



How Are You Coping with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Trust leaders and want assurance about loosening restrictions

Highlights from Coping Survey #5: April 20 – 26

Decision • Partners Canada Inc.
Dunn & Associates Communications and Public Affairs Inc.

Coping Survey #5 – Top Line

Highlights from **Survey #5** include new data on how people feel about lifting restrictions and their advice to leaders.

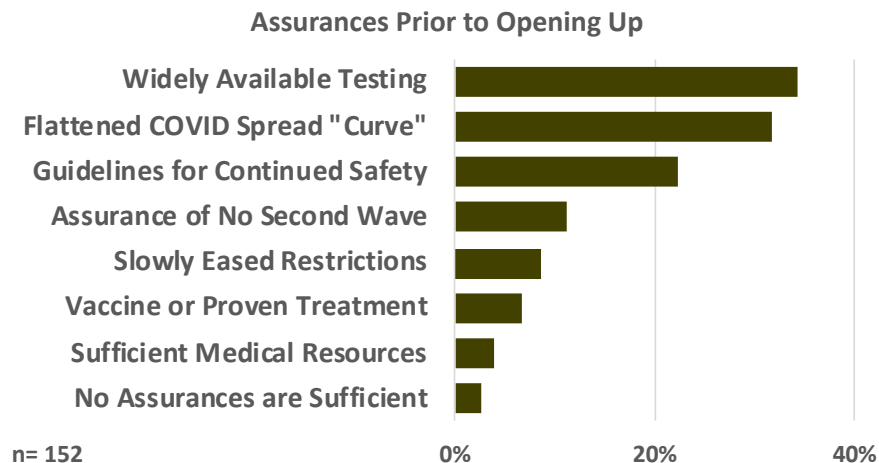
- **85%** of respondents **think the restrictions** in their area **are about right**.
- Respondents are **concerned about opening up too soon**:
 - » *“My biggest fear would be that we loosen restrictions following this first wave and put ourselves at increased risk for the second, third, etc. waves.”*
- They want **assurances from trusted government and public health leaders on the speed and safety of easing restrictions**:
 - *“That easing of restrictions would be done extremely slowly and at the first sign of an increase in new cases, they be reinstated. The virus is not gone.”*
- People will make their own decisions about when they feel is safe to move from self-isolation and self-protective behaviours. The two critical questions: **“Are We Safe?”** and **“Can We Trust You?”**
 - *“I will have to be vigilant to keep distancing and hand hygiene for my own sake. The virus isn’t gone to be gone.”*
- In **Survey #6** we are interested learning what people are thinking about plans to loosen restrictions and how it is changing their behaviour. [Everyone is welcome to participate](#).

Assurances of Safety

What would you want to be assured of before officials begin to loosen restrictions?

Respondents emphasized that opening things up must be done “gradually” and “carefully”.

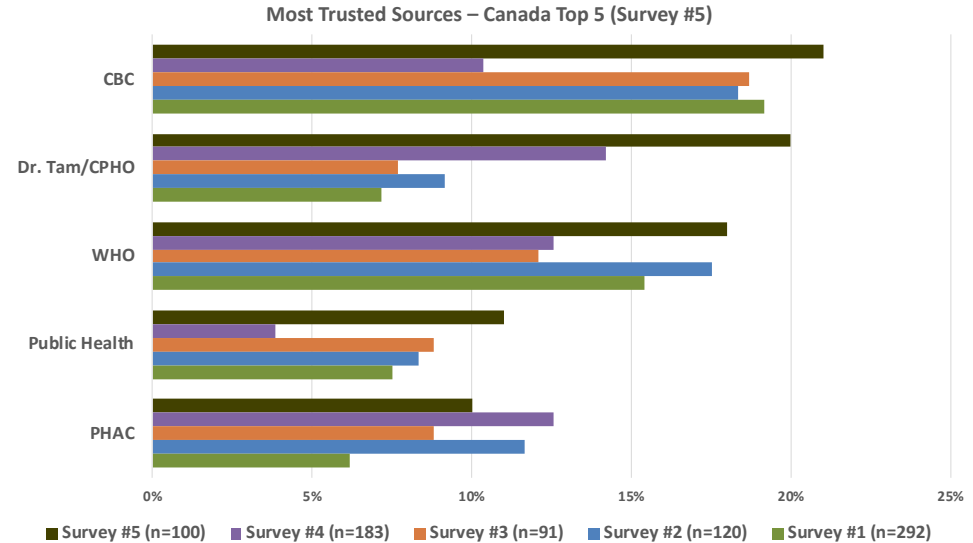
- They want the leaders they trust to assure them of the availability of :
 - » Widely available testing
 - » A flattened curve of COVID spread, and
 - » Guidelines for continued safety
- And they want assurances that government and health experts have made measured decisions based on facts and future considerations:
 - » *“That the potential loss of life has been fully considered prior to easing restrictions ... that should COVID-19 begin spreading rapidly again, government will not hesitate to put us into lockdown again.”*



Trusted Sources

Trust has a significant influence on people's judgment, decision making and behaviour.

- Over the past five weeks the most trusted sources of information on the pandemic in Canada have been relatively consistent.
- The trusted sources word clouds can be found at the end of the presentation on slides 28 and 30.

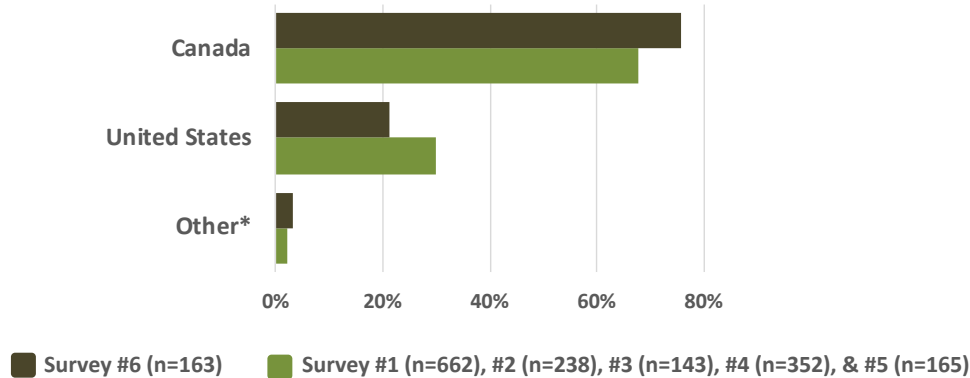


- In the US, **Dr. Anthony Fauci and CDC** are most frequently cited as trusted sources, followed by WHO, State Governments (and their governors) and the New York Times and CNN.
- Again this week, **virtually all survey respondents say they are doing what their public health and government leaders have asked them to do**. They are trusting that leaders will make careful and appropriate decisions about opening up jurisdictions in a way that keeps people safe. **They are watching** and paying close attention to leaders' behaviour.

Survey Overview

Survey Responses

- » COVID-19 Coping Survey #5 was active from April 20 through April 26, 2020.
- » **167 people responded** in total. Participation was limited to people 18 and over.
- » **67% of respondents had participated in previous surveys.** 33% were new participants this week.



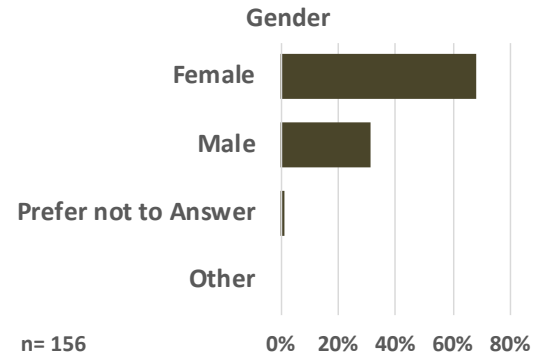
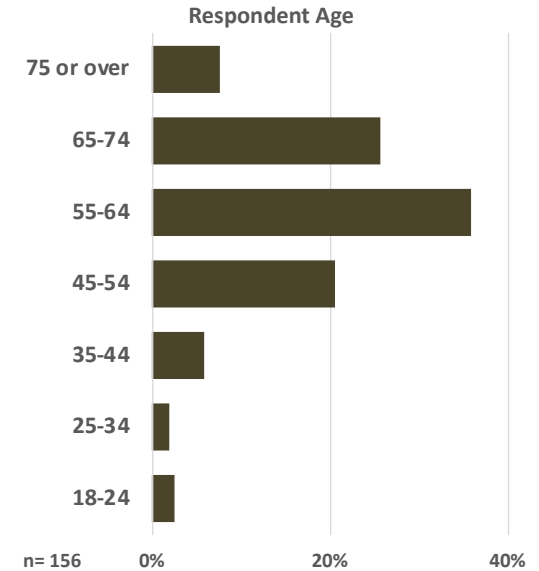
* Other countries represented in Survey #5 include:

- Bangladesh, Norway, Hong Kong, Bermuda, 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 #5 Highlights



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

- Respondents continue to describe their mood using a wide range of terms, with “tired” the most frequent word used; “fine”, “okay”, “good” and “frustrated” are also in the top 5. While many respondents are positive, some are still using terms like “anxious”, “uncertain” and “discouraged”.

April 20 - 26



* Word cloud from Survey #1 included at end of presentation for comparison.

COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #5 Highlights

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Notable Changes in the Past Week

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

- **Some expressed increasing frustration with government policies and decision-making related to the pandemic and to reopening the economy:**
 - » *“Impatience with “one size fits all” approach to the shutdowns.”*
 - » *“A recognition that there is no easy or early way out of this mess. Case/hospitalization data that is FAR UNDER government predictions - we have been conned.”*
 - » *“More push to open things up, in my home state especially and others, but more push back than expected from science-oriented majority.”*
- **Some are more anxious, “overwhelmed” and “worried” about next steps:**
 - » *“People are wearing down. They are getting antsy sheltering in place. They're tired.”*
 - » *“Everyone is hitting that “wall” men & women. For many the stress & pressures are usually solvable, solved or shared. The first four weeks have gone, perhaps more like a “who could hold your breath the longest” contest. These next 4-6 weeks and then the slow opening, whenever that happens, will be difficult in new ways. This is not solvable in my kitchen. I have to find out & then remind myself everyday what I can control.”*

Notable Changes in the Past Week

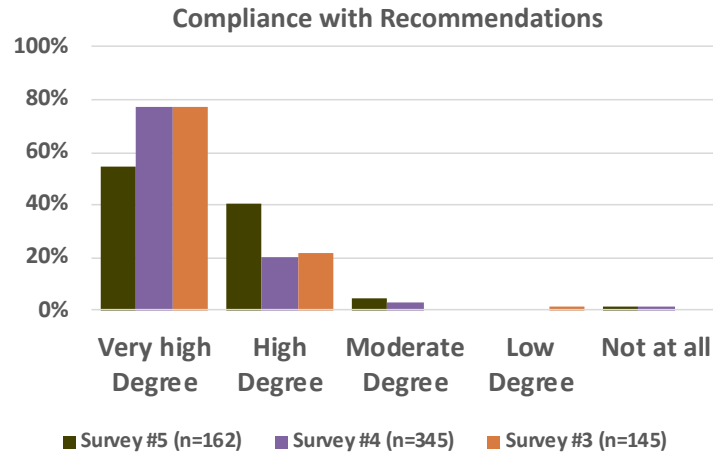
What are the biggest changes you've noticed around you in the past week (in people, places, businesses, government, etc.)?

- **Some are more hopeful, positive and calm:**
 - » *“Signs that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”*
- **Changes (increases and decreases) in social distancing and mask wearing:**
 - » *“People in my area are really starting to appreciate the seriousness of the virus. Social distancing, wearing masks etc. has really taken hold in the community.”*
 - » *“People are starting to get tired of social isolation, and I feel might be taking more risks in gathering with friends and family.”*
- **Changes in businesses and at stores, redesigning themselves to address needs:**
 - » *“Cancellation of appointments that are not emergency related: i.e. eye exam, dental exam and cleaning, hearing test and doctor appointment.”*
 - » *“It was my first visit to the larger grocery store. It is so different now. People line up in 6-foot section lines outside the store. Only a few people let in at a time by security. Direction arrows in the aisles. Wipe down self check stations by staff after every customer. So sad shopping now.”*
- **“More grim news” about the economy, layoffs, and pay cuts:**
 - » *“Business is struggling to stay afloat.”*

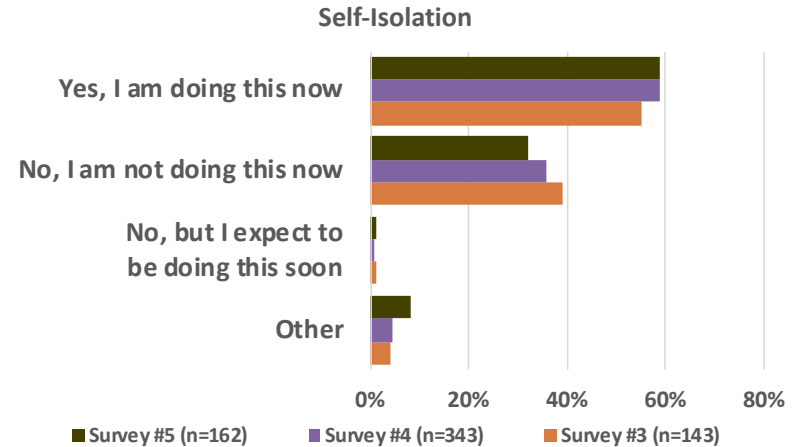
“Stay at Home”, “Shelter in Place” Orders

- Nearly all respondents (93%) reported some form of “stay at home” order in their area now and are self-reporting a very high or high degree of compliance. Many also report going beyond the recommendations and are “self-isolating”.

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



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



* New/modified questions in Survey #3

COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #5 Highlights

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Current Level of Restrictions – About Right

- **Nearly all respondents (85%) characterized the level of restrictions in there area as “About Right”. They said:**
- **Important to stop the spread and prevent a second wave:**
 - » *“Health, safety and containing the spread is still most important action.”*
 - » *“We need to stay home to ensure the pandemic doesn't spread here – I don't think we have the capacity to address it if it does.”*
- **Restrictions are working, we're flattening the curve and hospitals have not been “overburdened”:**
 - » *“I think a shift either way would be unwise. Too strict and people disobey, too loose and our numbers are likely to rise.”*
 - » *“The mitigation measures seem to be working. We have flattened the curve. There are some new cases but it's not growing exponentially.”*
- **Restrictions are easy to follow/comply with:**
 - » *“Easy enough to cope, best long-term outcome.”*
 - » *“They are reasonable and I have absolutely no problem adhering to them.”*

Current Level of Restrictions – Too Strict

- Those who feel that the restrictions are too strict, said ...
- **Open parks and walking paths:**
 - » *“Closing parks for a few people breaking the rules is like closing a highway because a few cars are speeding. Not constructive. Seems punitive.”*
 - » *“The parks are all closed. It’s difficult to walk a dog on the streets because there are many others doing the same.”*
- **Allow more businesses to stay open and hospitals to resume duties:**
 - » *“More business should have been allowed to stay open.”*
 - » *Our hospitals have tons of empty beds while people are forced to wait much longer than usual for elective surgeries and other needed hospital services.”*
- **Others questioned the need for restrictions:**
 - » *“We are all going to get the virus in the end and so all of these measures are a bit of overkill. I would rather get the virus now and be done with it whatever the outcome.”*
 - » *“Pandemic data does not support the story line that Covid-19 is anything more than a nasty new flu bug. I’m obliged to think this because comparative data with other flu seasons and pandemics including H1N1 and SARS are not being proactively shared.”*

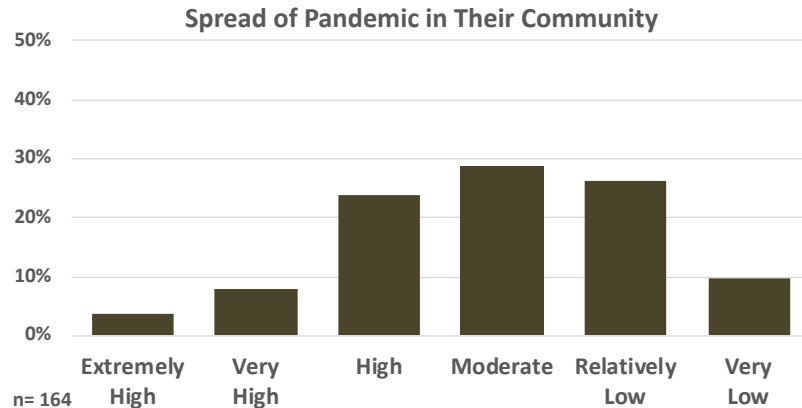
Current Level of Restrictions – Too Loose

- **Those who felt that the restrictions are too loose, often noted a lack of compliance and need for stricter enforcement:**
 - » *“I think that people are perceiving these restrictions as simply recommendations, stricter guidelines and the threat of legitimate punishment for breaking these rules is the only thing I think will keep people from worsening the outbreak. Stricter restrictions will make people understand the severity of the situation we are faced with.”*
 - » *“People still gather openly. This caused risk to themselves but by extension everyone else as well.”*
 - » *“I have business competitors that are not complying and they are not held accountable.”*
 - » *“The cases are spreading through grocery stores, liquor stores, bus travel. There are still too many people out and about.”*
 - » *“The [local superstore] is not disinfecting carts and allowing people to bypass lineups and security ignoring.”*

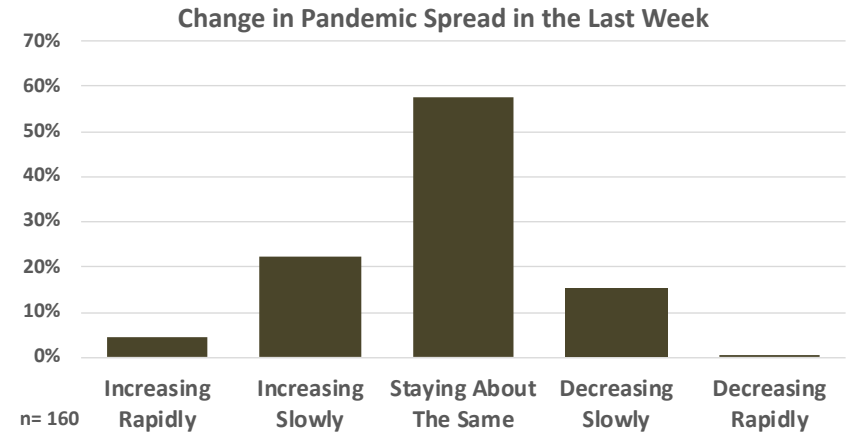
Covid-19 in Their Community

- When asked about the level of impact of COVID-19 in their community respondents reported a wide range, then reported that the level of impact is “staying about the same” as the previous week.

*How would you rate the level of impact of the pandemic on your community this week?**



*How has the level of impact changed in the last week?**



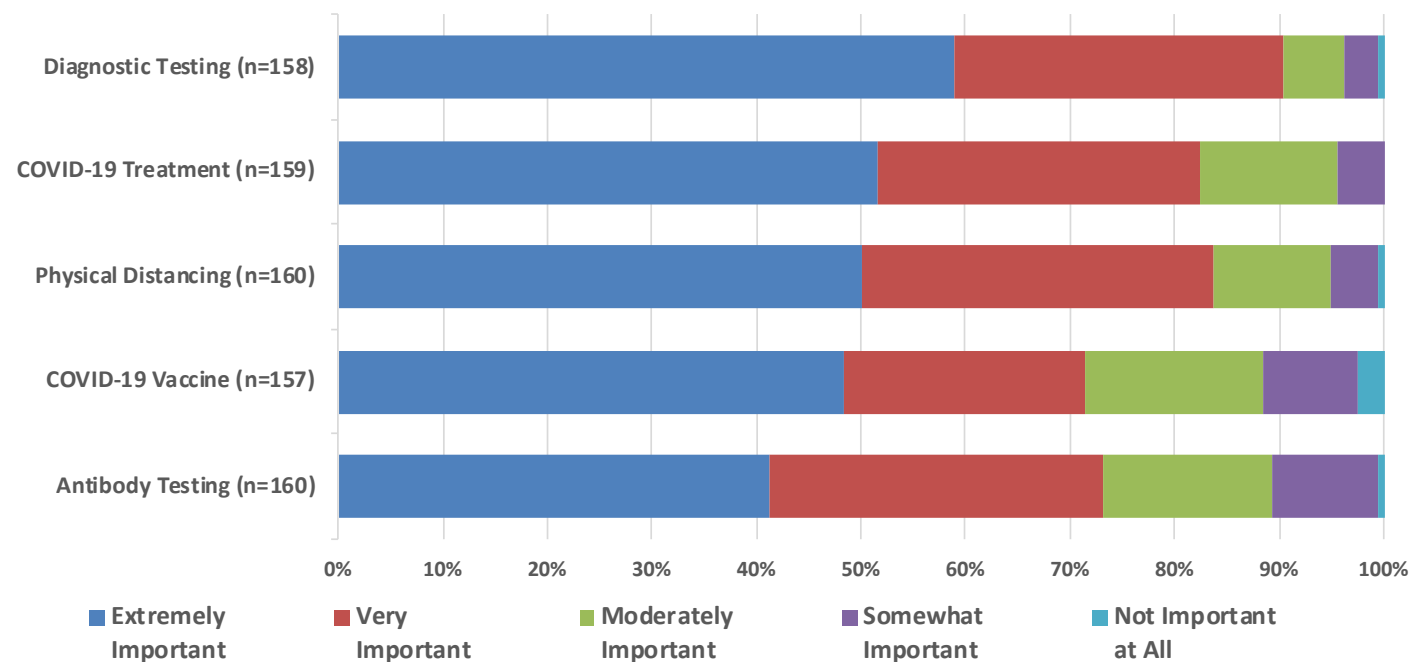
* New/modified questions in Survey #5

[COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #5 Highlights](#)

Assurances Prior to Easing Restrictions

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?

- For the first time we asked about easing restrictions.



Assurances Prior to Easing Restrictions

What would you want to be assured of before officials begin to loosen restrictions?

- **Wide-spread testing and contact tracing:**

- » *“That there is sufficient testing available for everyone to be tested multiple times if necessary. And that accurate statistics and information are readily available to the public.”*
- » *“That adequate monitoring, tracking and testing procedures are in place.”*

- **Assurance that the curve has flattened and there is a “consistent downward trend” in new cases:**

- » *“Consistently no new cases in my city for at least 2 weeks.”*
- » *“That infections are in decline, fewer new cases and fewer hospitalizations and deaths.”*

Assurances Prior to Easing Restrictions

- **Clear guidelines to assure personal and community safety, including for businesses, travel, social and public places:**
 - » *“That the risk of contracting the virus is low and that businesses/organizations are still taking precautions like cleaning and sanitizing regularly.”*
 - » *“That the distance people travel would be restricted. As in 100 km or 200 km. No travel to the US or outside Canada for a while longer.”*
 - » *“That any business that re-opens is doing so with a government approved plan for protecting all workers and customers.”*
- **Assurance that there will not be a spike or second wave:**
 - » *“That we don’t cause a second wave of the virus resulting in a longer pandemic.”*
 - » *“That there will not be a big spike and control will be maintained.”*
- **Assurance that the easing of restrictions will be “gradual and slow.”**
 - » *“That it needs to be done gradually with constant monitoring of possible increases.”*
 - » *“That easing of restrictions would be done extremely slowly and at the first sign of an increase in new cases, they be reinstated. The virus is not gone.”*

Assurances Prior to Easing Restrictions

- **Availability of a “proven effective treatment” and a vaccine:**
 - » *“There is a vaccine, otherwise it will peak again.”*
- **Assurance that medical resources will be sufficient to handle any additional cases or outbreak:**
 - » *“Room in hospitals and enough ventilators if I get really sick.”*
 - » *“That there is a sufficient public health infrastructure in place to deal with increases in infection, if that happens. Right now, the testing capacity is clearly insufficient, and I don't know how well the hospitals would deal with an unexpected surge in serious cases.”*
- **A few commented that nothing would give them assurance that restrictions can be eased:**
 - » *“I don't think there will be an assurance. I will have to be vigilant to keep distancing and hand hygiene for my own sake. The virus isn't going to be gone.”*

Thoughts about Wearing Masks

- Even as restrictions are eased, there will likely be many recommendations like wearing masks that may will continue. When asked about wearing masks, most respondents said that they were wearing masks consistently or sometimes.
- When asked to describe their thoughts on wearing masks, many characterized them as “helpful”, “important” and “necessary”:
 - » “Must do!”
 - » “If it helps slow the infection rate then it is the right thing to do.”
 - » “I feel more protected. They say it protects others but it gives me a sense of security.”
 - » I keep hearing that they protect others, but not the person wearing the mask. I feel it does protect the mask wearer, at least for me, I’m more mindful of touching my face.”



Thoughts about Wearing Masks

- **Not helpful/unnecessary:**

- » *“Not necessary. If you are not feeling well, you shouldn’t be out of your home.”*
- » *“Probably a waste of time if you were already following the other rules. Curve was very, very flat without this added restriction.”*
- » *“I think all they are doing is providing some peace of mind for those who are most paranoid about the virus.”*
- » *“Masks don’t protect me, and those that are wearing them move around people in grocery stores as if their mask makes them invulnerable.”*

- **Uncomfortable, “irritating”, hard to breathe:**

- » *“They fog up my glasses, but it makes sense. It is easier to do when you see other people doing it as well.”*
- » *“I have severe claustrophobia and can’t wear a mask.”*
- » *“They’re not fun, but it’s not too horrible to wear them. They do tend to fog up my glasses and thus are a little inconvenient.”*

Thoughts about Wearing Masks

- **Mask wearing depends on activity:**

- » *“I hardly go out and it depends where I go. Walking along the river doesn't merit a mask but going to the post office does.”*
- » *“I am doing this when at a grocery store or pharmacy to protect others and likely will when on the subway, in an Uber, taxi or other enclosed public space when they open.”*
- » *“If I'm out in public in closer contact with others (e.g., grocery store, pharmacy, delivering something to a senior, etc.), I will wear a mask. If I am in my vehicle or walking outside practicing physical distancing, I will not wear a mask.”*

- **Not easily accessible, “hard to come by”:**

- » *“They are not easy to find. Have to get creative to get masks.”*

What are you most grateful for today?

- **“Family”, “health”, “friends”, “home” and “work”** have consistently been most important over the past 5 weeks.

April 20 - 26



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 is by far the most frequent**
 - » *“Having a nice family dinner with the extended family.”*
 - » *“I need to see people who matter to me.”*
 - » *“Reconnecting with friends and family in physical visits – Zoom calls are fine, but I miss the hugs!”*
- Dining out
- Physical interaction – “Hugging”
- 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.
- Getting a hair cut and having nails done, getting the dog groomed
- Going to events and movies
- Returning to work
- Returning to “normal life”
- Returning to school, kids’ programs, daycare
- Returning to religious institution (church, synagogue, mosque etc.)
- Shopping

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?

- **In Week 5, taking care of yourself physically (exercise, get fresh air, drink water) and mentally (meditate, relax) was mentioned most frequently:**
 - » *“Don't pressure yourself. Expect highs and lows - it is normal. Get fresh air every day.”*
 - » *“Focus on yourself. It's why the virus is here: to slow us down and become introspective but the average joe won't get that.”*
 - » *“Get outside, go for walks and enjoy the outdoors. It's important to tune out for a while from all the news and information that's flooding our way. As well, take time to appreciate the quieter time with family.”*
- **Staying connected and reaching out to others was recommended almost as frequently:**
 - » *“Live, love and laugh whenever you can...even virtually”*
 - » *“Be positive, hopeful, kind and grateful. Pray for yourself and others. Trust.”*

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**:
 - » *“Great idea to have to articulate thoughts. I am interested to see if in fact there will be a new normal or if people will just drift back to the old way of doing business.”*
 - » *“This survey is thought-provoking and is helpful for me to do a “wellness check” with myself. Some days are more manageable than others.”*
 - » *“Thanks for the opportunity to vent; I think taking the public's temperature is an excellent idea, provided trends are being shared with those most in the need to know...and we all know who they are. Would be even better if they responded and you published how our feedback is having an impact. This should not just be an academic exercise.”*
 - » *“It’s interesting how my POV is changing over time.”*

Supplemental Results

Survey Overview

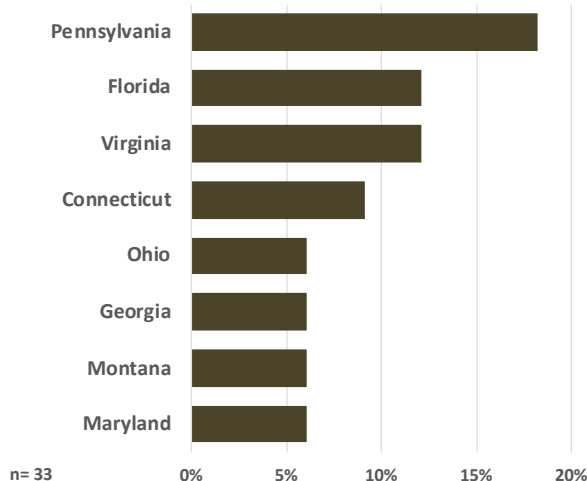
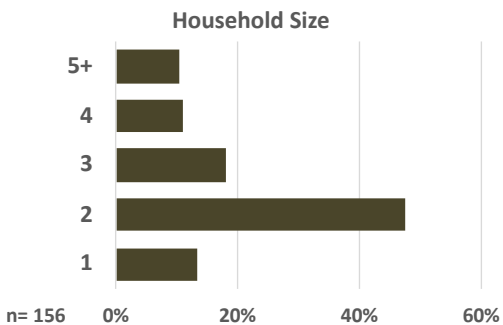
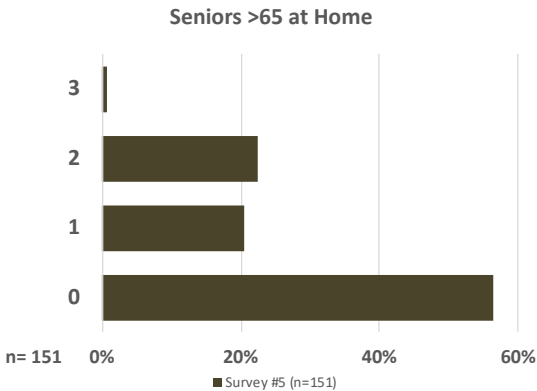
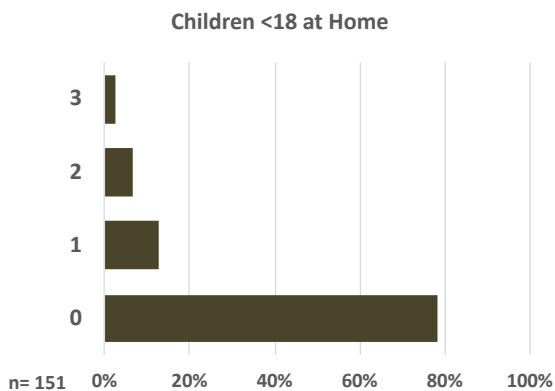
▪ Survey Responses

- » COVID-19 Coping Survey #5 was active from April 20 through April 26, 2020.
- » **167 people responded substantively**. Participation was limited to people 18 and over.
- » **67% of respondents had participated in previous surveys**. 33% were new participants this week.
- » **Nearly 1600 respondents over the past 5 weeks**

▪ Survey Sample

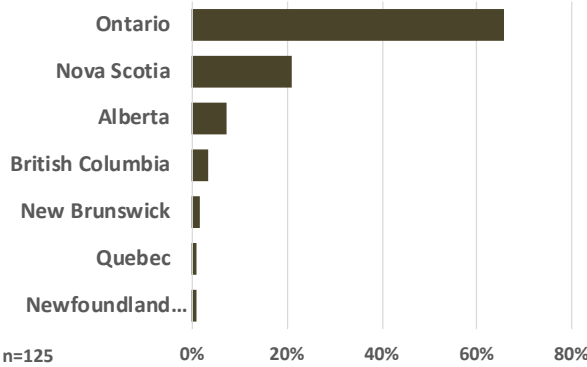
- » Survey participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling.
- » The survey was promoted through various avenues starting with our friends, families and professional colleagues via email, LinkedIn, Twitter and other platforms. People were asked to share the survey invitation with 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 #5



Other states represented in Survey #5 include:

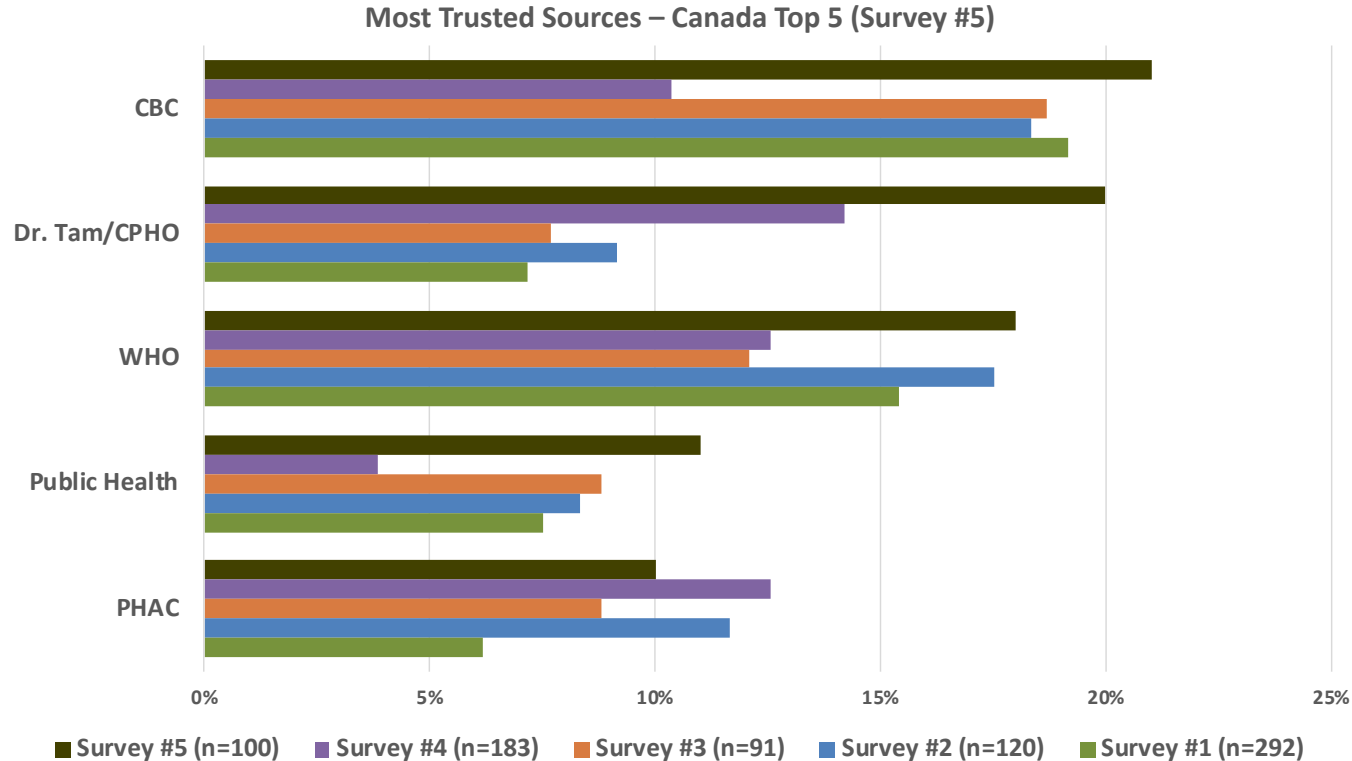
- Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Wisconsin



Trusted Sources – Canadian Respondents (Surveys #1- #5 combined)

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

- Comparing the most trusted sources over our 5 surveys ...



Trusted Sources – US Respondents (Surveys #1 - #5 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.

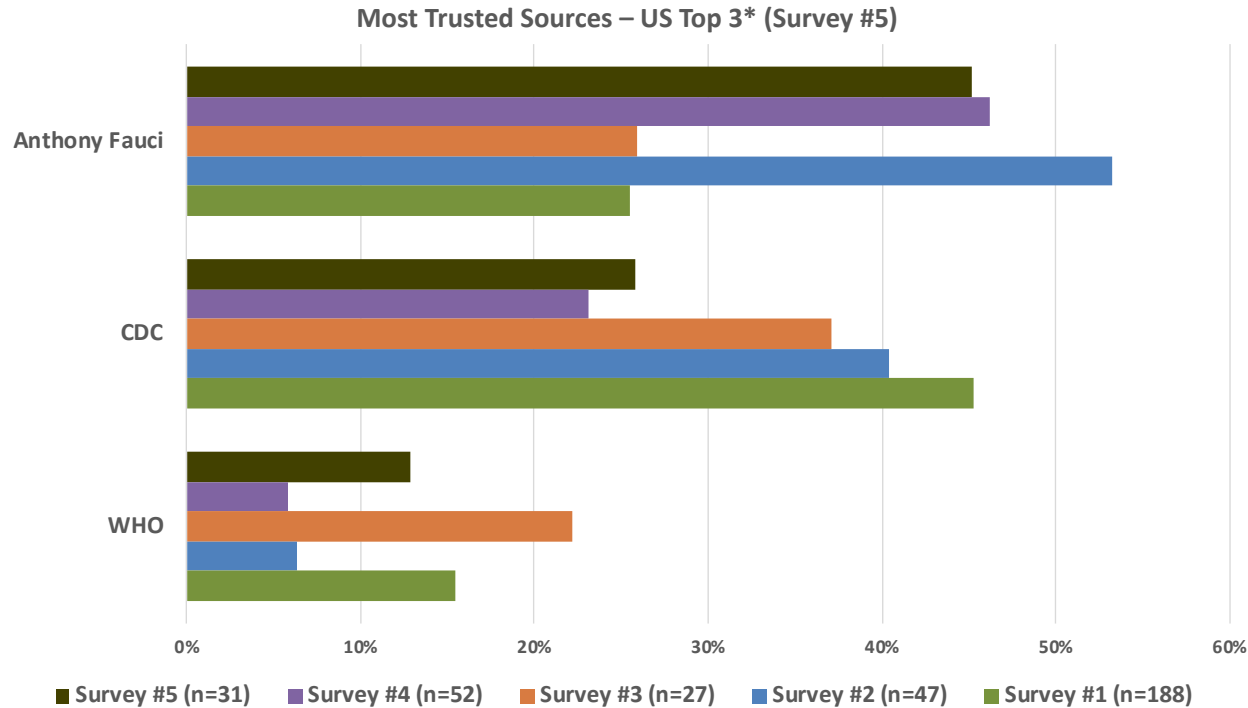
March 13 -
April 26



Trusted Sources – US Respondents

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

- Comparing the most trusted sources over our 5 surveys ...



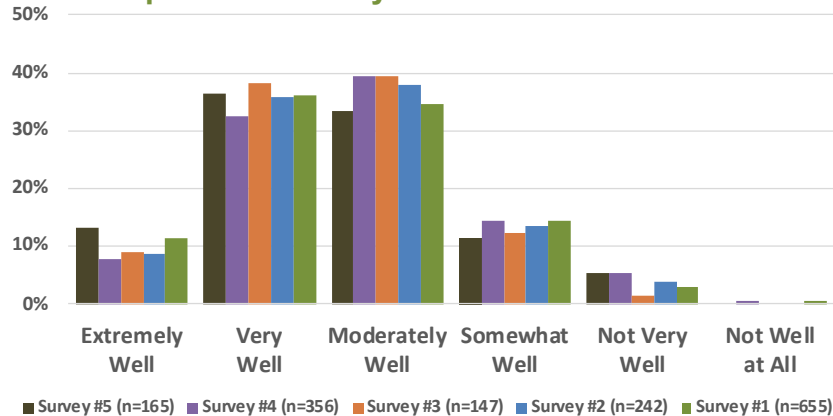
* The top 3 sources are shown for the US as they are consistently above other sources

[COVID-19 Coping Survey Week #5 Highlights](#)

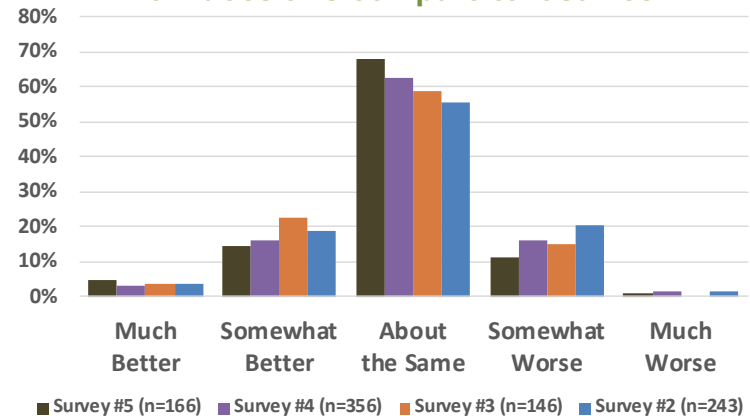
Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

- The range of how well respondents are coping has been consistent over the past 5 weeks and continues to reflect the broad range of emotions people are feeling. Most are reporting that it is unchanged from the previous week.

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

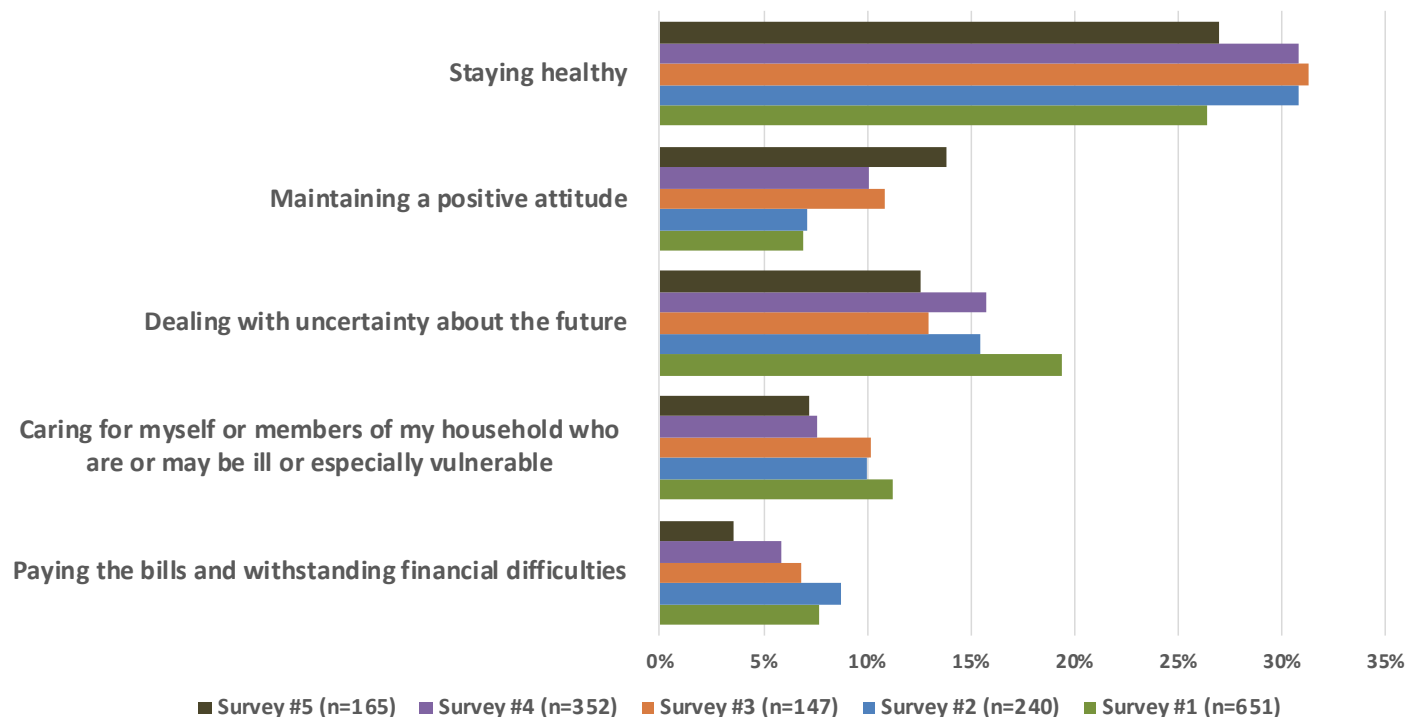


How does this compare to last week?



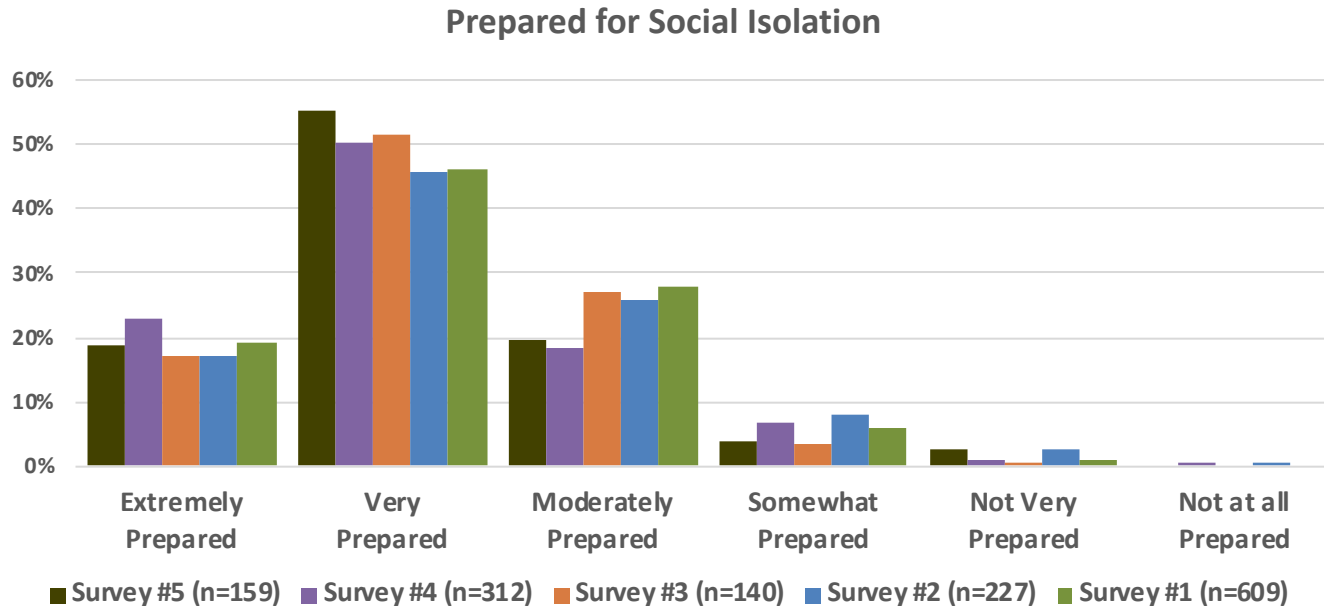
What would you say is your greatest concern today?

- Respondents' concerns continue to fluctuate, although **“staying healthy” has stayed the top concern by a large margin.** Other concerns appear to be trending higher or lower.



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



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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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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