



U-REPORT CANADA

May 2020

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on
Young People in Canada

Poll 1: How young people are experiencing
the pandemic

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U-Report Canada is a trusted, chatbot-based polling platform for young people aged 13-24 to have a say and decision-makers to understand their views. Developed by UNICEF, U-Report gathers youth perspectives on issues they care about to influence positive change. U-Report is a unique opportunity to get a quick and real-time pulse check of young people's views for a range of purposes, such as to understand how different groups of youth are being affected by decisions, policies, services and events, and involve youth in decisions that affect them. U-Report operates in more than 45 countries with 6 million U-Reporters and counting – every 30 seconds a new U-Reporter signs up somewhere in the world. Launched in Canada in October, 2018, U-Report Canada has more than 600 U-Reporters and counting, with young people in every province in territory on this panel, many of whom are furthest from opportunity. In Canada, U-Report is a partnership of UNICEF Canada and Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Kids Help Phone, The Students Commission of Canada, YMCA Canada, and the RBC Foundation. For more information about U-Report Canada, visit www.ureportcanada.ca.

Young People and COVID-19

Children and youth are the generation that is most affected by the social and economic impacts of the response to COVID-19, because it is taking a toll on all aspects of their lives at a critical time in their development. They will carry the impacts of this pandemic the longest. While young people are sometimes talked about during this crisis, they are rarely listened to.

This U-Report Canada poll that ran for two weeks in March served as a pulse check on how young people and those they care about were experiencing COVID-19 control measures at the start of the “lockdown” crisis-response stage across Canada. Respondents shared ideas and examples of how to take care of themselves and others, and were provided with relevant information and resources about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Takeaways:

- Almost all respondents have heard of COVID-19 (99%) and are practicing social distancing (95%).
- Three quarters of respondents are experiencing increased stress/anxiety. This was the most frequently selected impact of the pandemic, above school closures.
- Young people are primarily getting their information about COVID-19 from the news (89%), followed by social media (68%) and friends/family (54%).
- Respondents' feelings about the information and support they are receiving are mixed. More than half feel like they are getting the information and support they need from their family/friends (65%), the media (60%) and the government (58%). They generally feel less informed and supported by their schools and workplaces, which is not surprising as many of these are under control measures.
- U-Reporters emphasized the importance of finding ways to stay connected with friends, family, and community during this time, and felt inspired by displays of support seen online. They would appreciate easier access to accurate, reliable information about COVID-19, the supports available to them, and to information that would help them make plans for the future.

The results of this poll will be used to amplify young people's needs to help ensure decision-makers are considering their rights and many impacts of both the pandemic and control measures on children and youth.

How are young people experiencing COVID-19? Here is what 77 U-Reporters said:

Have you heard of COVID-19?

Yes – almost unanimously.

All but 1% of respondents reported being aware of COVID-19.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	99
2. No	1
Total	100

Are you currently taking steps to distance yourself from others?

Yes – almost unanimously.

Almost all U-Reporters are practicing some form of social distancing.

Response	Percentage
1. Yes	95
2. No	5
Total	100

How is this global pandemic affecting you?

Top selection: increased anxiety

Three quarters of respondents are experiencing increased anxiety as a result of the pandemic. Over one third reported caring for others (35%) and just over half are missing work (53%).

Response	Percentage
1. Increased stress/anxiety	76
2. Missing school	61
3. Missing work	53
4. Caring for others	35
5. Feeling symptoms	11
6. Other	26

Where are you getting your information on COVID-19?

Top selection: News (print/digital)

U-Reporters are mostly getting their information on COVID-19 from news (89%), followed by social media (68%) and friends/family (54%).

Response	Percentage
1. News (print/digital)	89
2. Social media	68
3. Friends/Family	54
4. YouTube	22
5. Other	20

In the next questions, U-Reporters were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

I am getting the information and support I need from family/friends.

The majority of respondents (65%) feel they are getting enough support and information from their friends and family.

Response	Percentage
1. Strongly Agree	16
2. Agree	49
3. Neutral	26
4. Disagree	7
5. Strongly Disagree	3
Total	100

I am getting the information and support I need from school.

Almost one third of respondents (30%) feel they are not getting the information and support they need from school. About the same proportion say they are getting the information and support they need from school.

Response	Percentage
1. Strongly agree	3
2. Agree	29
3. Neutral	32
4. Disagree	23
5. Strongly disagree	7
6. Does not apply	7
Total	100

I am getting the information and support I need from my workplace.

Under half of respondents (41%) agree or strongly agree that they are getting the information and support they need from their workplace.

Response	Percentage
1. Strongly agree	8
2. Agree	33
3. Neutral	31
4. Disagree	13
5. Strongly disagree	4
6. Does not apply	11
Total	100

I am getting the information and support I need from the government.

Almost 6 out of 10 respondents feel like they are getting the information and support they need from the government. There is an opportunity to increase the communication from government as a credible source of information.

Response	Percentage
1. Strongly agree	14
2. Agree	44
3. Neutral	21
4. Disagree	18
5. Strongly disagree	3
Total	100

I am getting the information and support I need from the media.

Approximately half of respondents agree that they are getting the information and support they need from the media.

Response	Percentage
1. Strongly agree	11
2. Agree	41
3. Neutral	28
4. Disagree	17
5. Strongly disagree	3
Total	100

What additional information and support do you need to feel better and more informed?

- Information that is reliable, unbiased, accurate, and up to date
- Information about financial support
- Information about supports for students
- Easier access to government information & updates
- Information about what to expect in the coming months, especially with school

What have you been doing to support yourself and others in this time?

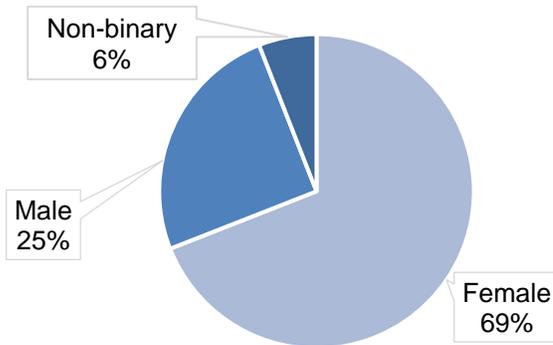
- Staying connected with friends, family, and community
- Practicing social distancing
- Resting, looking after physical and mental health
- Creative hobbies
- Being kind and compassionate to themselves and others

What is something you've seen online that has been positive or inspiring?

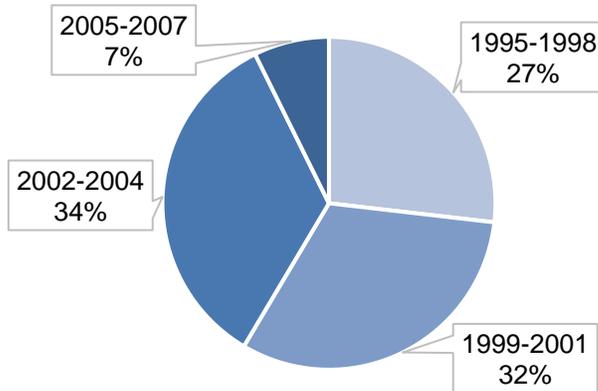
- Displays of support for frontline/essential workers
- People helping one another (e.g. getting groceries)
- People coming together virtually through music and art
- Mental health initiatives
- Efforts to support healthcare workers (e.g. fundraising, mask-making, volunteering)

Demographic Information

Reported Gender



Birth Year



Province/Territory

