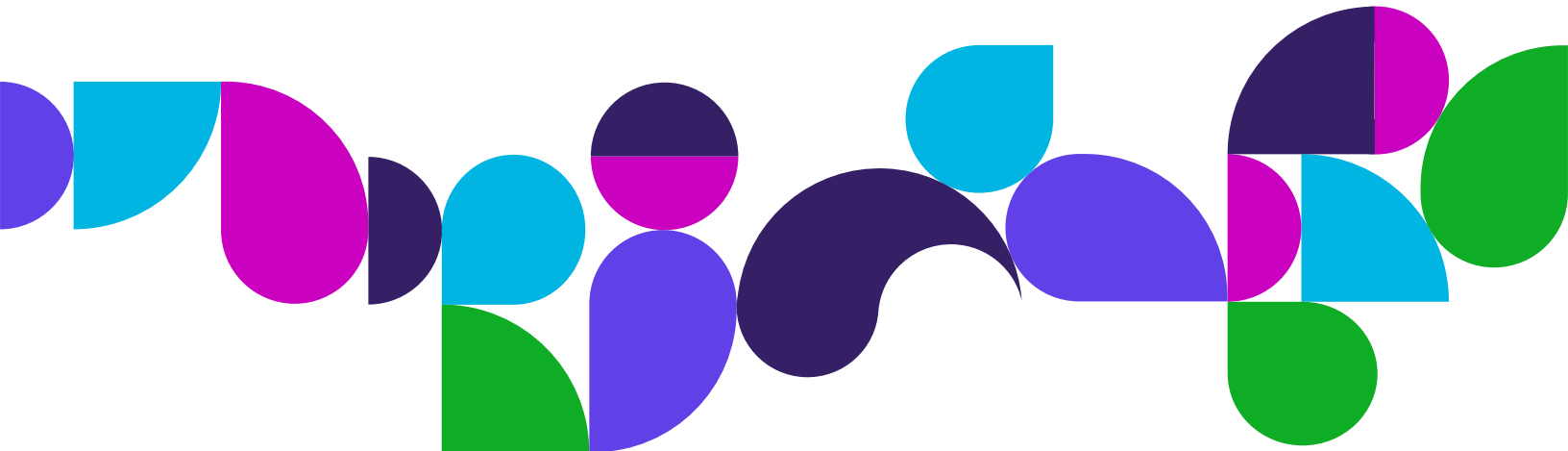




From Hurdles to Healing:

Navigating Mental Health Needs in Canada

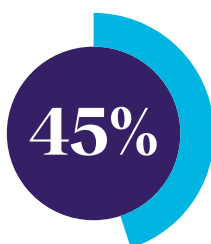


Canadians have experienced a decline in mental health and well-being in recent years. Yet, while they increasingly seek mental health support, multiple systemic obstacles impede a path to effective treatment.

In fact, one study found that among Canadians with mental health concerns, 45% said their needs were either unmet or only partially met, a sentiment that persisted for some even after receiving care.

Besides the impact of mental illness on individuals, the societal toll is also staggering; causing nearly half a million Canadians to miss work each week. In total, the economic burden of mental illness in Canada is an estimated \$51 billion per year including health care costs, lost productivity and reductions in health-related quality of life.

Recognizing the importance of better understanding the mental health care journey, Teladoc Health Canada commissioned a nationwide survey of more than 1600 Canadians. The valuable insights gleaned from this research reveal the hurdles individuals face when seeking care for their mental health needs.



**of Canadians report
their mental health
needs are not fully met**



**in annual healthcare
costs are driven by
mental illness**



KEY FINDINGS:

The Mental Health Care Experience Survey

The survey revealed that the mental health care journey is riddled with systemic barriers – and can be influenced by social determinants of health.

Consumer responses on the survey surfaced three important themes:

1. Care seeking is difficult

As mental health stigma lessens in some parts of the world, more people are feeling comfortable with seeking mental health care. Unfortunately, many emerging care seekers report struggling to navigate the mental health system because they don't know where to begin.

2. Confidence in care is mixed

Confidence in mental health diagnoses and treatment plans is lower than expected, and many Canadians report interest in obtaining a second opinion.

3. Disparities exist during their care journey

Mental health care experiences varied across age groups, gender and income levels.

Despite these reported barriers, respondents see a path forward with mental health programs and services at their workplace. According to our survey, 71% of respondents say they would be more likely to stay with an employer who fully supported their mental health needs.

7 in 10

Canadians report they would be more likely to stay with an employer who fully supported their mental health needs

A Closer Look at the Survey Findings

Care-seeking behaviour is trending

Nearly half of the survey respondents report trying to access professional mental health support in the past five years, either for themselves or a family member. More than one-fourth (27%) sought support in the past year.

Interestingly, care-seeking behaviour varies markedly by age and gender.

- Respondents under the age of 45 were most likely to report trying to access mental health support within the past year.
- Seniors are much less likely than other age groups to try accessing support.
- Women are much more likely than men to seek mental health support (51% vs. 42%, respectively).



More than 1 in 3 respondents under 45 years old tried to access mental health support within the past year



Best Practice

Since no two people are the same, it's important to offer support options that account for people's unique preferences in care delivery and providers.



Margaret's Story

Getting Help

"I credit Teladoc Health for my rehabilitation. The whole process made me feel safe, seen, and taken care of."





Finding the “right” care is difficult

While the demand for mental health services continues to grow, individuals still struggle to find the help they greatly need.

For care seekers, finding the right care at the right time, or even knowing where to begin, is a difficult step. Indeed, more than three-fourths (78%) of survey respondents who have accessed mental health support say that navigating the healthcare system to find this support was “somewhat difficult” or “very difficult”.

Level of difficulty navigating the mental health care system:

Somewhat/Very Difficult

78%

Not Difficult

18%



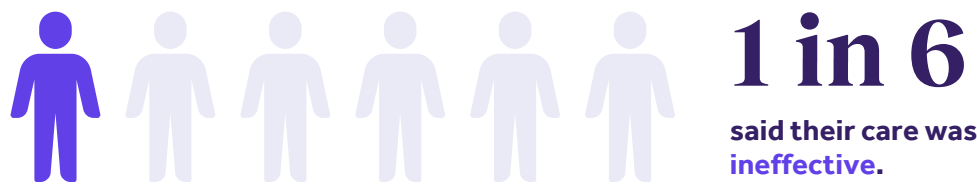
Best Practice

Human resource leaders can consider solutions that guide individuals to the right level of support upfront, adjusting recommendations as needs change. This guided approach helps people engage earlier, minimizing progression to more complex and costly conditions.

The survey also revealed a disparity in ease of access to mental health care based on income level. Respondents with household incomes of \$150,000 or higher are less likely to have difficulty accessing support for their mental health needs. Social determinants of health, such as income inequality, may contribute to this discrepancy.

Confidence in care is lower than expected

Although the majority of respondents said that the mental health support they received was at least somewhat effective...



What's driving this decidedly lukewarm reaction to the mental health care that respondents receive? The survey points to three driving forces:

1. Inability to find a healthcare professional who “helps them feel better”

Slightly more than half of respondents say that it is a struggle to find a professional who can help them feel better.



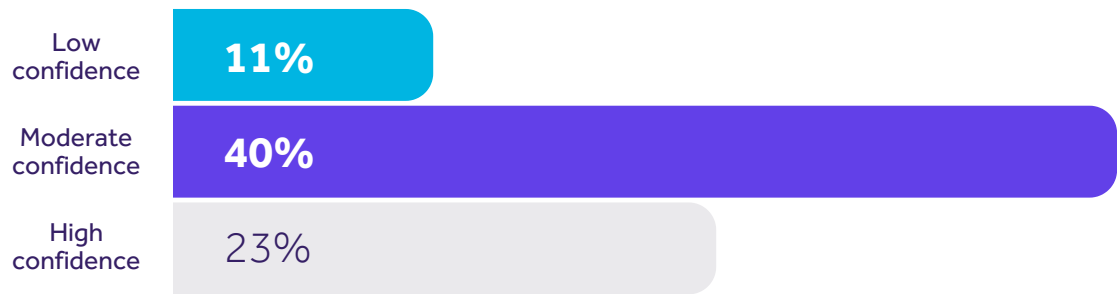
2. Confidence in diagnosis is mixed

Only 28% of respondents said they were highly confident in their diagnosis. The remaining respondents reported mixed perceptions, with a surprising 27% never receiving a formal diagnosis.



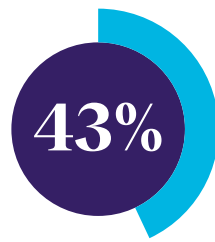
33% never received a diagnosis or were unsure/no answer.

3. Lack of confidence in treatment plan



23% never received a treatment plan.

In light of these results, it isn't surprising that survey respondents report significant interest in obtaining another opinion about their diagnosis and treatment plan. Indeed, forty-three percent who accessed mental health support say they are interested in getting a second opinion.



of respondents would be interested in having a mental health professional provide a second opinion on their mental health treatment plan and/or diagnosis

Given these results - and the current state of mental health in Canada - having dedicated and easily accessible support throughout a person's mental health journey has never been more important.



Best Practice

Human resource leaders can partner with mental health vendors who can provide solutions for members who aren't benefiting from their current care, or who may need an expert assessment of their treatment plan.



Joanna's Story

Finding the right therapist

"She had my background. She was prepared. We jumped right in that first day to working on stuff. I remember that first day having some huge breakthrough that I didn't have with my previous therapist."





INTRODUCING Mental Health Navigator

Teladoc Health provides personalized, mental health support that helps individuals find the right care and stay on the best path to recovery.

The Mental Health Navigator solution gives people the guidance they need to navigate the complex mental health system. Highly qualified mental health professionals are available to:



Assess and
diagnose a new
mental health
concern



Review an existing
diagnosis and
treatment plan



Deliver a
personalized
action plan



Provide guidance
throughout with
collaborative,
ongoing support

Employers may want to consider extending this benefit to parents and in-laws of employees as well. Our research demonstrated forty percent of retirees said it was difficult to navigate the health care system and almost a third of seniors reported they would be interested in a second mental health opinion.

When employees - and their extended families - are supported through each step in their mental health journey with accurate diagnoses and effective treatment plans, confidence builds as they progress on their road to recovery.

Participants in the Mental Health Navigator program reported:

70%

improvement in
depression, anxiety,
and stress

76%

improvement in
self-reported
productivity

80%

improvement
in diagnosis or
treatment

Enhancing mental health care access

47%

of people in the Mental Health Navigator program would not have sought treatment without the program

6 days

is the average time it takes for Teladoc Health psychiatrists to start a case, far faster than the national benchmark of 22 days.

\$170

workplace savings per virtual therapy session as part of the Mental Health Navigator program

A stepped-care approach to mental health care

There is a broad range of mental health needs across any population, but the people who need mental health care most comprise the subclinical and clinically acute side of the spectrum.



Research shows that twenty-five percent of your population are in a clinically acute stage. They have diagnosable mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. An additional 35% of your population remains in the subclinical category and are struggling with stress driven, moderate or temporary symptoms like insomnia and isolation. Together, these categories represent the majority of a given working population.

The psychology behind mental health care needs

While addressing the clinical and sub-clinical categories is vital, we know from psychology that the “spillover effect” is true: **feeling stress in one area of life spills over to other areas.**

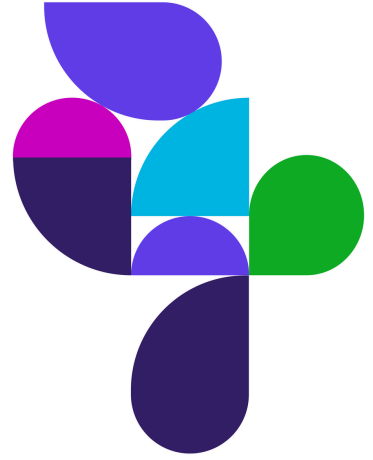
We also know that there are “crossover effects”, meaning the transmission of emotional states can take place between closely related people, which can include work colleagues or teams.

Lastly, we know that ultimately, stress opens the door to more serious mental health needs.



What can be done?

A strategy is needed that addresses the clinical population, the subclinical population, and the remaining 40% of the population who is "healthy" but benefit from good maintenance. At Teladoc Health, we've created a comprehensive stepped Mental Health program designed to meet the needs of an entire population.



Teladoc Health's Mental Health Suite

myStrength

A digital wellness and mental health program that covers the entire spectrum of care, from stress to emotional well-being, anxiety, and depression. myStrength is tailored to individual personal needs and allows for moving at a self-determined pace through engaging self-guided programs. An in-app coach is also available to assist on the wellness journey.

Mental Health Navigator

Each person's mental health care journey is unique. With personalized support that could change lives, individuals can find and stay on the right path. There is support in navigating the healthcare system, assessing and diagnosing mental health concerns, or reviewing existing diagnoses or treatment plans that may not be working or improving conditions.

Mental Health Care

Choosing a preferred psychologist or therapist for quick connection and multiple sessions becomes possible, no matter where individuals live, at a time that works with their schedule. The convenience of virtual therapy, available by video or phone, ensures secure, discreet, and confidential appointments, making treatment possible wherever individuals feel most comfortable.

Mental Health Disability Management

Ongoing disability management—connecting individuals to experts and providing rapid access to specialized care for an easier return-to-work process. This comprehensive approach encompasses collaboration with healthcare professionals and ensures that the right strategies and resources are implemented to foster optimal recovery.

With our stepped care model, we're really capturing everyone in the population and targeting spillover and crossover with every member who is served. **Plus, employers can choose to extend benefits to parents and in-laws.**

Enhancing Employee Wellbeing

THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mental and emotional wellness play a crucial role in workplace engagement and productivity. A support program can improve employee retention and foster a supportive workplace culture, ultimately resulting in significant long-term benefits for employees.



Employee & Family Assistance Program

Teladoc Health's Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) offers comprehensive support for employees, addressing mental health, legal, and life management issues to enhance workplace productivity and employee wellbeing.

24/7 Crisis Support

Immediate access to trained counsellors is available around the clock. This ensures that employees and their families have constant support during crises, offering a safety net when it's needed most.

Mental Health Care & Counselling

Confidential and accessible short-term counselling for a variety of personal and professional issues. Assistance is available through phone or video consultations, helping employees navigate the complexities of life with professional guidance.

myStrength: Digital Wellbeing

Guidance in managing life's stresses with myStrength's comprehensive digital wellness programs. The program contains over 1,100 self-guided resources for managing stress, depression, sleep issues, and other mental health challenges.

Legal and Financial Support

Confidential navigation to legal and financial support. This service provides peace of mind and allows employees to focus more fully on their personal and professional responsibilities.

Life Management Services

Personalized resources and referrals for local services, including child and eldercare and relocation services. This holistic approach ensures that every aspect of employees' welfare is supported, fostering a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

A well-balanced work and personal life can significantly reduce stress, prevent burnout, and improve overall mental and physical health. Recognizing this, our EFAP is committed to providing resources and tools to help employees manage their professional responsibilities and personal lives more effectively.

By integrating the Employee & Family Assistance Program, employers can promote a culture of care and support that significantly benefits employees and their families.



Conclusion

The pandemic led to a significant increase in demand for mental health services, severely straining the Canadian mental health care system. Now, even as the pandemic subsides, the need for care remains high. Our research, along with other studies, underscores that Canadians are overwhelmed trying to navigate the mental health care maze, and struggle to find the 'right' care. The findings suggest a need to bring a complete mental health care solution to the workplace.

Because each person's mental health journey is unique, Teladoc Health has solutions to support them in every step of the way.

Study Methodology

The survey was conducted online and via mobile devices between April 25 – May 3, 2023 using Modus Research's Modalis Public Opinion panel. Margin of error for this survey: plus or minus 2.4% at a 95% confidence interval.

Sample Size and Selection

The study included a total of 1,631 participants. The sample was gathered from various regions in Canada, focusing mainly on Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

Demographic Breakdown

Gender:

- 63% men
- 37% women

Age Groups:

- <25: 0%
- 25-34: 10%
- 35-44: 17%
- 45-54: 17%
- 55-64: 25%
- 65-74: 23%
- 75+: 6%

Regional Distribution:

- Ontario: 44%
- Quebec: 19%
- Alberta: 14%
- British Columbia: 12%
- Manitoba: 3%
- Nova Scotia: 3%
- Saskatchewan: 3%
- Newfoundland: 1%
- New Brunswick: 1%
- Prince Edward Island: 1%
- Others: 0%

Note on Data Presentation

The graphics and charts in this paper may not include small samples; therefore, the percentages presented may not sum up to 100%.



Learn more at TeladocHealth.ca

About Teladoc Health: Teladoc Health is empowering all people everywhere to live healthier lives by transforming the healthcare experience. Recognized as the world leader in whole-person virtual care, Teladoc Health leverages clinical expertise, advanced technology and actionable data insights to meet the evolving needs of consumers and healthcare professionals.