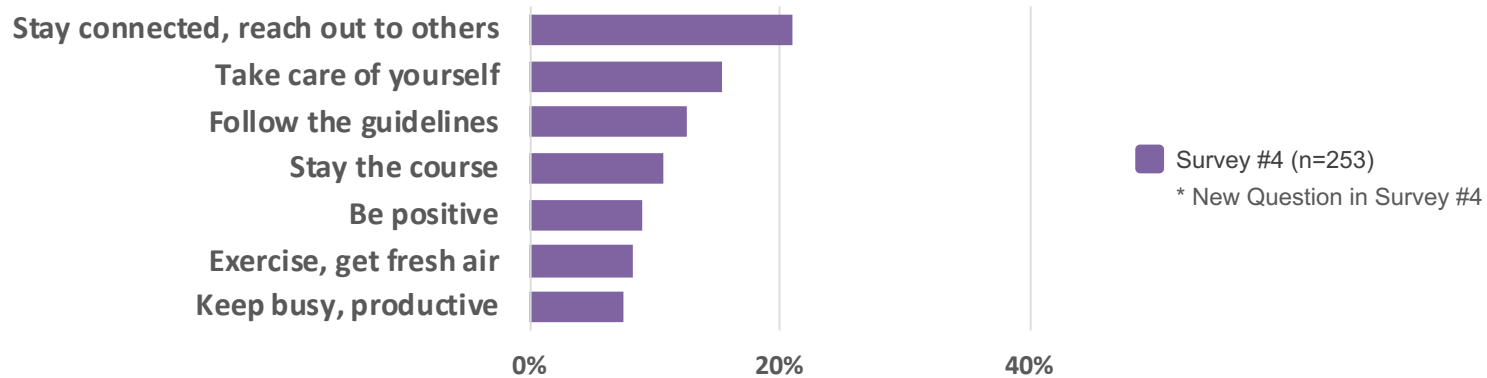


# Respondents' Questions for Public Health Officials

- Respondents had several questions they would like to have answered by public health officials.
- Again this week in Canada and the US many questions related to policies and decisions made by the federal governments related to planning and preparedness, plus questions about what is being learned that can be applied in the future.
- Several specific questions related to:
  - » **The virus:** immunity; long-term health effects; comparison with annual flu season; when a vaccine will be available and why it is taking so long; and preventing a second wave.
  - » **Testing:** more questions this week about testing protocols – why testing is not broadly available and when it will be; how testing is done and if there are other ways of doing it; when testing for antibodies will be available and how widely available such testing will be; how accurate the testing will be?
  - » **Timeframe:** *“Will this be our new normal?”*, *“Do you feel our lives will forever be changed by this pandemic?”*

# Suggestions to Others

*If you could offer one suggestion or piece of advice to other people dealing with the social isolation related to the COVID-19 outbreak, what would that be?*



## ▪ Stay connected, reach out to others

- » *“Embrace technology! Skype, FaceTime, Zoom are close to being together. WhatsApp allows our extended family group to be connected. Houseparty App is great for playing games with others.”*
- » *“Don’t lose touch with each other. Support each other. Talk more often.”*

# Suggestions to Others

- **Take care of yourself, do what makes you feel good, relax, stay calm, and control your reactions**
  - » *“Do what makes you feel good, as long as it’s not something that leads to destructive behaviour, i.e.. gambling, alcohol.”*
  - » *“Enjoy the downtime and take the opportunity to decide what’s important in your life moving forward.”*
  - » *“Be in charge of your good mental health. Find what works and do it.”*
- **Follow the guidelines/take safety precautions**
  - » *“Stay home and wear a mask when you are out. Thinking about other people doesn’t make you a bad or weak person.”*
  - » *“Our grand parents lived through two wars, a depression and the Spanish flu epidemic. We have rules to follow to get through our one big event, now follow them.”*
- **“Stay the course”**
  - » *“Stay strong, we will get through this together.”*
  - » *“Be thankful and grateful for what you do have, this won’t last forever.”*
- **Be positive and keep your sense of humour**
  - » *“Try to find good in every day and smile.”*
  - » *“Try to stay positive and hold onto the light at the end of the tunnel.”*

## ▪ Other suggestions include:

- » *“Limit time watching the news and on social media”*
- » *“Keep a schedule”*
- » *“Be kind to others”*
- » *“Pray”, “Trust in God”*
- » *“Get a hobby”*
- » *“Meditate”*
- » *“Get over yourself”*
- » *“Be informed”*
- » *“Read and watch shows on Netflix”*

# Respondents' Comments on our Survey

- We heard from many respondents that the survey is **providing an outlet for people to share their thoughts and experiences and helping them cope with the pandemic:**
  - » *“Very useful to understand others are going through the same thing.”*
  - » *“Answering these questions were helpful for me mentally. Things I should ask myself more regularly during this time. Thank you.”*
  - » *“This is a very informative form of survey because it helps most of the people express their own feelings or sentiments in order to cope with this crisis.”*
  - » *“This survey is a helpful tool for me to reflect on how I am personally coping during this pandemic and to honour how my experiences are evolving (positively and otherwise).”*
  - » *“It’s great to do this survey. It encourages me to reflect, hear what others are doing, learn from them, and get ideas on how to move forward. Also, I feel someone really cares.”*

# Survey Overview

## ▪ Survey Responses

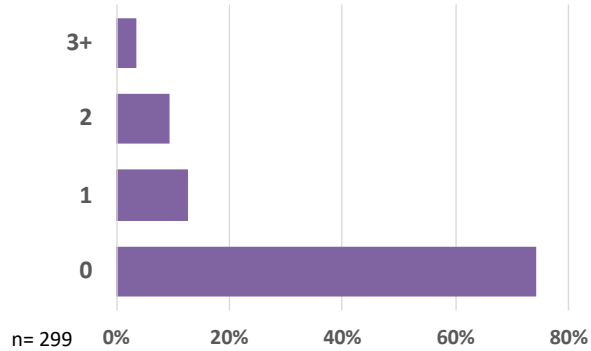
- » COVID-19 Coping Survey #4 was active from April 13 through April 19, 2020.
- » **357 people responded**. Participation was limited to people 18 and over.
- » **38% of respondents had participated in previous surveys**. 62% were new participants this week.

## ▪ Survey Sample

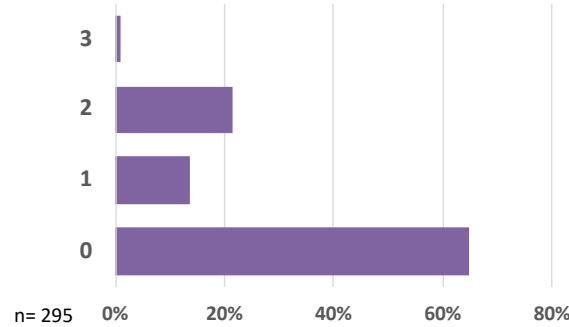
- » Survey participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling.
- » The survey was promoted through various avenues starting with our friends, families and professional colleagues via email, LinkedIn, Twitter and other platforms. People were asked to share the survey invitation with others.
- » *As such, we make no claims about the representativeness of the survey to any specific population, but we do believe that the results provide meaningful insight into people's experiences and perspectives during these difficult times.*

# Other Demographics – Survey Week #4

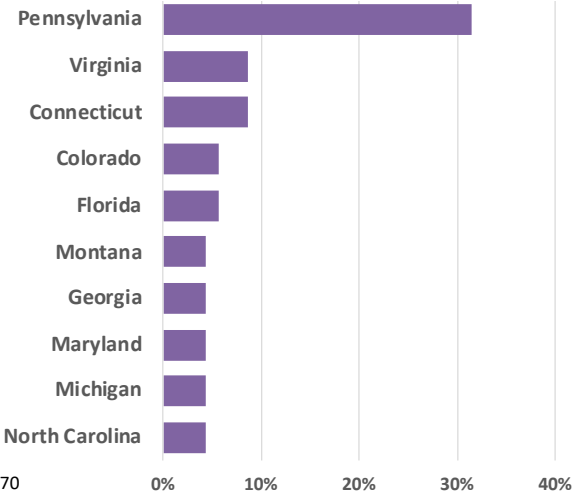
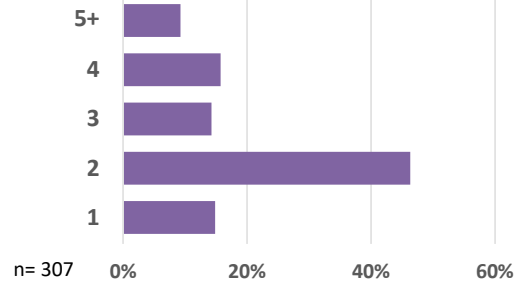
Children <18 at Home



Seniors >65 at Home

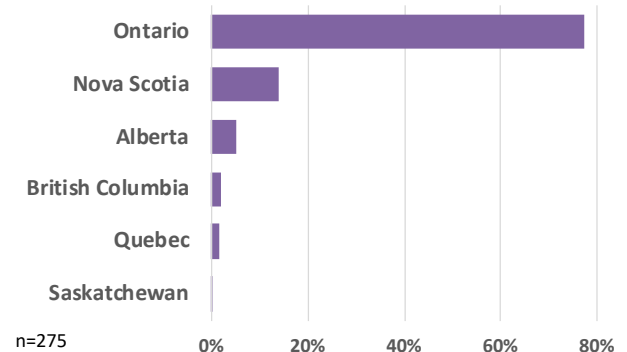


Household Size



**Other states represented in Survey #3 include:**

- New York, South Carolina, Missouri, Washington, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Ohio, Delaware, New Jersey





# Why We're Doing the Coping Survey

- Like many others we are trying to understand and cope with the practical, psychological and emotional effects of physical distancing, self-isolation, symptom monitoring and general uncertainty during this COVID-19 pandemic.
- Our team at Decision Partners believes we can help, in a small way, by doing what we do best – listening and learning about how people are feeling and what they are doing to cope with the changes and challenges we are all facing. That's why we launched our **weekly** COVID-19 Coping Survey on March 24.
- No one has sponsored this research – we're doing it on our own. We hope this work will generate useful insight to help people cope a little better, and hopefully inform ongoing and future pandemic decision making.
- Please [take the weekly survey](#), share the survey link and the weekly results!

# Contributors

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Katherine Sousa, Research Associate, Decision • Partners

Michael Dunn, President - Dunn & Associates Communications and Public Affairs Inc.

# About Us

Our team at Decision Partners believes our world is a better place when people make better-informed decisions. We specialize in behavioural research designed to better understand how people think about and respond to complex topics, including social and health-related issues. We are a small business that has been doing this work for 30 years.

You can learn more about us, and our COVID-19 Coping Survey at <http://www.decisionpartners.co>

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