



## PRESS RELEASE

### Mental Illnesses Increasingly Recognized as Disability, but Stigma Persists

Three-Quarters (75%) of Employed Canadians Say They Would Be Reluctant, or Would Not Admit They Were Suffering From a Mental Illness to a Boss/Co-Worker

**Toronto, ON, September 24, 2019** —More working Canadians are recognizing depression (53%, + 6 pts) and anxiety (41%, + 5 pts) as disabilities compared to last year, according to an Ipsos survey for RBC Insurance. However, the survey provides evidence that a significant stigma around mental health still exists. Three-quarters (75%) of working Canadians say they would either be reluctant to admit (48%) or would not admit (27%) to a boss or co-worker that they were suffering from a mental illness. In fact, working Canadians are three times as likely to indicate that they would not admit they were suffering from a mental illness (27%) compared to a physical illness (10%).

When asked why they are reluctant/would not admit to a mental illness, among the top reasons were:

- Believe that there is a public stigma around mental health (45%);
- Wouldn't want to be treated differently (44%);
- Wouldn't want to be judged (40%);
- And afraid of negative consequences, such as losing their job (36%).

Adding to stigmatization of mental illnesses in the workplace, half (47%) of employed Canadians say that if they admitted they were suffering from a mental illness to a boss or co-worker, they feel their ability to do their job would be questioned. An additional two in ten (20%) say they feel their boss or co-workers would look at them in a negative light or distance themselves, which is again 3 times higher than those who say this about physical illnesses (7%).

However, interestingly, in terms of their own reaction if a co-worker/boss admitted they were suffering from a mental illness, three-quarters (76%) reveal they would be completely comfortable and supportive, at par with their reaction to a physical illness (83%).

Working Canadians recognize the toll it can take to suffer from a mental illness in silence, unknown to those around them. Three-quarters (75%) believe it would have a negative impact on their own personal wellbeing, and 6 in 10 or more believe it would have a negative impact on their: relationships with family (66%), productivity at work (65%), relationships with friends (64%) and relationships with co-workers (64%).





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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between April 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019, on behalf of RBC Insurance. For this survey, a sample of 1501 employed Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all employed Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

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