



FACTUM

Despite Pandemic, Canadians Close Out 2020 With Hardy Outlook on Health, Happiness, and Financial Situation

Challenges Nonetheless Await in New Year; 4 in 10 (37%) Report Issues with Mental Health, Addiction, or Alcohol

Toronto, ON, December 30, 2020 – 2020 was the year that our lives were suddenly upended. In the rush to switch to a life spent mostly in isolation and online, jobs were lost, shops were closed, toilet paper was hoarded, and tears were shed. However, even in the face of a tumultuous year, a recent Ipsos poll done exclusively for Global News had found that Canadians' assessments of their lives have not changed much since last year. The COVID-19 pandemic may have upended our lives in a very short period of time, but it may have also helped put our lives into perspective, meaning that we might just enter 2021 with a renewed appreciation for things that we had taken for granted before.

Despite Pandemic, Majority of Canadians Report They've Come Out of 2020 Relatively Unscathed

Seemingly unflappable in the face of hardship, Canadians have a surprisingly steady outlook on how their 2020 has been. Perhaps encouraging as the country sinks deeper into a second wave of COVID-19 infections, eight in ten (80%) say that their health has been good (20% very/60% somewhat) this year (+1 from last year). Men are a little more likely to rate their health as 'very good' (23%) when compared to women (17%), as are those aged 18-34 (29% v. 17% among 35-54 and 16% among 55+). Quebecers are a little less likely to be sanguine about their physical health, with only 12% rating it as 'very good'.

More surprising is that even though the world has gone through a lot of turbulence during the past year, Canadians are also feeling happy, all things considered. Over three-quarters (78%) would rate their personal happiness as good (22% very/56% somewhat), only a one-point decrease from the same time last year. Among those aged 55+, the proportion of those who rate their personal happiness as either 'very good' or 'somewhat good' increases to 87%. This confidence is no doubt linked to this age group's relatively comfortable financial situation that has helped them weather the crisis, despite being the most at risk of having complications from COVID-19.

Swift action taken by governments, banks, and private companies at the height of the pandemic has helped stabilize in the aggregate how Canadians feel about their financial situation. Two-thirds (66%, -1) rate their financial situation as good (14% very/51% somewhat), with this proportion reaching 76% among those over 55 years. However, on the other end of the scale, those under 55 years are more likely to say that their financial situation is bad, with 14% of those aged 18-34 and 12% of those aged 35-54 saying their financial situation is 'very bad'.

However, it could very well be the case that the pandemic and subsequent economic downturn has given perspective to Canadians. With the numbers of those affected by COVID-19 climbing by the day and many still affected by job losses or layoffs, those who are lucky enough to not be seriously affected may be taking a different tone as when asked how they are doing.



FACTUM

Our Social Lives Have Taken A Hit

While video calls with loved ones and virtual happy hours have helped people cope in the absence of being able to meet up in person, there's still nothing like the real thing. A thirteen-point drop from the same time last year, 6 in 10 (60%) would rate their social life as good (13% very/46% somewhat). Nearly 2 in 10 (19%) of those aged 18-34 would also say their social life is 'very good'. However, the experience of younger Canadians when it comes to socializing runs the gamut from carefree Spring Breaker to university student diligently abiding by public health guidelines; while 18-34 year-olds are more likely than other age groups to rate their social life as excellent, they are also more likely to be on the other end of the scale and rate their social life as 'very bad' (12% among 18-34 and 11% among 35-54 v. 6% among 55+).

COVID-19 may have put a lid on Canadians' social lives, but it seems that for many, their romantic or sex lives remain stable (even with all this time spent indoors). Nearly six in ten (58%) would rate their romantic or sex lives as 'good' (16% very/32% somewhat), just a one-point decrease from last year. Relatedly, 8% say that they have either started or ended a romantic relationship over the past year—either be good or bad news, depending on the relationship. Further evidence of how important being social is to younger Canadians, this proportion rises to 15% among those aged 18-34.

Health and Well-Being: The Year of Self-Care and Coping

The fact that Canadians feel that all things considered, things generally aren't going too badly for themselves does not mean that the past year has been entirely kind to them. Three in ten (30%) Canadians say that they have gained weight in the past year, no doubt mostly a direct result of having to stay indoors for most of the year. Women (35%) are more likely than men (24%) to say that they're a little heavier in December than they were in January. Another 2 in 10 (21%) can say that they've lost weight during the past year, possibly linked to the 19% who say they've spent more time being physically active in 2020.

Long days spent indoors either in isolation or cooped up with others certainly takes its toll. Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) Canadians say they've been struggling with mental health, addiction, or alcohol in some form over the past year. Younger Canadians are more likely to say they've faced these issues (47% among 18-34 and 43% among 35-54 v. 25% among 55+). More specifically, 3 in 10 (28%) say they've struggled with their mental health, a proportion that is higher those groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic: those aged 18-34 (39%), those in households earning less than \$40,000 a year (37%), and women (32%).

With some Canadians organizing virtual happy hours with family and friends or taking to daytime drinking to cope with the stresses of the pandemic, it is not surprising that 15% of Canadians say that they've consumed more alcohol in the past year. However, for others, this extra time indoors and in isolation from others has been cited as a reason behind a spike in issues related to addiction. Even though just under 1 in 10 (7%) say they're struggling with addiction, this figure represents 2.1 million adult Canadians. This proportion reaches 15% in British Columbia, where deaths from drug overdoses have become a matter of urgent concern.



FACTUM

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between December 11-14, 2020, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all 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.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Darrell Bricker
CEO, Ipsos Global Public Affairs
+1 416 324 2001
Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com

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