

COVID-19 Recovery

As we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and look towards recovery, better access to mental health supports in our communities and workplaces is essential.



Issue Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every Albertan. The province has experienced increased rates of isolation, anxiety, depression and substance use.³²

Solution

Albertans must continue to advocate for funding and access to community-based mental health supports as the province moves forward with reopening to address the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Research

“The pandemic is taking an emotional toll on people in Canada, as 77% of adults report feeling so-called negative emotions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The five most common responses across Canada were ‘worried or anxious,’ ‘bored,’ ‘stressed,’ ‘lonely or isolated’ and ‘sad.’”

–*UBC and CMHA Study: Summary of Findings Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: Round 3*,³³ 2021



Alberta Examples

BounceBack® is a free program from CMHA that helps individuals build skills to improve mental health. Free for all Albertans 15+ and available virtually, BounceBack®, provides access to a trained coach and skill-building workbooks that can be selected to fit individual needs.

OSI-CAN is a community-based peer support initiative facilitating conscious connections and group support for military, first responders and public safety personnel dealing with operational and post-traumatic stress, which is showing at higher rates since COVID-19 began.³⁴³⁵ The peer support initiative includes family group support, assistance with service dog acquisition and referrals to equine therapy programs. OSI-CAN began in 2016 as a partnership between the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and The Royal Canadian Legion, Saskatchewan Command. OSI-CAN operates over 20 groups across Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

211 is an essential service that helps Albertans find the right resource or service for whatever issue they need help with at the right time. 211 is available 24/7 by phone, text and chat. The service is free, confidential and available in over 170 languages over the phone. During COVID-19, 211 helps connect Albertans with resources and supports.

³² University of British Columbia, Canadian Mental Health Association (2021). *Summary of Findings: Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: Round 3*. Retrieved from <https://cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CMHA-UBC-Round-3-Summary-of-Findings-FINAL-EN.pdf>

³³ Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: Round 3 (2021, May). Canadian Mental Health Association. Retrieved from <https://alberta.cmha.ca/news/mental-health-impacts-of-covid-19-round-3/>

³⁴ Bridgland, V. M., Moeck, E. K., Green, D. M., Swain, T. L., Nayda, D. M., Matson, L. A., Hutchison, N. P., & Takarangi, M. K. (2021). Why the COVID-19 pandemic is a traumatic stressor. *PLOS ONE*, 16(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240146>

³⁵ Currie C. L. (2021). Adult PTSD symptoms and substance use during Wave 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Addictive behaviors reports*, 13, 100341. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2021.100341>