



COVID-19 Worsening Nova Scotians' Access to Psychologists

November 30, 2020 (Halifax) – With the significant impact COVID-19 is having on the mental health of Nova Scotians, the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia (APNS), the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists (CPAP) asked Nanos Research to survey over 3,000 Canadians (including over 200 Nova Scotians) to better understand how they are managing their mental health and accessing care provided by psychologists.

“We are very concerned about the global pandemic’s impact on the mental health of Canadians, now and into the foreseeable future. Canada had a crisis of access to mental health care before the pandemic. Now, more than ever, we need to implement innovative and sustainable solutions – in the public and private sectors – to improve timely access to mental health care provided by psychologists when the people of Canada need it”, said Dr. Karen Cohen CEO of the CPA.

“While other public surveys tell us that Canadians’ mental health is in decline, we need to ensure that the public and private sectors have the policies, programs and services to meet this impending demand for mental health care”, said Mr. Christopher Cameron, CPAP Executive Director. “Psychologists are highly trained professionals who can play a vital role in assessing, treating and managing one’s mental health.”

In a pandemic environment where face to face human contact is not an option, Nova Scotians have a strong preference to be treated face-to-face by a psychologist. APNS, however, is encouraged that there is an openness to using technology.

The survey found:

Access to Care

- **65%** of Nova Scotians report that COVID-19 has had a negative (43%) or somewhat negative (22%) impact on the ability of Canadians to access mental health care provided by psychologists.
- At **78%**, the majority of Nova Scotians prefer to receive psychological services face-to-face. National results, however, show that older Canadians (55+) are more likely to say they would prefer to receive services face-to-face (**80%**) than those 35 to 54 (**70%**), and 18 to 34 (**65%**).
- **93%** of Nova Scotians report that they have not accessed services from a psychologist since the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Canada, older Canadians (55+) are less likely to report having accessed services (3%) than those 35 to 54, or 18 to 34 (11% each).
- For those Nova Scotians who accessed psychological care during COVID-19 or in the past five years, close to seven in ten say they were satisfied (**42%**) or somewhat satisfied (**25%**) with the services provided.
- **Over 90%** of Nova Scotians would be willing (**78%**) or somewhat willing (**16%**) to attend if an in-person assessment by a psychologist was needed for memory loss, stroke, brain injury, ADHD, or a learning disorder.

Virtual Care

- With physical/social distancing rules in place, over **70%** of Nova Scotians say they are willing (**47%**) or somewhat willing (**25%**) to use technology – like telemedicine – to receive mental health care provided by psychologists.

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- Of the **24%** of Nova Scotians who had concerns using technology to receive care provided by psychologists, they identified the following issues: (1) privacy/ confidentiality (**7%**); (2) barriers to establishing good communication (**3%**); (3) security/ hackers (**2%**); (4) prefer face-to-face (**4%**); (5) impersonal (**2%**); and (6) challenges using technology (**2%**).

Given the unprecedented times in which we live, we must invest in and protect our most valuable assets ... people. Our first wealth must always be our mental health. The Association is committed to working collaboratively with all levels of government, employers and insurers so that Nova Scotians receive evidence-based care where, and when, they need it.

To review the Nova Scotian results in detail, please visit our website: www.apns.ca.

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To review the Canadian results in detail – which includes a breakdown by province and territory, gender and age, please visit the Canadian Psychological Association website: www.cpa.ca.

About APNS

The Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia (APNS) is a voluntary professional organization established in 1965 to represent psychology in Nova Scotia. APNS is the only provincial association devoted to representing the needs of psychology professionals in the province of Nova Scotia. APNS promotes psychology as a profession, as a science, and as a means of promoting human welfare.

About CPA

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national voice for the science, practice and education of psychology in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians. The CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology and represents psychologists in public and private practice, university educators and researchers, as well as students. Psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, making our profession a key resource for the mental health treatment Canadians need.

About CPAP

The Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists is comprised of 13 national, provincial and territorial psychology associations, and has four objectives: facilitating knowledge exchange amongst member associations; identify and share best practices amongst member associations; advocating for the needs of Canadian psychologists and the people that they support; and develop leadership potential and capacity in Canadian psychologists.

About the Survey

Nanos Research conducted a representative online survey of 3,070 Canadians, drawn from a non-probability panel between September 25th and October 2nd, 2020. The results were statistically checked and weighted by age and gender using the latest Census information and the sample is geographically stratified to be representative of Canada. The research was commissioned by the Canadian Psychological Association and was conducted by Nanos Research.