

COVID-19

AND

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Impact



A series of national polls launched by Mental Health Research Canada found that in December 2020, rates of anxiety had more than quadrupled and depression more than doubled since the onset of the pandemic.

Importantly, these high levels of anxiety and depression have fluctuated only marginally over the course of the pandemic as COVID-19 numbers have changed, restrictions have been adjusted and/or eased, and vaccines have been rolled-out.

POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

Early data also suggests that stress and isolation associated with the pandemic have contributed to an increase in psychological distress

Impact on Marginalized Populations

It is important to understand that there are significant differences in how marginalized groups have experienced the pandemic, as racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and other structures of oppression and discrimination intersect with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Xenophobia and **bigotry** have resulted in individuals of Asian descent facing an increase in **anti-Asian racism** since the onset of the pandemic, which is detrimental to both mental and physical safety.

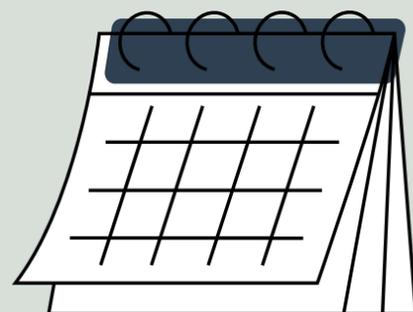
Financially disadvantaged families are more significantly impacted by workplace closures, and may have **limited access to important resources** such as internet connections.

Due to restrictions and lockdowns, some people have been exposed to **increasingly unsafe and harmful situations in their home.**

Unequal disruption to work-family balance for **women and femme-presenting** family members has been reported as compared to men or male-presenting individuals.

Creating New Routines

Students have found it even more difficult to maintain work/life balance than usual as a result of moves to virtual, at-home, and/or hybrid settings. Achieving a healthy balance between work and your personal life can help reduce stress, anxiety, and exhaustion, and improve productivity and satisfaction.



Creating new routines as we move out of the pandemic is essential. Some tips include:

- Daily structure (e.g., waking up at a certain time, completing a usual pattern of activities to get ready for the day)
- Maintaining physical health routines, like getting rest, eating balanced meals, and getting active
- Make time for social connections, either in-person or online
- Maintain a work/life balance between your academic obligations and daily self-care
- Incorporate a balance of mastery and pleasure-based activities

Mastery-Based Activities

Mastery-based activities provide us with a sense of achievement and accomplishment and might include school, work, chores (e.g., cleaning the house), and cooking.

Pleasure-Based Activities

Pleasure-based activities provide us with an intrinsic sense of happiness. These might include socializing, exercising, setting aside time for hobbies, and going outside.

Maintaining a Work/Study-Life Balance

- 1 What will give me a sense of accomplishment?
- 2 What can I do just for myself? What will make me feel good?
- 3 Be specific and concrete: What will you be doing, and where? When will you be doing it and for how long?

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