

# Healthy Kids Inside and Out

THE 2012 RBC CHILDREN'S  
MENTAL HEALTH PARENTS POLL



**RBC**  
Children's Mental  
Health Project

# A message from RBC

Parents are quick to take action if their child breaks a limb or has a physical illness. They know what to do and where to go for information. But it's a different story when a child has a mental illness.

Most mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence. The good news is that many children improve with early intervention and treatment, so it's absolutely crucial for parents and caregivers, doctors and teachers to have a basic level of mental health knowledge. Armed with the proper tools, they can spot the warning signs if a child is struggling at an early age and intervene to get help.

It's equally important for parents to have conversations about mental health early and often with their children. But that's not what's happening, or so says the **"2012 RBC Children's Mental Health Parents Poll."** The majority of parents, we learned, assume that their children will open up to them if they have a problem. But half of kids say they talk to their friends first if they have a mental health concern and 20% of kids say they'd just go silent, and not mention their worries to anyone. And this is complicated by the fact that parents are silent on the topic too: 53 per cent haven't prompted conversations with anyone about their kids' mental health. These are dangerous silences.

Attached you will find the full results of this third annual poll of parents about children's mental health issues. We encourage the broad dissemination of the findings from this poll and hope the information contributes to a healthy conversation about children's mental health.

You are welcome to refer to, reprint or redistribute the information found in this document, and we ask that you attribute the source as the **"2012 RBC Children's Mental Health Parents Poll."**

The RBC Children's Mental Health Project is a multi-year philanthropic commitment to support community-based and hospital programs that reduce stigma, provide early intervention and increase public awareness about children's mental health issues. Since 2008, the RBC Children's Mental Health Project has donated over \$12 million to more than 200 organizations across Canada.

Wafa Kadri  
Senior Manager, Corporate Donations  
RBC



The survey was completed on-line from **July 19<sup>th</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012** using Leger Marketing's online panel, **LegerWeb**, with a sample of 2,568 Canadian parents with at least one child under the age of 18.

A small number of questions were also posted by Kids Help Phone on their youth website to determine if and where youth are going to talk about mental health concerns. A total of 115 youth answered the online survey.

## **ONLINE PANEL**

Leger Marketing's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally – with between 10,000 and 20,000 new members added each month, and has a retention rate of 90%.

Panel members are randomly selected to receive email invitations to the individual surveys.

Please see the end of this report for further methodological details.

# Key Findings



# Key Findings



## Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour

- › Three quarters of parents are aware that mental illness can develop in early childhood, but one in three do not know that most mental illness found in adults began in childhood.
- › While most parents would be worried if they were approached with evidence that their child may have a mental illness, the majority would feel grateful.
- › A smaller, yet noteworthy, proportion think this would reflect poorly on their parenting.
- › The fear that parenting may be responsible for mental illness stems from the common belief that children with mental illnesses are stigmatized among their peers and adults.
- › A strong majority of parents are convinced of both - a quarter of parents would feel embarrassed if anyone found out that their child was suffering from mental health problems.
- › More than eight in ten parents feel that the real problem facing children with mental health problems is accessible information and services, and the societal stigma that surrounds mental health is secondary.
- › Most parents would prefer to access information on the subject anonymously to avoid the perceived stigma concerning mental health.
- › If parents observed behaviours in their child that may be indicative of a mental health problem, for the most part they would monitor these behaviours to see if they improve on their own before seeking professional help.
- › Parents would make an exception for behaviours which could potentially cause bodily harm to the child. These behaviours would compel most parents to immediately consult a professional.
- › For most problem behaviours, only about one in ten parents would try to handle the issue themselves. Men are almost always more likely to choose this approach, while women are more likely than men to consult a physician immediately.

# Key Findings



## Discussing Children's Mental Health

- › Less than half of parents have discussed mental health with anyone.
- › Most who do not discuss it suggest that it simply doesn't come up or that the topic is not relevant because their child has no history of mental illness.
- › A small number avoid discussing mental illness because it makes them uncomfortable. When parents do discuss the topic of children's mental health, they do so most frequently with their spouse or a doctor.
- › Half the parents report discussing children's mental health with their children or other family members, friends, counsellors, or teachers.
- › Parents are less inclined to think that their children have discussed their own mental health with another party. Only one in five believe that their child has raised a concern about their mental health with anyone.
- › A similar number of parents don't know whether or not their child has had a conversation about their own mental health.
- › Parents who believe that their children have discussed their mental health think that they do so with parents, doctors, teachers or their friends.
- › If children have not discussed their mental health with anyone, parents tend to believe that their child's first choice would be to discuss them with themselves, or other family members.
- › Less than one in six believe that their child would approach a doctor.

# Key Findings



## Seeking Information on Children's Mental Health

- › More than half of parents have looked for information on children's mental health. This group is disproportionately of women.
- › Most often, those who have looked for information on mental health are looking for details on anxiety, inattentiveness, autism, where to go for help with mental illness, or just for reassurances that their child is developing normally.
- › One quarter of parents search for specific information on a clinical disorder.
- › Most often, a parent's search for information begins online, although many turn to physicians or family and friends after their initial online inquiry.
- › Despite parents' reliance on online sources for their initial research, physicians are still perceived to be the most credible source of information.
- › Health-related organizations (such as CAHM or CMHA) are also widely regarded as credible sources of information.
- › Newspapers, magazines, community organizations and faith-based organizations are considered by parents to be among the least credible sources of information about mental health.
- › A majority of parents believe that finding information on children's mental health is more difficult than it ought to be, and many feel overwhelmed by the volume of information available.
- › Women in particular have difficulty navigating the wealth of information.
- › With so much information available online, it is not surprising that seven in ten parents find it challenging to know which information is trustworthy.
- › The majority conclude that finding trustworthy information is a nightmarish exercise. This perception is particularly common among younger parents.

# Key Findings



## Experiences with Mental Health

- › More than half of parents have experienced a brush with mental illness within their family
- › Seven in ten know someone (outside of their family) who has been diagnosed with a mental disorder.
- › Two in five parents have observed signs or symptoms in their children that may be indicative of a mental disorder.
- › Most commonly, they suspect that their child is suffering from anxiety issues, attention deficit disorders, or depression.
- › A quarter of parents have children who have been diagnosed with some form of mental illness, the most common being attention deficit disorders. When these parents noticed their child exhibiting signs of mental health issues, two in five felt unprepared.
- › A lack of preparedness for parenting a child with mental health issues sometimes results in other unforeseen consequences for the family.
- › Two in five parents of a child who has been diagnosed with a mental health condition felt a strain in their relationship with their spouse, and a third felt that it put undue strain on their other children. In rare instances, a child's condition resulted in the parents separating.
- › Socially, mental health issues in a child can also have negative consequences for the parents. Some parents stop going out with friends as often as they once did, and they do not have visitors as frequently.
- › In rare instances, parents report that their friends are no longer forthcoming with invitations to their homes for social engagements.



# Key Findings



## Experiences with Mental Health

- › Many parents with a child who has been diagnosed with a mental illness have been forced to use their vacation time or take unpaid days off in order to care for their child.
- › Not all the impacts of children's mental illness are negative.
- › Three in five parents with a diagnosed child have become more knowledgeable about mental illness due to their child's condition, and two in five feel more accepting of people's differences after their child's diagnosis. Some even report that the experience brought their family closer together.
- › Friends of families with a child afflicted with mental illness do not always respond negatively – two in five parents with a diagnosed child report that their friends have rallied around them, and a similar proportion say that their friends have learned more about mental illness as a result of their experience.

## Children's Mental Health and the Workplace

- › Three quarters of parents with a child who has been diagnosed agree that caring for a child with mental health problems is a full time job. Support for these parents in the workplace is essential for success both professionally and at home.
- › Nearly one in five parents suggest that their workplace is less supportive of parents of children with mental illnesses than it is of parents of a child who is physically ill.
- › Whether the workplace should play a role in educating parents about children's mental health is itself a contentious issue.
- › While nearly half agree that the workplace has a role to play, the number who disagree is only slightly less.
- ›
- › Men are apt to think their workplace has no role to play in the mental health education process.
- › While the role that the workplace should play in educating their employees about children's mental health is contentious, the question of whether or not they should provide additional support to parents of children who have been afflicted with mental health issues is not.
- › Three quarters of parents believe that the workplace should provide more help and support for those who have a child with a mental illness.

## Awareness & Access to Programs / Support Groups

- › Awareness of local children's mental health programs and services is split: half of parents are aware of some in their community while the other half are not.
- › Younger parents tend to be less aware of programs and services than older parents.
- › Five in six parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness have looked for help or support in managing their child's mental health difficulties. Those whose child has been diagnosed with a mental condition are significantly more likely to actively seek support than those whose child is only exhibiting symptoms or signs.
- › Parents who have sought out support most frequently look for counselling, in school help or general information on whether their child is developing normally.

# Key Findings



## The Role of Fathers

- › Overall, fathers tend to be less engaged with children's mental health issues.
- › Men are less likely than women to have discussed children's mental health.
- › Fathers are more likely to believe that the child would speak to their other parent if they had concerns.
- › This perception may be a result of mothers' heightened engagement with children's mental health issues – women are more likely than men to have actively sought out information on the subject and are more trusting of various sources than fathers.
- › Fewer men than women have looked for help or support in managing their child's emotional, behavioural or mental well-being.
- › If told that their child was exhibiting signs of a potential mental illness, fathers would feel less worried than mothers.
- › Mothers are more likely to feel guilty and that they would be perceived as a poor parent.
- › Mothers and fathers would also react differently if they observed their child exhibiting potentially problematic behaviours.
- › Fathers tend to adopt a more cautious approach, and would try to manage the behaviours themselves more often than women, many of whom would seek professional help instead.
- › In the workplace, fathers tend to prefer that education on mental health issues not be discussed. Nearly half feel that the workplace should not play a role in educating adults on the subject of children's mental health.

## Parents Close to the Topic of Children's Mental Health

- › Parents with a child who has been diagnosed with mental illness are particularly sensitive to the stigma that surrounds children's mental health.
- › More of these parents believe that children with mental health issues are stigmatized by their peers and other adults.
- › Those with a diagnosed child are more likely than those who have not to feel embarrassed if anyone found out their child had a mental illness.
- › As a result, these parents would prefer to search for information anonymously. These parents also tend to have fewer misconceptions about mental illness.
- › Predictably, parents of diagnosed children are likely to be sympathetic and supportive of other families with a child diagnosed with a mental illness.
- › Virtually all parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness have looked for information on the subject of children's mental health. They consulted their family doctor first, then later turned to online searches.
- › Parents of children with a diagnosed mental illness are more likely than others to find it difficult to find trustworthy information.
- › Two in five parents with a diagnosed child have talked to someone about children's mental health have not discussed the subject with their own child.

## Parents Close to the Topic of Children's Mental Health

- › Parents of diagnosed children notice a greater impact on their professional, social and family lives than parents whose child only exhibits signs of mental health issues.
- › Parents whose children have been clinically diagnosed with a mental illness report more turmoil in their family than those whose child only exhibits signs.
- › Two in five found the diagnosis increased tension between partners, and the same number found that the diagnosis put more strain on their other children.
- › One in six of those whose child is formally diagnosed do not go out with their friends as often. That said, this group has also seen their friends rally around them in greater numbers than those whose child only exhibits signs of mental illness.
- › Parents with a child who has been diagnosed with a mental illness tend to be more likely to strongly agree that caring for a child with a mental health condition is a full time job.
- › Instead of their workplaces being supportive of them, a quarter of those with a diagnosed child believe that colleagues at work are less supportive than they are of parents whose child has a physical illness.
- › The majority of parents with a diagnosed child therefore look to counseling, support groups or in-school help for support.

# Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour



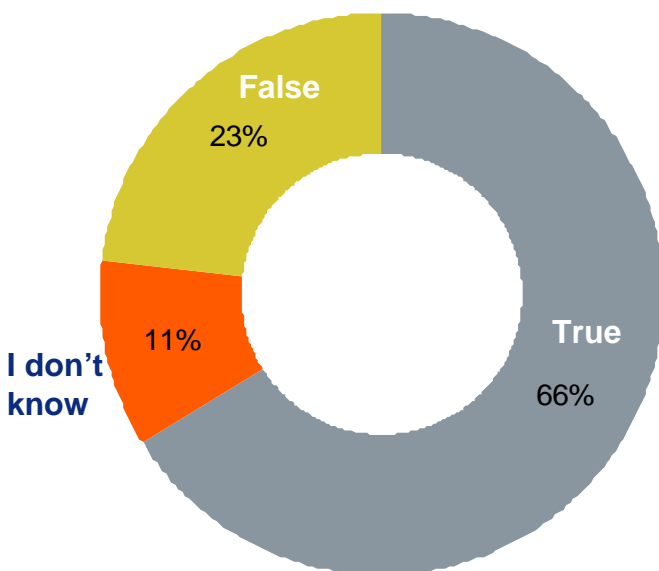
# Knowledge of Children's Mental Health

## One in three parents are not aware that most cases of mental illness in adults started in early childhood

While the majority of parents are aware that mental illness can develop during early childhood, some believe these conditions can only affect children older than the age of five. Young parents under the age of 35 tend to be more aware that young children can develop mental health disorders (77% say it can affect children under the age of five). Two thirds of parents know that most cases of mental illness began in childhood, while one in ten are unaware. Middle aged parents between the ages of 45 and 64 tend to be less likely than those who are younger to agree that this statement is true (60%). Compared to 2011, more parents are aware that most cases of mental illness can begin in childhood (54% agreed with this statement last year).

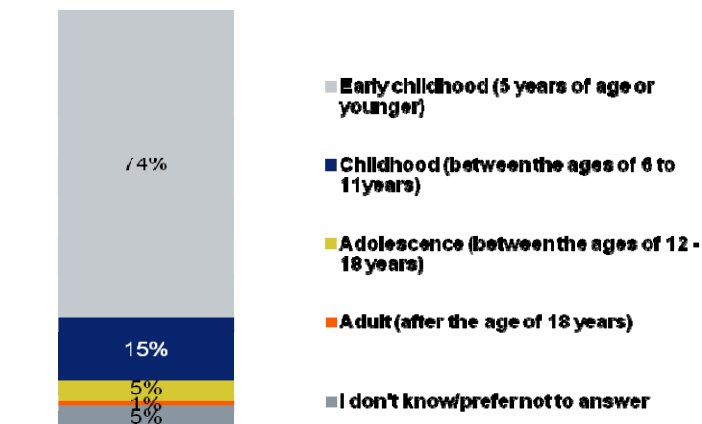
### “Most cases of mental illness in adults started in childhood”

Q26. Base: 2568 Canadian parents



### Earliest Age A Person Can Develop Mental Health Problems

Q6 Base: 2568 Canadian Parents





# Reaction If Your Child Had Mental Health Concerns

## Feelings of nervousness and worry most common

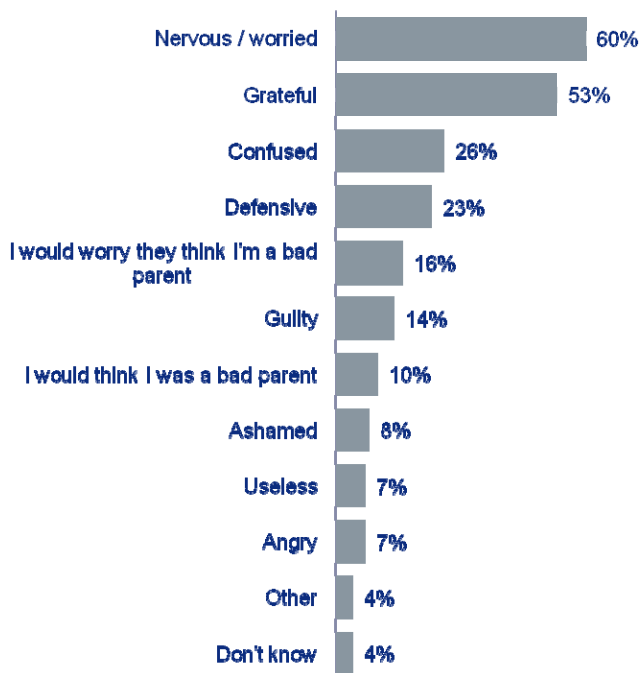
Parents would feel uneasy and worried if they were told that their children may have a mental health condition, but would also be grateful. Parents who have a child who has been diagnosed with a mental illness are even more likely to say that they would feel grateful in this context (64%). Women would feel more worried than men – 65% say that they would react with nervousness, compared to 55% of men.

A quarter of parents would feel confused and defensive, and one in six would feel guilty and worry that their child’s mental health problem would reflect poorly on their parenting. Women are more likely to think that they would feel guilty (18%) and that they would be perceived as a poor parent (20%).

Parents of children aged 12 and older are more likely than of children 11 and younger to say they would feel ashamed (11% vs. 9%) or grateful (58% vs. 50%). Parents of children age 11 or younger, however, are more likely to feel nervous (63% vs. 55%).

### How would you feel if someone approached you about a behaviour in your child that might indicate a mental health condition?

Q31 Base: 1281 Canadian parents



# Reaction if Neighbourhood Child had Mental Health Concerns



**The prospect of a neighbourhood child developing a mental illness elicits sympathy and concern from other parents.**

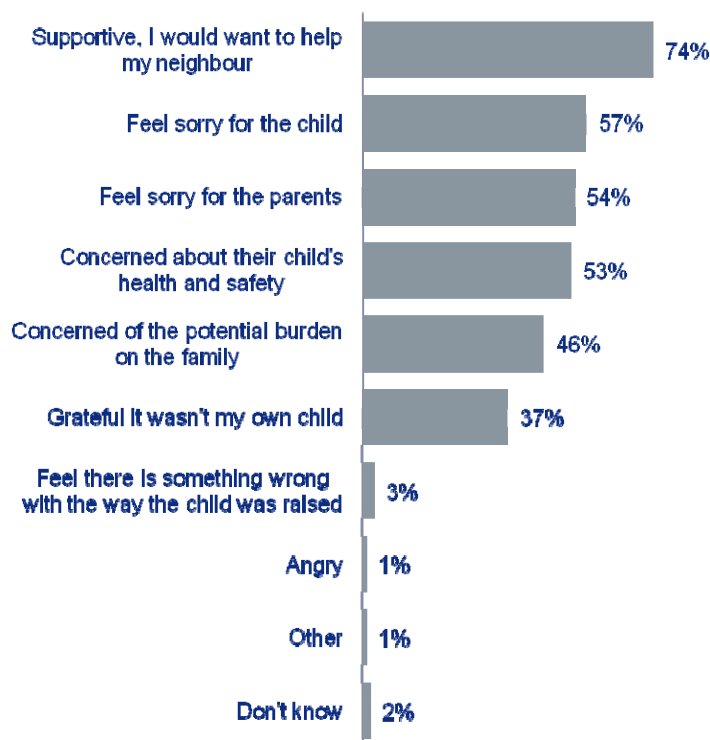
If they found out that a neighbourhood child had been diagnosed with a mental health condition, more than half of parents would feel sorry for both the child or the parents and three quarters would want to support their neighbours.

Parents of diagnosed children are particularly likely to be supportive of other neighbourhood families – 79% say they would want to support their neighbour, compared to 73% of those parents whose child has not been diagnosed.

Parents with children aged 11 or younger are more likely to be grateful it wasn't their own child (42% vs. 35% of parents aged 12 or older).

**How would you feel if you found out that one of your neighbours had a child with a mental health condition?**

*Q32 Base: 1287 Canadian parents*



# Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness

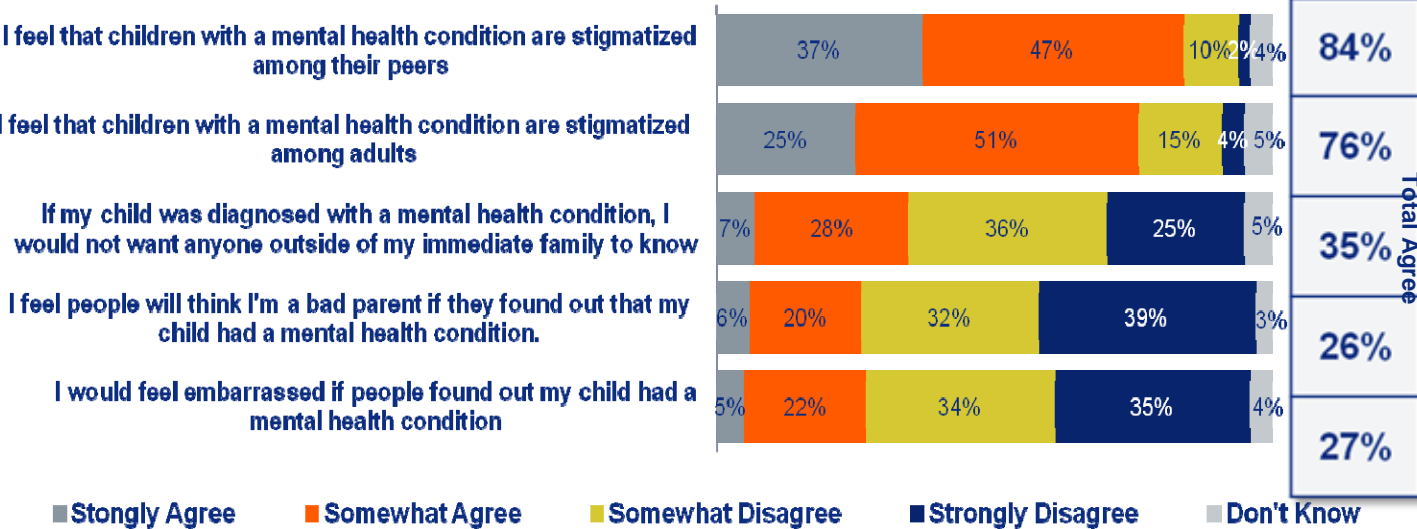


## Parents do not personally stigmatize mental illness, but are convinced that others do.

Nearly nine in ten parents believe that children with mental health issues are stigmatized among their peers, and three quarters believe adults do the same. Those who have a diagnosed child in their family are more likely than those who do not to believe that mental illness is stigmatized both among adults (78%) and other children (87%). Contrasting sharply with their perceptions of the widespread stigma surrounding mental health issues, considerably fewer parents would feel embarrassed or ashamed if their own child were to be affected by a mental illness. Only a quarter would feel embarrassed if others found out that their child had mental health difficulties. Those who have a diagnosed child are more likely than those who do not to feel this way (29%). Compared to 2011, more parents would prefer that only their immediate family know if their child was diagnosed with a mental illness (26% agreed with this statement in 2011).

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q19 – 25 Base: 2568 Canadian parents

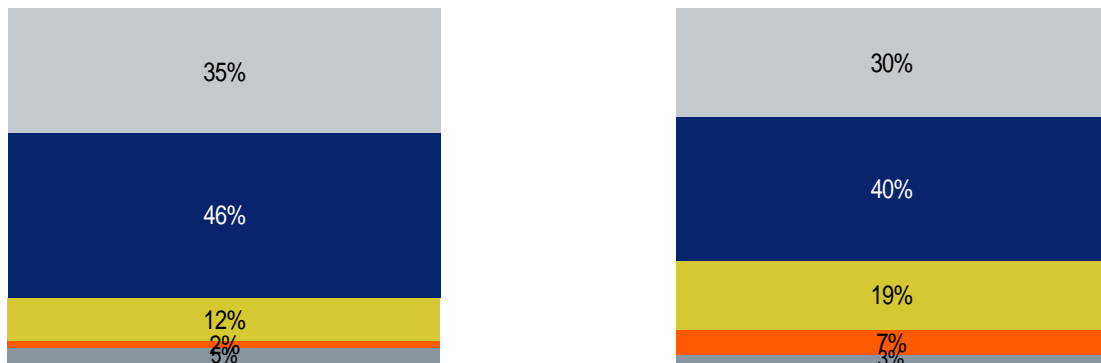


## Access to information about mental illness is important, but most parents would prefer to seek information anonymously.

Parents generally agree that the biggest issue facing children with mental illness is not stigma, but access to information and services. Most still believe the stigma is significant enough to warrant a way to access information on the subject anonymously. Parents with a diagnosed child are more likely than those who do not to recognize the importance of being able to access information anonymously (73%). The number of parents who agree with both of these statements remains unchanged since 2011.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q19 – 25 Base: 2568 Canadian parents



The real issue for children with a mental health condition is not stigma but getting information and services to help treat them

It is important to me to be able to obtain information on children's mental health issues anonymously so that my child wouldn't be "labelled" or stigmatized.

Don't Know
  Strongly Disagree
  Somewhat Disagree
  Somewhat Agree
  Strongly Agree

# Responding to Children's Mental Health Concerns



## Parents would respond to potentially problematic behaviours differently depending on the age of their children.

The following two pages detail the different ways parents would respond to behaviours observed in children 11 and younger, or those seen in children 12 years of age and older. In many cases, parents would be more likely to immediately seek medical help if they observe such behaviours in children over the age of 12. The behaviours where one group is more likely than another to react in a particular manner are marked with an arrow.

Overall, both groups would prefer to monitor most problematic behaviours to see if they resolved themselves, however there are exceptional behaviours which would elicit a different response. Nearly three quarters of parents who observed self-inflicted injury behaviours would immediately seek professional help, and about half would respond similarly if they observed repetitive, ritualistic or compulsive behaviours.

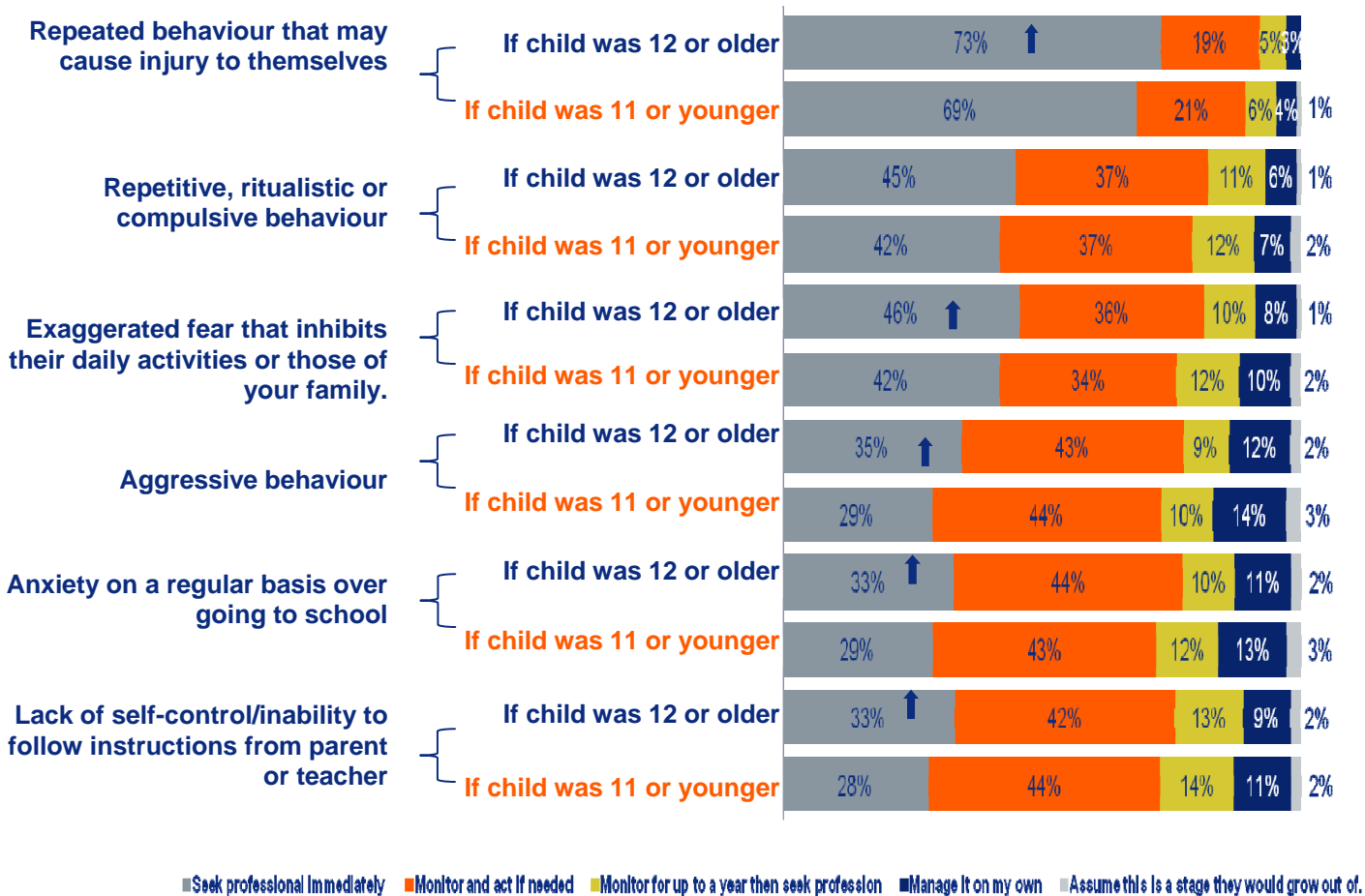
For both age groups, only about one in ten parents would try to manage the issue on their own. More than one in ten would try to manage temper problems, excessive shyness or a sudden change in grades on their own. When men from both groups are taken together, they are almost always more likely than women to try to manage problems on their own. Men are more likely to try to manage the following behaviours on their own: aggressive (17%); repetitive, ritualistic, or compulsive behaviour (8%); difficulty paying attention for more than a few minutes (10%); seems moody or sad most of the time (13%); anxiety on a regular basis over going to school (14%); lack of self-control / inability to follow instructions (13%); sudden changes in grades (21%); exaggerated fear that inhibits daily activities (10%); and withdrawal from activities they used to enjoy (16%).

# Responding to Children's Mental Health



## How would you respond to the following behaviours?

Q7 – 18 Base: Parents who would respond to behaviours if their children were 11 years of age or younger (n=1330), parents who would respond to behaviours if their children were 12 years of age or older (n=1238)

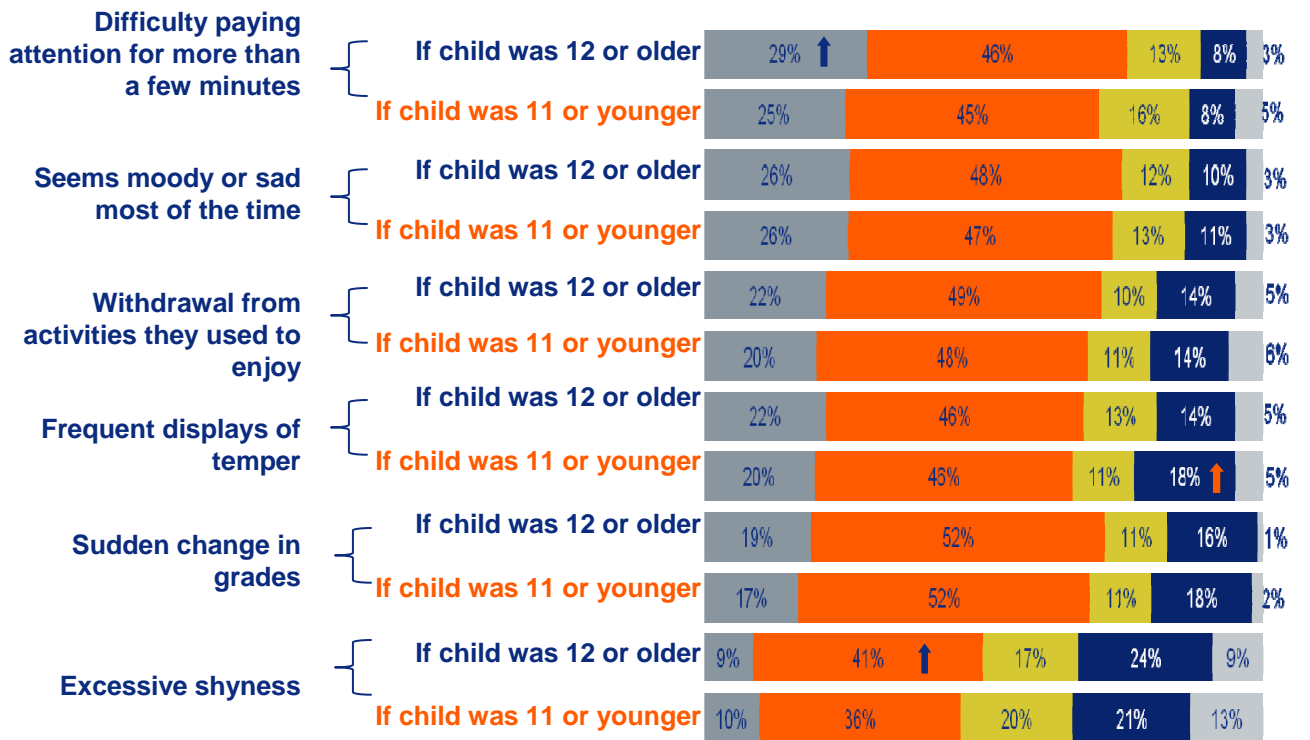


# Responding to Children's Mental Health



## How would you respond to the following behaviours?

Q7 – 18 Base: Parents who would respond to behaviours if their children were 11 years of age or younger (n=1330), parents who would respond to behaviours if their children were 12 years of age or older (n=1238)



■ Seek professional immediately 
 ■ Monitor and act if needed 
 ■ Monitor for up to a year then seek profession 
 ■ Manage it on my own 
 ■ Assume this is a stage they would grow out of.

# Discussing Children's Mental Health With Others





# Discussing Children's Mental Health

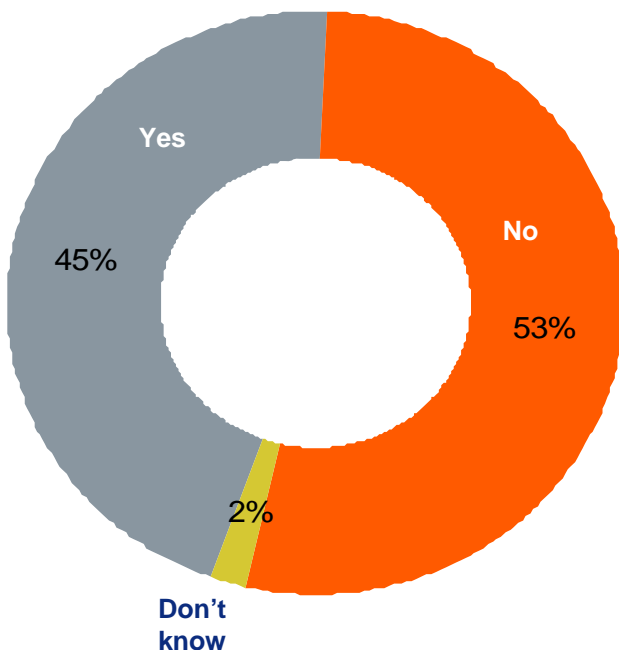


## The majority of parents have not discussed their child's mental health with anyone.

While the majority of parents have not discussed children's mental health, most have not deliberately avoided the subject. Parents do not broach the subject because they do not believe that their child suffers from any mental health concerns, or the subject simply has never come up. One in twenty parents are uncomfortable with the subject and avoid discussing it. Men are less likely than women to have discussed children's mental health with anyone (43% vs. 48% of women). Parents of children aged 12 and older are more likely than those with children aged 11 or younger to have discussed their child's mental health (51% vs. 37%).

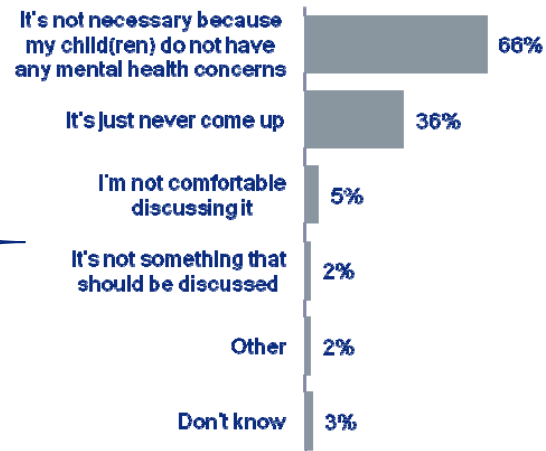
### Have you ever discussed your child's or your children's mental health with anyone?

Q44 Base: 2568 Canadian Parents



### Why have you never had a discussion with anyone about your child's or children's mental health?

Q45 Base: 1338 Canadian parents who have not spoken to anyone about mental health



# Discussing Children's Mental Health

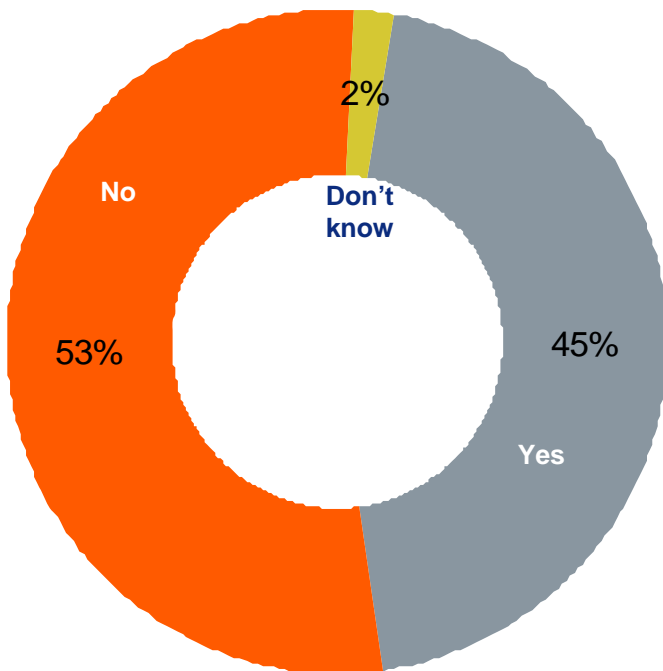


## Parents commonly speak to their spouse or a doctor about their children's mental health, but often do not speak to their child.

Those parents who have discussed their child's mental health tend to do so with doctors and their spouse. Less than half of parents who have discussed their child's mental health have done so with the child themselves. As children age, parents become more likely to speak directly to the child about their mental health. 59% of parents with children over the age of 12 who have discussed children's mental health with someone have done so with their child. Two in five (40%) parents of a diagnosed child who have talked to someone about children's mental health have not discussed the subject with their own child.

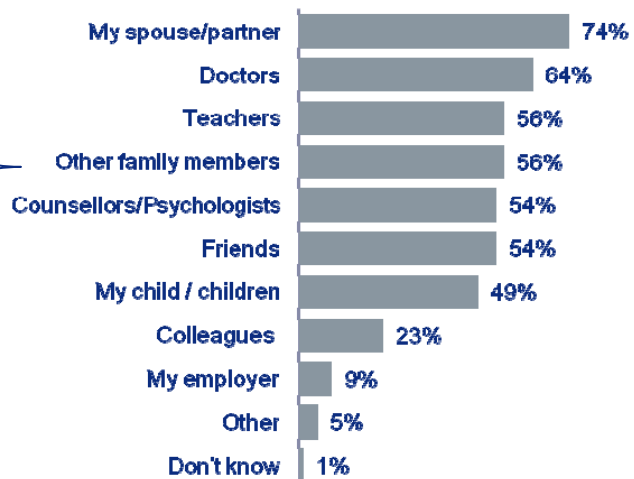
### Have you ever discussed the topic of your child's or your children's mental health with anyone?

Q44 Base: 2568 Canadian Parents



### With whom have you discussed your child's or children's mental health?

Q46 Base: 1182 Canadian parents who have discussed children's mental health



# Discussing Children's Mental Health

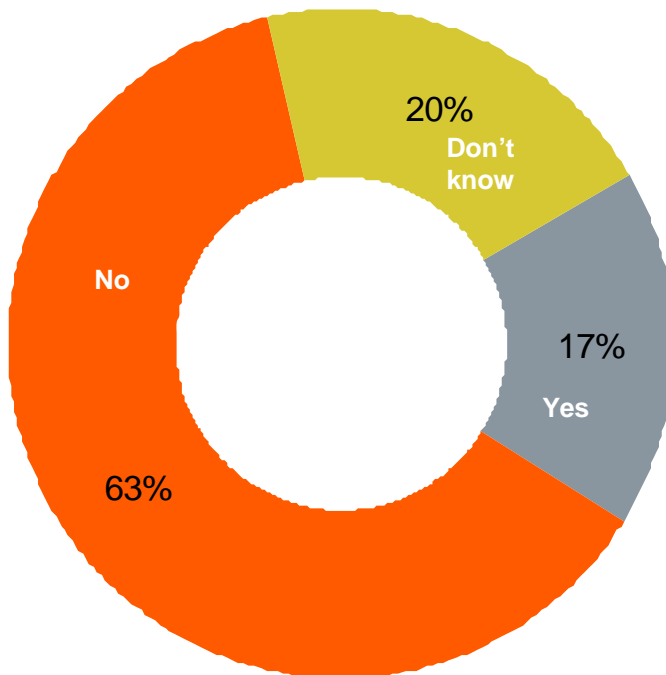


**Only one in five parents believe that their child has discussed their own mental health with someone.**

Of the few who believe their child has discussed their mental health, most say that it was with themselves or a mental health professional. Only a quarter believe that they discussed the subject with their friends.

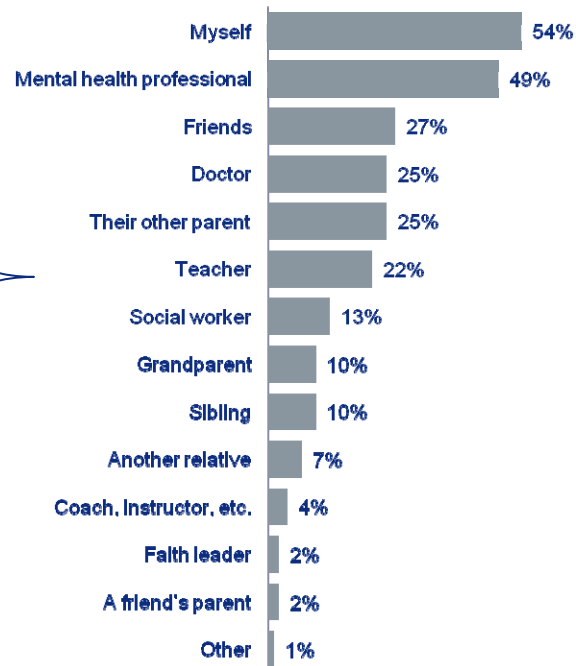
## Do you think your child has ever discussed a concern about their own mental health with anyone?

Q47 Base: 2568 Canadian Parents



## Who do you think your child would most likely have discussed their mental health concern with?

Q47A Base: 434 Canadian parents who believe their child has discussed their mental health



# Discussing Children's Mental Health

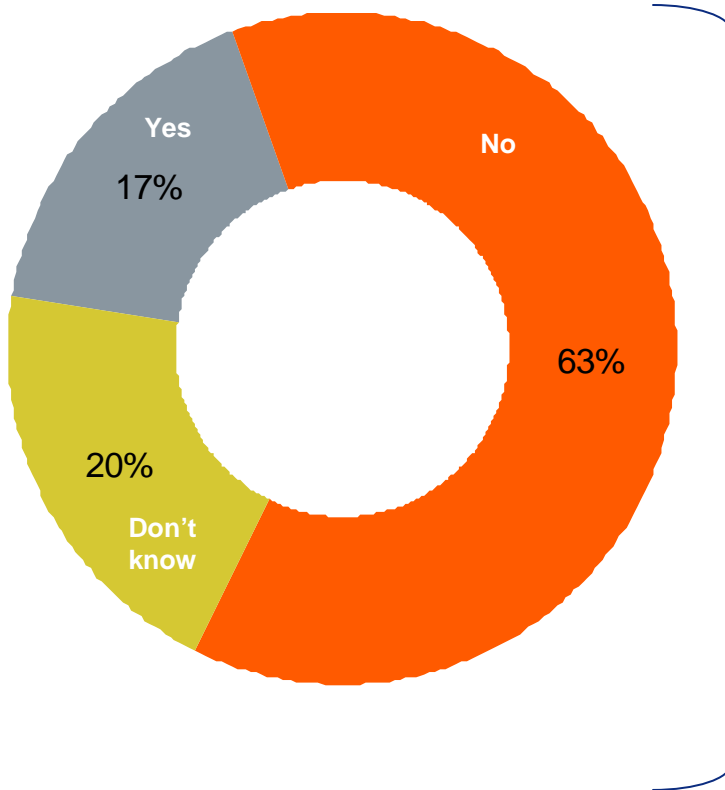


**Most parents do not believe that their children have spoken to anyone about their mental health.**

If the child were to talk to someone concerning their mental health, most parents believe it would be with them or their other parent. Women are more likely to believe that the child would speak to them (70%), while men are more likely to believe that the child would speak to the other parent (43%). Few believe that the child would go to a doctor.

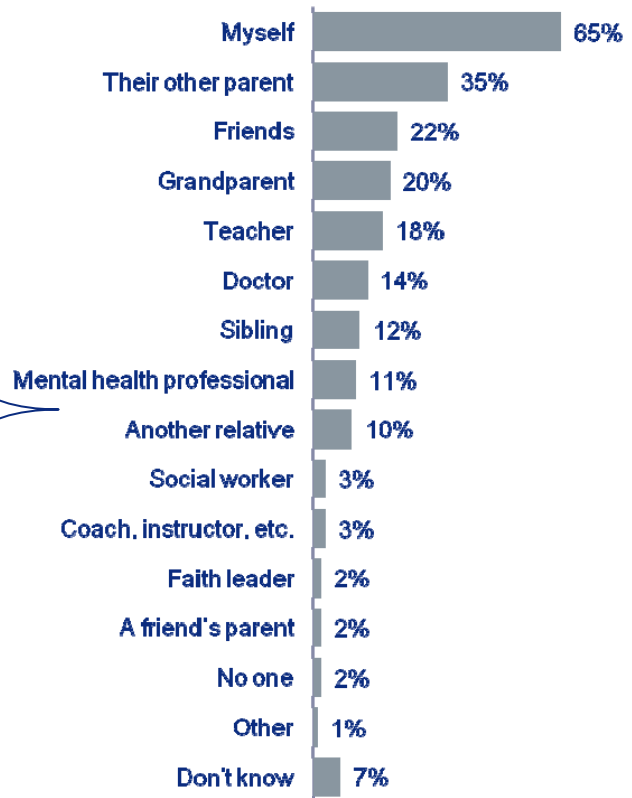
## Do you think your child has ever discussed a concern about their own mental health with anyone?

Q47 Base: 2568 Canadian Parents



## If your child were to discuss their mental health concerns, who would they talk to?

Q47B Base: 2134 Canadian parents who do not believe that their child has discussed their own mental health



# Discussing Children's Mental Health



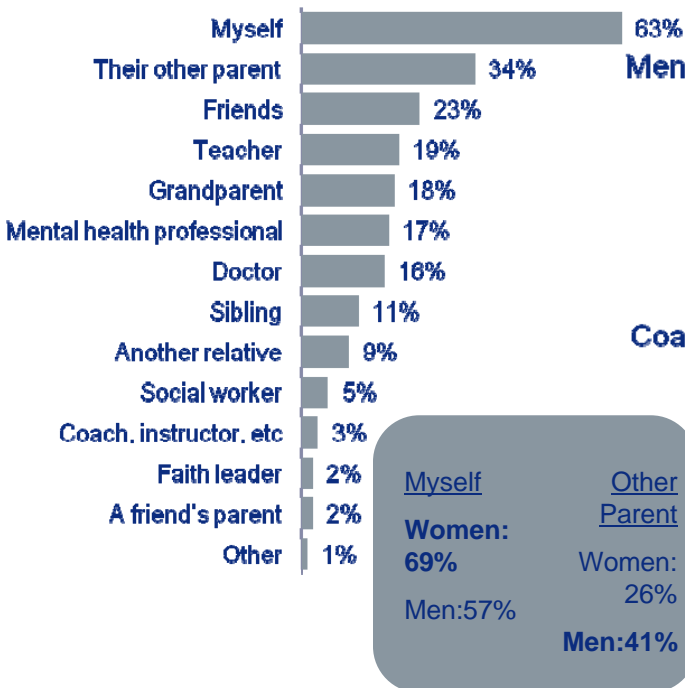
## When discussing mental health, there are significant gaps in parents' expectations and children's preferences.

The majority of parents expect their children would speak to them about mental health issues. Women are particularly likely to say that their child either has or would speak to them about their mental health (69%), while men are more likely than women to believe that they have or would speak to the other parent (41%).

According to data collected by Kids Help Phone, however, youth are more likely to choose to speak to friends. If they were to speak to a parent, they are twice as likely to speak with their mother, rather than father. A noteworthy 2 in 5 youth who have or suspect they have a mental health concern have not spoken to anyone about it.

### Who do you think your child would most likely have discussed their mental health concern with? / If your child were to discuss their mental health concerns, who would they talk to?

Q47AB Base: 2538 Canadian parents.



### Who have you discussed this mental health concern with in the past?/ If you were to speak to someone about your mental health, who would you speak with?

Base: 115 Canadian youth visiting the Kids Help Phone website



# Seeking Information



## The majority of parents have looked for information on children’s mental health.

Women are more likely to seek out information on children’s mental health than men (60% vs. 50%), both in regards to their own child (33%), and for in general (27%). Virtually all parents (88%) whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness have looked for information on children’s mental health.

Parents of children aged 12 or older are more likely to have looked for information regarding their own children than those with children aged 11 or younger (59% vs. 49%). Furthermore, parents of children aged 12 and older are looking for information on anxiety about going to school (19% vs. 15%), specific clinical disorders (28% vs. 22%) or suicidal behaviour (12% vs. 4%), more so than parents of children age 11 or younger. Parents with younger children are more inclined to search for information about whether their child is developing normally (39% vs. 24%).

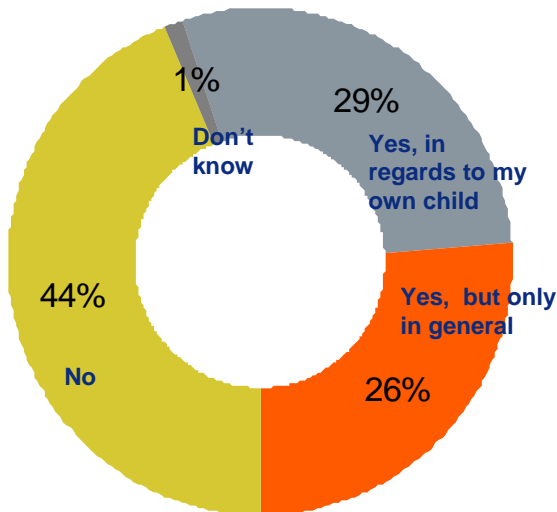
## What was the nature of the information on children’s mental health or illness that you looked for?

Q35 Base: 1438 Canadian parents who have looked for information on mental health

Disorder	Total
Learning problems	35%
Anxiety (in general)	31%
Whether my child is developing normally	30%
Inattentiveness	26%
A specific clinical disorder (bipolar, eating, substance abuse, ADD, behaviour etc.)	25%
Where to go for help	23%
Autism	23%
Depression	22%
Aggressive behaviour	18%
Anxiety on a regular basis over going to school	17%
Frequent displays of temper	16%
Repetitive, ritualistic or compulsive behaviour	13%
Excessive shyness	9%
Suicidal Behaviour	9%
Repeated behaviour that may injure themselves (i.e. punching a wall, hitting themselves etc.)	7%
Lack of energy	6%
Other (please specify)	3%
I don't know/prefer not to answer	2%

## Have you ever looked for information on children’s mental health or illness?

Q34 Base: 2568 Canadian parents



# Primary and Secondary Information Sources

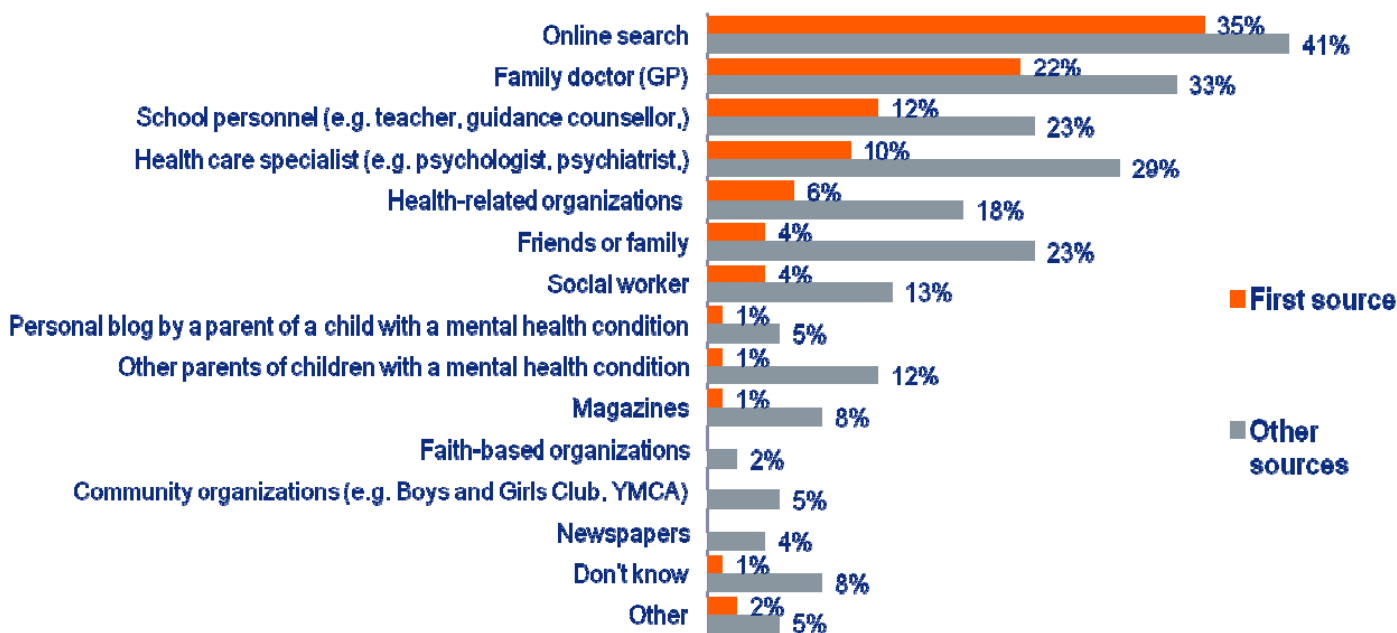


## Most parents search for information online first, then consult other sources.

A third of parents begin their search for information online. Health care professionals such as family doctors or specialists are also popular sources of information, but are not typically a parent's first choice. After their initial online searches, many parents also turn to friends or family for information. Parents whose children were ultimately diagnosed with a mental illness most frequently consulted their family doctor first (35%), then later turned to online searches (46%).

### Where did you first look for information about mental illness? Did you look anywhere else?

Q36/Q37 Base: 1423 Canadian parents who have searched for information about mental illness.





# Finding Information About Children's Mental Health

**Sources that are most frequently used are not necessarily considered to be the most credible.**

While nearly seven in ten parents use online sources at some point for information on children's mental health, the information from these sources is not considered to be as credible as information from a doctor, a health-related organization, or even from parents of children with existing mental health conditions. Women tend to be more trusting of source credibility than men. Specifically, women are more likely to say that online searches (81%), social workers (84%), family and friends (63%), and parents of other children with a mental condition (70%) are credible sources of information.

## Credibility of Information Sources vs. Sources Used

Q38 Base: 1438 Canadian parents who have searched for information about mental illness.



# Finding Information About Children's Mental Health

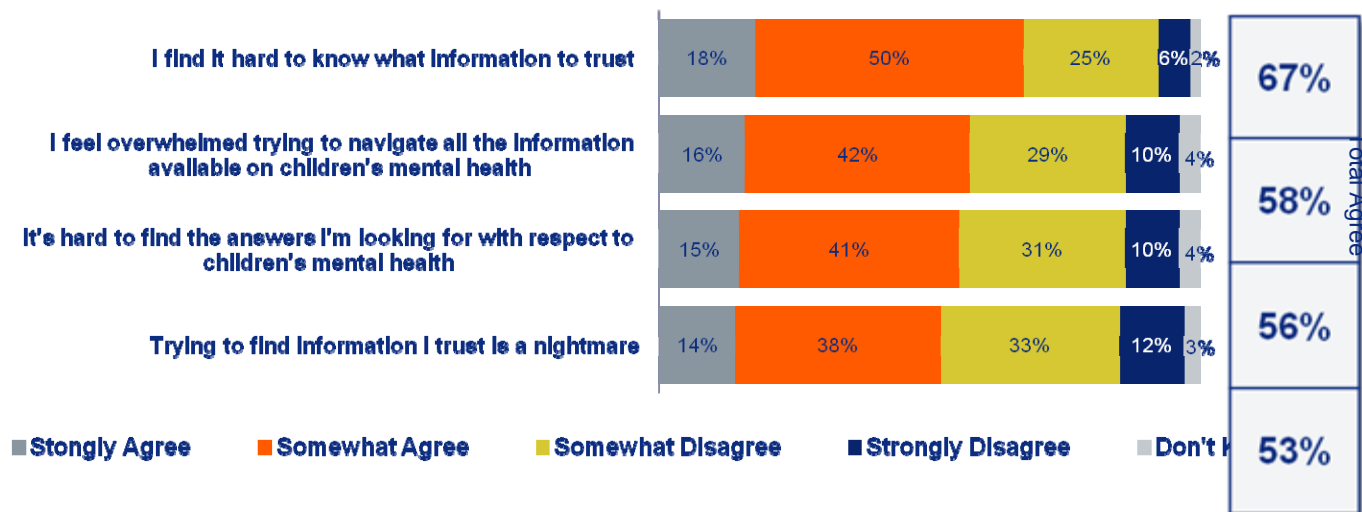


## The trustworthiness of information sources is a concern for the majority of parents.

The majority of Canadian parents agree that finding trustworthy information poses a considerable challenge. Parents nationwide believe that it is difficult to find trustworthy information. Many parents also feel overwhelmed by the volume of information available, and a similar proportion find it difficult to get information that specifically addresses the problems they face. Half the parents confirm that trying to find information they can trust is a nightmare. In all cases, parents of diagnosed children are more likely than others to agree that finding credible information is a challenge.

### To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q39-42 Base: 1,438 Canadian parents who have searched for information about mental illness.



# Experiences With Mental Health

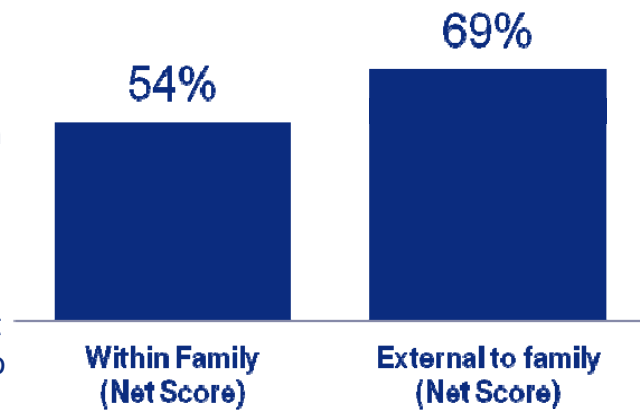


# Experiences With Mental Illness



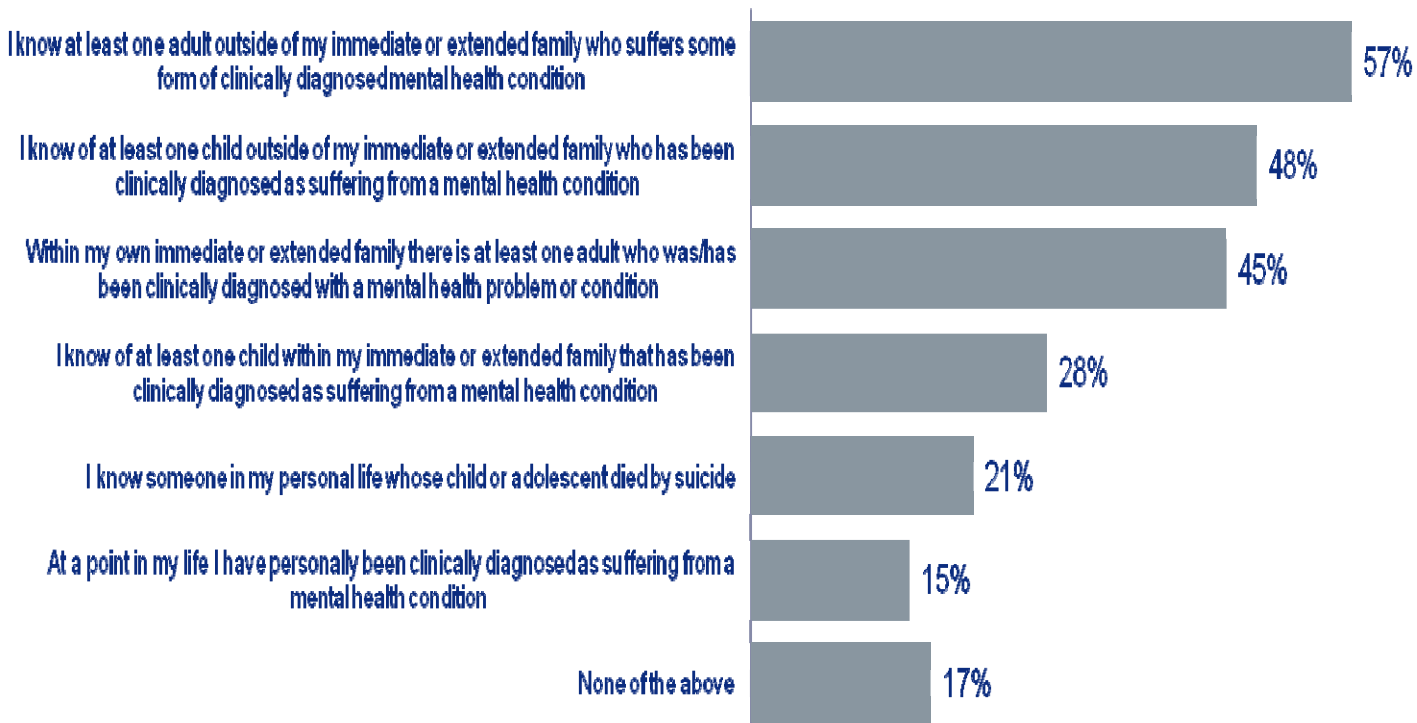
**Mental illness touches the majority of parents. One in five have known someone who has lost a child to suicide.**

Most Canadian families have encountered mental illness. Nearly half of parents have been exposed to mental illness within their families, and over a quarter suggest that there is at least one child within their family who has been diagnosed with a mental health concern. One in six have been diagnosed personally with a mental health condition. Women are particularly likely to have been personally diagnosed (19%). They are also more likely to admit that there is at least one adult within their family who has been diagnosed with a mental illness (48%).



## Which of the following apply ?

*Q48 Base: 2568 Canadian parents*



# Experiences of Affected Families



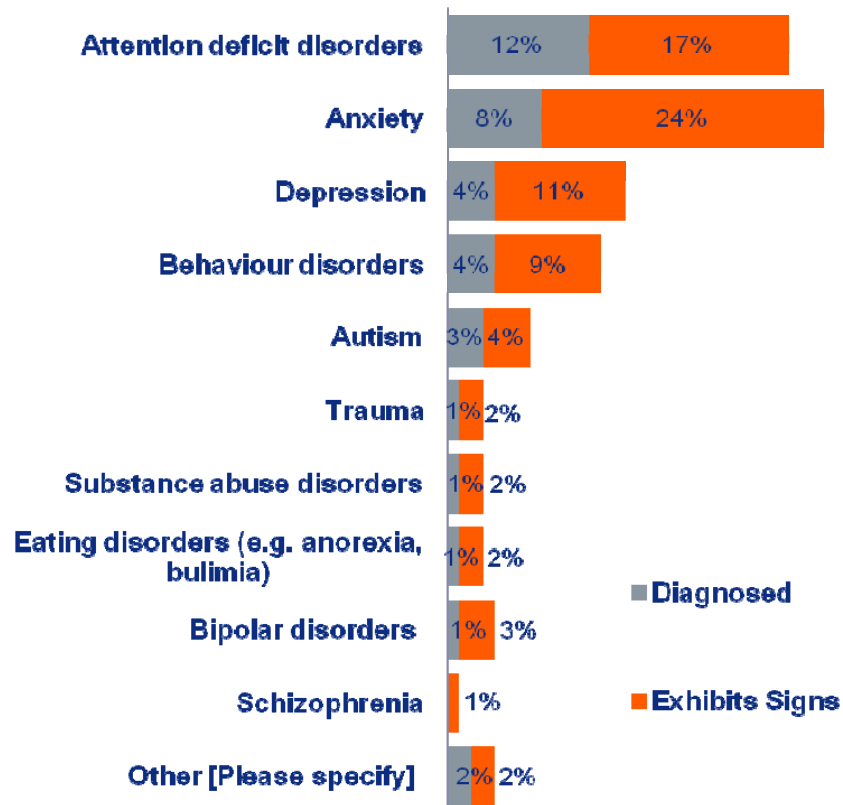
## Attention deficit disorders are more commonly diagnosed, but parents see more signs of anxiety disorders in their children.

Attention deficit disorders and anxiety disorders are the most commonly diagnosed mental health conditions among children. Nearly a quarter of parents indicate that their child has shown signs of an anxiety disorder, while fewer than one in five suspect their children may be affected by an attention deficit disorder. Compared to 2011, more parents have noticed their child has shown signs of both anxiety (17% in 2011) and attention deficit disorders (12% in 2011).

More parents of children aged 12 and older than 11 or younger have suspected signs of mental illness in their child (48% vs. 34%) or say that their child has been diagnosed with one or more disorders (30% vs. 14%).

Have any one of your children exhibited signs of, or been diagnosed with, any of the following conditions?

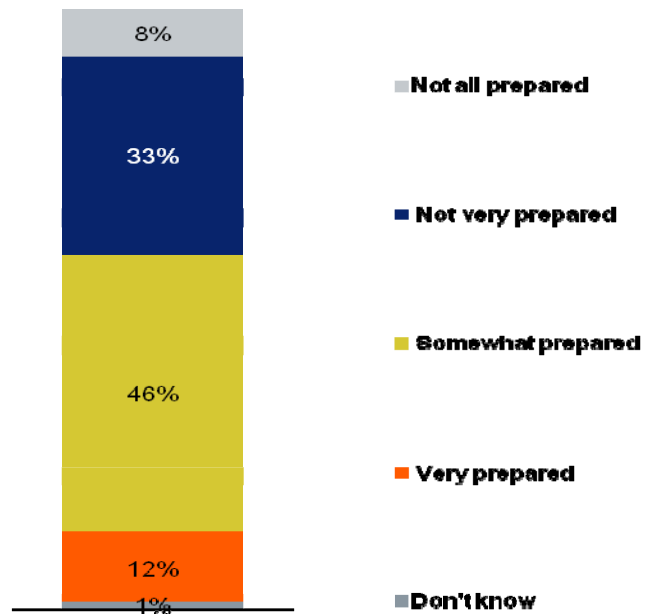
Q49 Base: 2568 Canadian parents



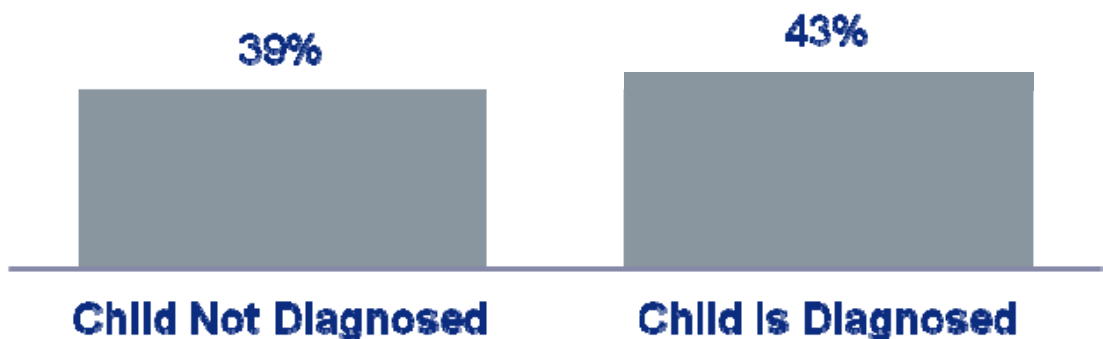
## Two in five parents were unprepared for their child's mental health difficulties.

Many parents find themselves unprepared for the challenges of caring for a child with mental health challenges. Parents of children over the age of 12 found themselves less prepared than parents of children under the age of 12, with 46% reporting that they were not very or not at all prepared.

**How prepared did you feel upon recognizing that your child exhibited signs / was diagnosed with mental health issues?**  
Q5C Base: 1196 Canadian parents whose child exhibits signs or has been diagnosed with mental illness.



### Percent Who Were Unprepared



# Impact of Mental Illness on Family Life



## The onset of mental illness in a child can create discord in the family.

Two in five parents of diagnosed children found the mental illness created tension between them and their partners, and a third believe that it has put a strain on their other children. Families also found that they gained a great deal of insight into mental illness and its care, and nearly two in five have become more accepting of differences in others.

### What impact, if any, has your child's condition had on your family?

*Q52 Base: 625 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness.*



# Impact of Mental Illness on Social Life

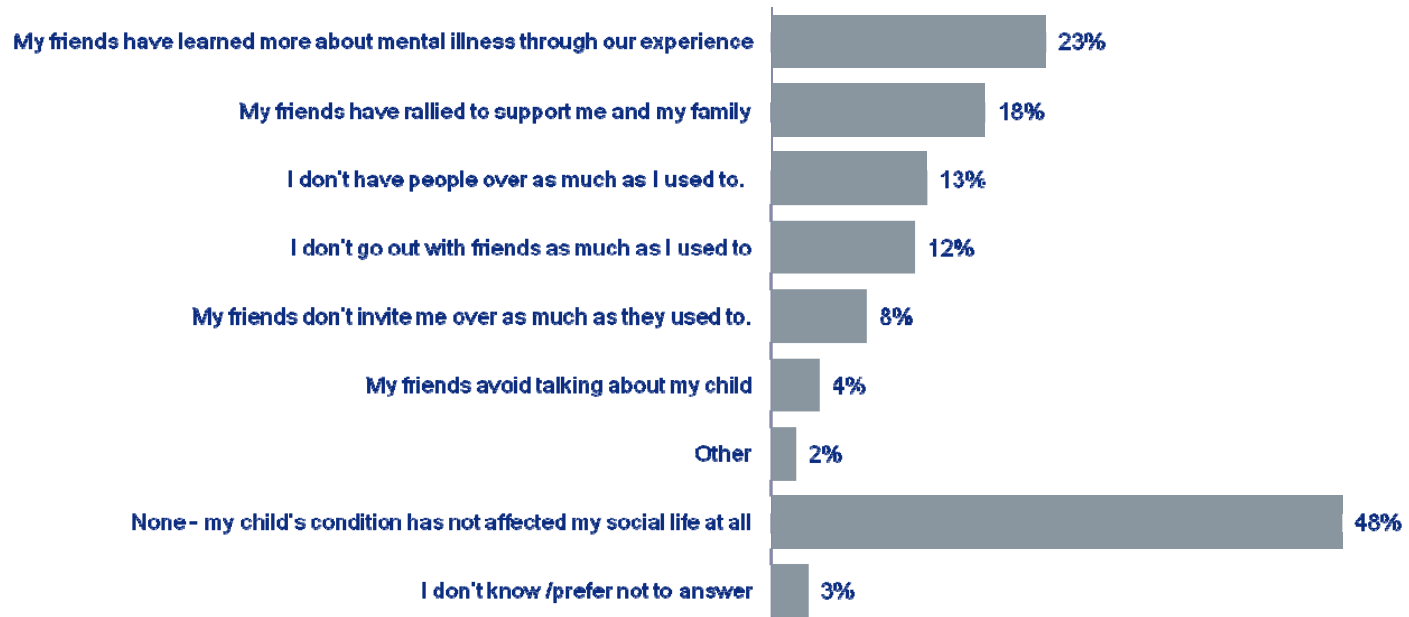


**Having a diagnosed child can have both positive and negative consequences on parent's social lives.**

Half of parents with diagnosed children say their child's condition has impacted their social life, but it's not all negative. One in four say their friends have learned more about mental illness through their experiences and 1 in 5 say their friends have rallied to support them and their family.

## What impact, if any, has your child's condition had on your social life?

*Q53 Base: 625 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness.*





# Impact of Mental Illness on Work Life

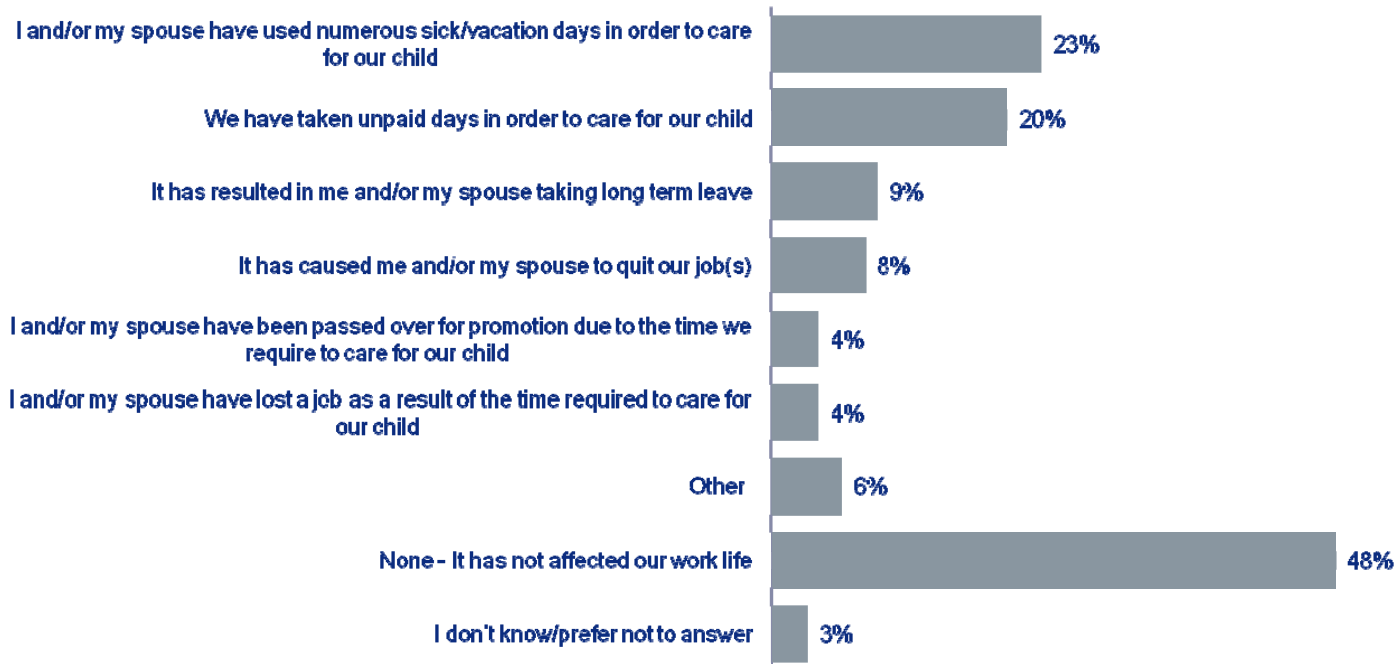


## Half say they or their spouse's work life has been affected

While few parents have had to quit their jobs as a result of caring for a child with a mental illness, a quarter have used vacation time and one in five have forfeited pay to care for their child. In rare cases, parents are passed for a promotion or fired outright due to their time commitments with their child.

### What impact, if any, has your child's condition had on you or your spouse in terms of work?

*Q51 Base: 625 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness.*

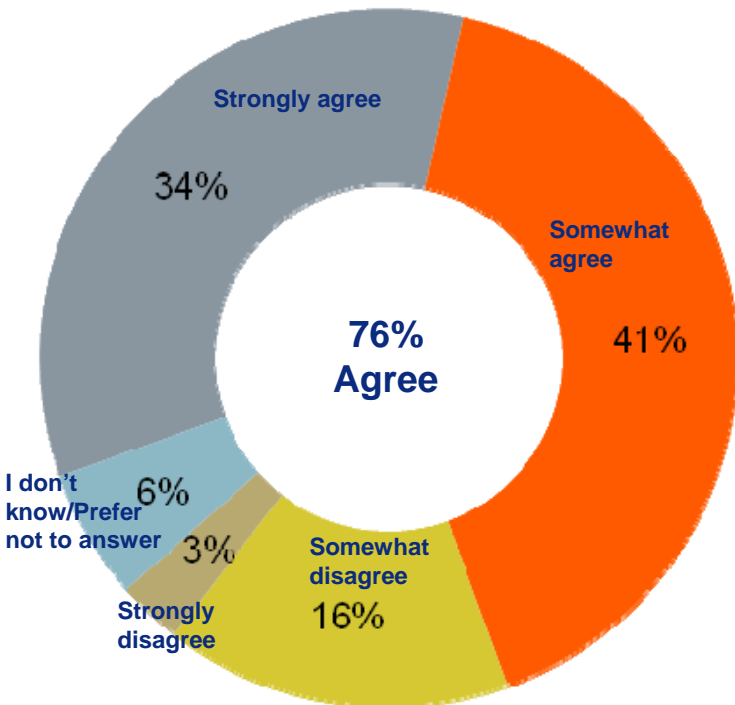


## Parents are aware of the challenges in caring for a child with a mental health condition, but some believe that people at work do not offer enough support.

Three quarters of parents with a diagnosed child believe that caring for a child with a mental illness is a full-time job. Those whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness are more likely than those whose child has not been diagnosed to strongly agree with this statement. Parents most commonly believe that colleagues at work are equally supportive of parents whose child is mentally ill as they are of parents whose child is physically ill. A further 3 in 10, however, are unsure of the support distribution offered. Unfortunately, 25% of those with a diagnosed child believe that people at work are *less* supportive.

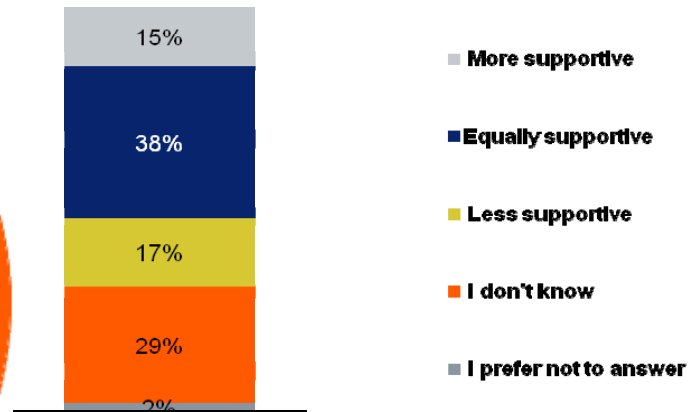
### “Caring for a child with a mental health condition is a full-time job”

Q56 Base: 625 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness.



### Compared to colleagues with a child with a physical illness, are people at work more or less supportive of colleagues whose child has a mental illness?

Q57 Base: 2568 Canadian parents

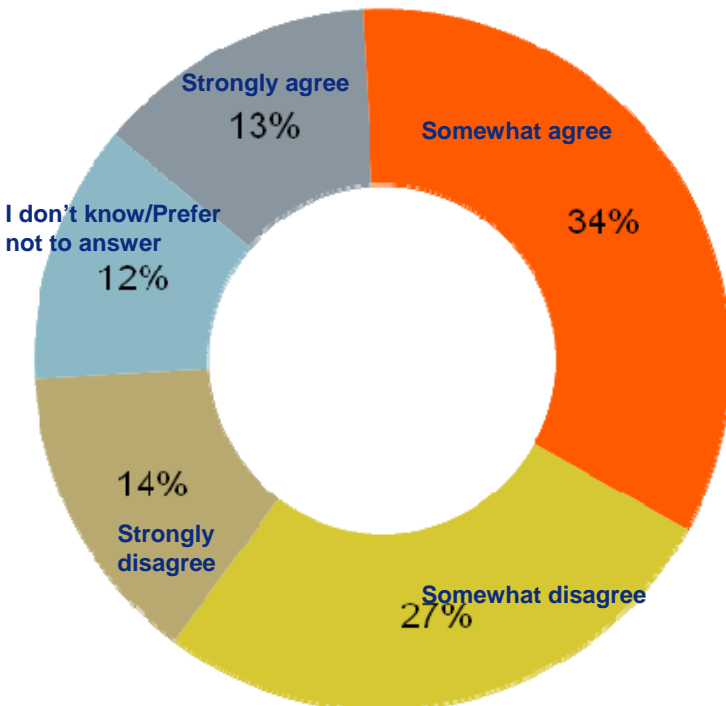


## Parents are divided about the role of the workplace in educating about mental illness, but most agree that more support should be given to those affected.

Slightly fewer than half of parents believe that the workplace has a role to play in educating parents about children’s mental health. Men in particular are wary of this notion, with 43% saying that the workplace should *not* play a role in educating parents on the subject. A strong majority support the idea of more help and support given to parents raising a child with a mental illness. Women tend to be more supportive of this idea than men – 31% *strongly agree* compared to only 25% of men who feel the same.

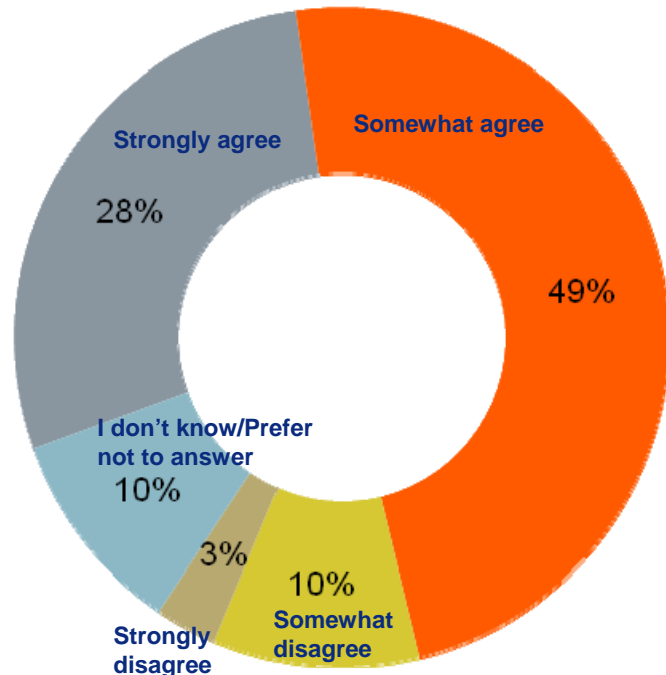
**“I think the workplace has a role to play in educating parents on the issue of children’s mental health”**

*Q58 Base: 2568 Canadian parents*



**“More help and support should be given by workplaces to parents who have a child with a mental illness”**

*Q59 Base: 2568 Canadian parents*



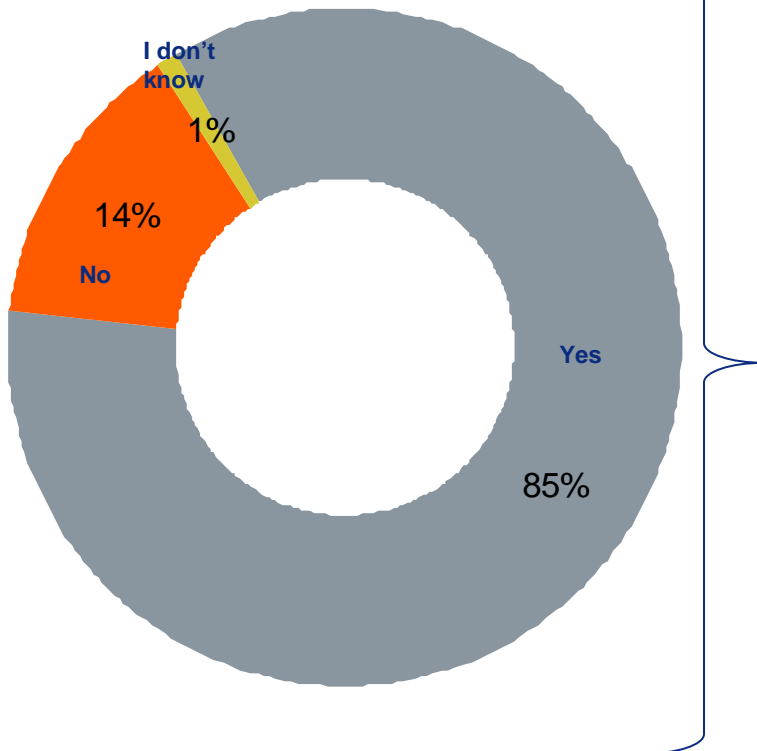
## Most Parents of Diagnosed Children are Looking for Counseling or Talk Therapy

Only half (49%) of parents are aware of programs or services available in their communities. This number is slightly lower than in 2011, where 56% were aware of local programs or services.

Looking specifically at parents with a diagnosed child, more than 8 in 10 have looked for help or support managing their child’s mental health, with most seeking out counseling/talk therapy. The majority have also looked for in school help or shadowing.

### Have you looked for help or support in managing your child’s emotional, behavioural or mental health well-being?

Q54 Base: 625 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness.



### What kind of help or support have you looked for?

Q55 Base: 532 parents whose child has been diagnosed with a mental illness and who have looked for help or support.

Help or Support Sought	
Counseling / talk therapy	68%
In school help/shadow	53%
Information about whether my child is developing normally	35%
Support groups	23%
Financial aid	15%
At home help in caring for my child with a mental health condition	11%
At home help in caring for my other children	5%
Other (please specify)	7%
I don't know/prefer not to answer	2%



# Demographics



Age of Child	Total (n=2568)
Up to 2 years old	18%
3 to 5 years old	26%
6 to 11 years old	50%
12 to 15 years old	38 %
16 to 18 years old	23%
Over 18 years old	17%

Marital Status	Total (n=2568)
Single	5%
Married or living together	86%
Widowed	1%
Separated	3%
Divorced	4%

Single or Dual Parent	Total (n=2568)
Single parent	12%
Dual parent	86%
Other	2%

# Demographics



Gender	Total (n=2568)
Male	50%
Female	50%

Age	Total (n=2568)
18-24 years of age	1%
25-34 years of age	19%
35-44 years of age	44%
45-54 years of age	30%
55-64 years of age	5%
65-74 years of age	1%

Province	Total (n=2568)
Newfoundland	1%
Prince Edward Island	1%
Nova Scotia	4%
New Brunswick	2%
Quebec	24%
Ontario	39%
Manitoba	4%
Saskatchewan	2%
Alberta	10%
British Columbia	13%

# Demographics



Education	Total (n=2568)
Elementary (7 years or less)	1%
High School, general or professional (8 to 12 years)	18%
College pre-university, technical training, certificate (CEP), accreditation (AEC) or proficiency diploma (DEP) (13-15 years)	31%
University certificates and diplomas	7%
University Bachelor (including classical studies)	31%
University Masters	10%
University Doctorate (PhD)	1%

Income	Total (n=2568)
\$19 999 and less	3%
between \$20 000 and \$39 999	10%
between \$40 000 and \$59 999	14%
between \$60 000 and \$79 999	16%
between \$80 000 and \$99 999	16%
\$100 000 or more	10%



## INSTRUMENT

A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of  $\pm 1.93\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

## ONLINE PANEL

We ensure the protection of privacy via the usage of unique URLs and respondent IDs in combination with survey IDs.

## QUALITY CONTROL

Stringent quality assurance measures allow Leger to achieve the high-quality standards set by the company. As a result, our methods of data collection and storage outperform the norms set by **WAPOR** (The World Association for Public Opinion Research). These measures are applied at every stage of the project: from data collection to processing, through to analysis. Leger has also obtained "**Gold Seal**" certification from the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA), the leading professional marketing association in Canada. This is obtained following an audit of the company's quality control and business procedures by Deloitte. Leger was certified in 2006 and was re-certified again this year. In addition, Leger **meets or exceeds the standards for marketing research** created by ESOMAR, the international association of public opinion and market research professionals. Its code of ethical practice is reviewed frequently to ensure that representatives respect respondent privacy, regardless of the techniques or technologies used to conduct the research. We aim to answer our clients' needs with honesty, total confidentiality, and integrity.