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Baseline and Post-Campaign ACET Survey for the COVID-19 Mental Health Campaign

Executive Summary

Prepared for Health Canada

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Colledge".

Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs



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March 2022

This public opinion research report presents the methodology of the Baseline and Post-Campaign ACET Survey for the COVID-19 Mental Health Campaign online survey conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. The baseline survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,137 Canadians ages 18+ between December 10th, 2021, and January 10th, 2022, and the post-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,101 Canadians ages 18+ between March 2nd and March 16th, 2022.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Sondage de référence et post campagne OÉCP pour la campagne COVID-19 sur la santé mentale.

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Executive Summary

1. Background

1.1 Summary Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on mental health across the population, with concerns about the virus itself compounded by impacts on work and routines, financial stress, social isolation, substance use, anxiety and depression, grief and bereavement, and reduced access to services and supports.

In light of ongoing uncertainties, as well the lasting effects of the pandemic thus far, it is imperative that we continue to offer ongoing mental health and substance use supports to those who need it. The effects of the pandemic have been higher among certain populations, including youth, seniors, parents, Indigenous Peoples, and ethnic and racialized populations, as observed by Statistics Canada, leading Canadian health organizations and associations, academia, research organizations, and governments at all levels. Even prior to the pandemic, many of these at-risk groups reported lower rates of positive mental health and higher rates of mental illness than the general population.

In response, Health Canada (HC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) launched a national awareness ad campaign to support the mental health of these Canadians most affected by COVID-19. The campaign aimed to drive these audiences to Canada.ca/covid-mental-health to motivate interest and engagement with free resources, tools and professional support services.

2. Purpose of the Research

2.1 Research Objectives

The objective of the research was to assess the impact of the *COVID-19 Mental Health Campaign* in raising awareness of the online health-related resources that at-risk and vulnerable Canadians (5 groups) could immediately access to get help. The research involved a baseline survey to collect information on status of awareness and use of these resources prior to the campaign and a post-campaign survey to measure the impact of the campaign on awareness and usage.

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- Determine if people have seen the advertisements associated with the campaign
- Determine where the ads have been seen
- Measure recall of specific elements of the campaign
- Measure awareness and usages of mental health supports
- Measure visits to the campaign website
- Identify attitudinal and behavioural changes as a result of the advertising campaign



The results of this research will allow HC and PHAC to evaluate the performance of this campaign. It will also help HC and PHAC to improve any future phases of the campaign (or similar).

The Government of Canada's Policy on Communications and Federal Identity requires the evaluation of all advertising campaigns exceeding \$1 million in media through the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET).

Target Audience

The target audience of the research was as follows:

- Canadians 18+

The target audiences of the campaign represent five (5) at-risk and vulnerable groups of Canadians.

1. **Youth and young adults (a18-34)** who are the most vulnerable age group to a decline in mental health because of the pandemic
2. **Parents with school aged children (a5-17)** who are facing income loss, increased caregiving, work disruptions, family health stresses, and more
3. **Seniors (a65+)** who represent the largest number of COVID-19 deaths since the start of the pandemic to present
4. **Indigenous Peoples** who report declining mental health and substance use issues
5. **Ethnic and Racialized Populations** who report poor overall mental health and are increasingly needing access to easy-to-understand COVID-19 supports and services.

3. Methodology

3.1 Online Sample

This project involved two (2) online surveys – a baseline survey and a post-campaign survey. Both surveys were executed online using a non-probability online panel. This is the standard approach for all Government of Canada advertising evaluation surveys. The initial baseline survey was conducted before the campaign launched and the post-campaign survey was conducted following the completion of the campaign.

Respondents for the survey were drawn from the Ipsos' i-Say panel and a trusted partner panel vendor, Dynata. The baseline survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,137 Canadians ages 18+ and the post-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,101 Canadians ages 18+. Survey respondents took the survey in the official language of their choice, either English or French.

For the baseline survey a pre-test was conducted on December 10th, 2021, with 40 completes (24 English / 16 French), to confirm survey length before fully deploying the questionnaire. An open-ended question was asked at the end of the survey where any problems with the clarity of the survey questions could be brought to our attention; no issues were flagged. The survey was fully launched and ran between December 10th, 2021, and January 10th, 2022.



For the post-campaign survey, a pre-test was conducted on March 2, 2022, with 96 completes (62 English / 34 French). No issues were flagged. The survey was fully launched and ran between March 2nd and March 16th, 2022.

For both surveys, quotas were set to ensure representation by region, age and gender, according to the latest Census information. In the end, within natural fallout we obtained our targets without having to oversample except Indigenous (oversampled n=100 to ensure we achieved a minimum sample of n=200 Indigenous Canadians). The unweighted counts are shown below.

Target audience	Baseline Survey Sample Size	Post-campaign Survey Sample Size
Young adults 18-24 years of age	194	223
Young adults 25-34 years of age	365	333
Ethnic communities (n=200)	396	423
Indigenous communities (n=200)	200	200
Parents of children 12-17 (n=300)	430	385

The sampling methodology utilized email invitations + router technology to invite participants. Each participant received a unique URL link. This link could only be used once, with respondents being allowed to pause during completion and return to complete. On average, each survey was completed within 10 minutes.