



U-REPORT CANADA

July 2020

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

Poll 3: Looking Back and Looking Forward

WWW.UNICEF.CA/ONEYOUTH

U-REPORT CANADA

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 lead by UNICEF Canada, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Kids Help Phone, Statistics Canada, 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.

From June 16th to June 28th 2020, 64 young people responded to the third U-Report Canada poll on COVID-19. The respondent group is smaller than typical polls due to transitions in our polling technology. U-Reporters answered questions about how they were feeling compared to earlier in the pandemic, and shared their views on what the future might and should look like. Respondents were provided with resources and information to help support them with the issues addressed in the poll.

Key Takeaways

- As public health restrictions are lifted and businesses and public places start to open, almost eight out of ten U-Reporters (79%) are as concerned or more concerned about their safety in July than they were a month before.
- Like many adults, U-Reporters are concerned about how quickly their provinces and territories are lifting restrictions, and whether people are still following public health recommendations. They say decision-makers should base plans on science and what's best for public health.
- Although a substantial number of U-Reporters (29%) are feeling less optimistic about the future than they were a month ago, the largest portion (48%) are feeling more optimistic than before.
- According to U-Reporters, the most important services for schools to offer when they open are: providing help with planning for the future (76%), academic support and accommodations (72%) and mental health services (62%).
- U-Reporters are most looking forward to the social aspect of school and hope that teachers and professors will be empathetic and understanding when school starts again.
- The largest portion of U-Reporters (58%) agree or strongly agree that information about COVID-19 has been communicated in youth-friendly language, but they are divided about how well-informed they feel about plans to reopen in their province or territory

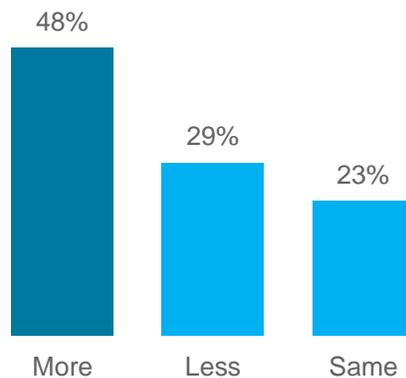
The results of this poll will be used to promote understanding among Canadians about how young people are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensure their views and experiences are taken into account in decision-making.

How are young people experiencing COVID-19? Here is what 64 U-Reporters said:

Compared to how you felt a month ago....

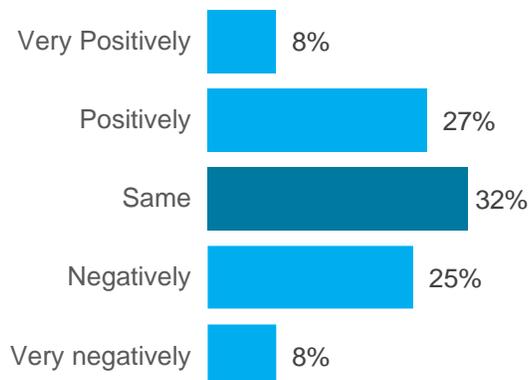
Do you feel more or less optimistic about the future?

Almost half of U-Reporters (48%) are feeling more optimistic in July than they were a month ago. Just under a third are less optimistic.



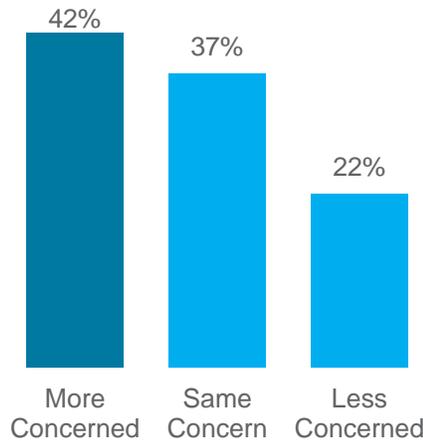
How are you feeling about your mental health?

U-Reporters are divided in how differently they're feeling about their mental health in July compared to a month ago. About one third report no change compared to a month ago. A similar portion reports feeling more positive, and about the same amount report feeling more negative.



As places like parks, schools, and businesses start opening, how do you feel about your safety overall?

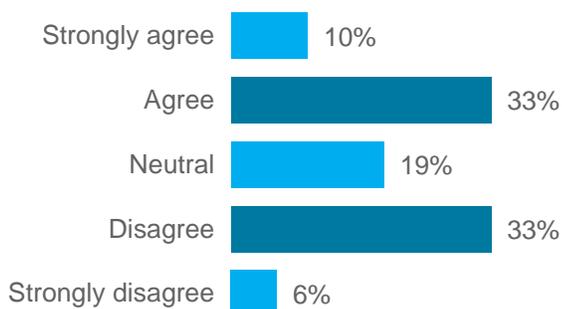
The largest portion of U-Reporters (42%) are feeling more concerned about their safety as places start to open to the public.



How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

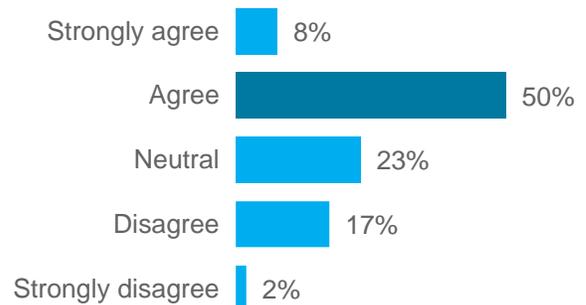
I feel well-informed about plans for re-opening in my province or territory.

U-Reporters are evenly split in terms of how well-informed they feel; 43% agree or strongly agree, and 39% disagree or strongly disagree.



I feel like information about COVID-19 has been communicated in youth-friendly language.

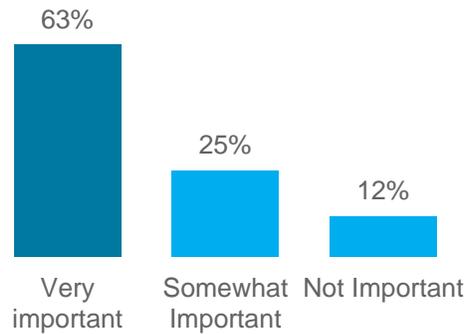
Over half of U-Reporters (58%) agree or strongly agree that information about COVID-19 has been communicated in youth-friendly language.



When schools start opening, how important will these school services be to you?

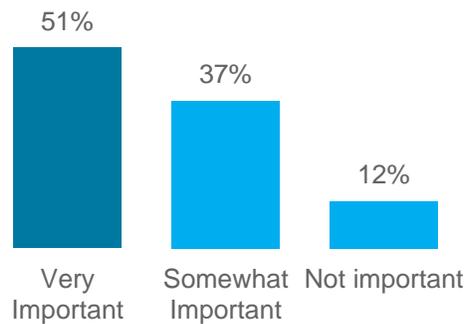
Providing mental health support or services

A majority of U-Reporters (63%) say mental health supports and services are very important.



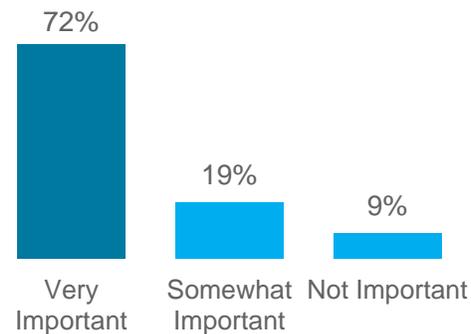
Providing physical health information or services

Half of U-Reporters (51%) say physical health supports and services are very important.



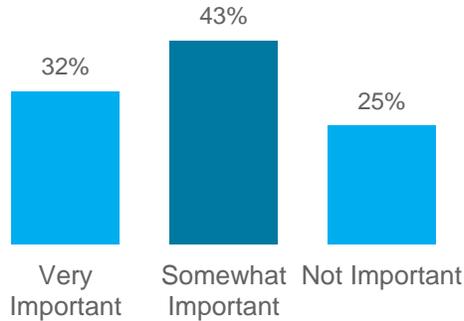
Providing additional academic support and accommodations

A substantial majority of U-Reporters (72%) say it's very important for schools to provide academic support and accommodations.



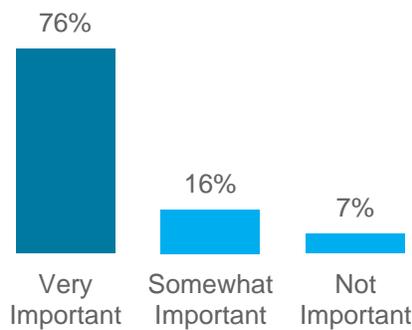
School clubs, sports teams, and other extra-curricular activities

Less than half of U-Reporters (32%) say extra-curricular activities are very important. 1 in 4 say they are not important for schools to provide.



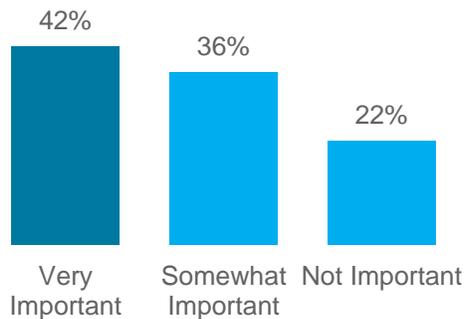
Help with planning for the future (e.g. applying for university, jobs, internships)

3 out of 4 U-Reporters say it is very important for schools to help students with planning for the future..



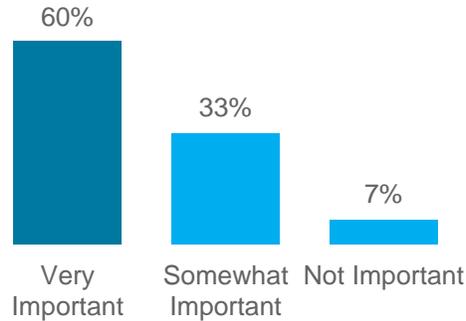
Providing free meal programs

Just under half of U-Reporters (42%) say it is very important for schools to provide free meal programs.



Providing Internet access and equipment

A large majority of U-Reporters (93%) say internet access and equipment are at least somewhat important for schools to provide.



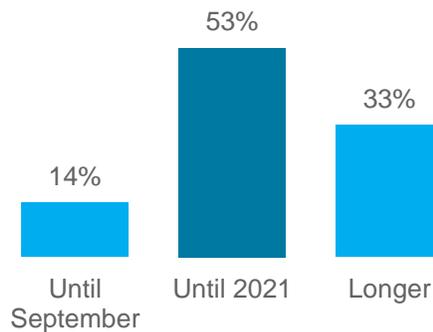
Is there anything else that schools could do to support young people when they open again?

Themes:

- Be flexible and lenient
- Show empathy and understanding of what students are going through
- Find ways to adapt lessons and engage with students online

How long do you think COVID-19 will have a significant impact on your daily life: until September, until 2021, or longer than that?

A large majority of U-Reporters (86%) think that COVID-19 will have a significant impact on their daily life at least until 2021, if not longer.



Based on how your province/territory or community has been re-opening, what is positive? What is challenging?

Themes:

- Concern about others not abiding by remaining public health restrictions
- Concern that things are opening too quickly
- Being able to go outside and socialize more is positive
- The restrictions that are still in place are challenging

What would you recommend to decision-makers who are making plans to re-open?

Themes:

- Make it clear to the public that COVID-19 continues to pose a serious threat
- Make decisions based on science, and prioritize public health and safety
- Enforce public health measures like social distancing, wearing masks, and providing hand sanitizer

What do you hope will be different about school when students eventually go back?

Themes:

- Education should be more accessible and inclusive
- Schools should ensure they are clean and safe for students
- More mental health support, and additional support for students in general with whatever their needs are (e.g. academic, financial, safety)

What about school do you hope will be the same as before COVID-19?

Themes:

- Seeing and spending time with friends and peers
- Sense of community

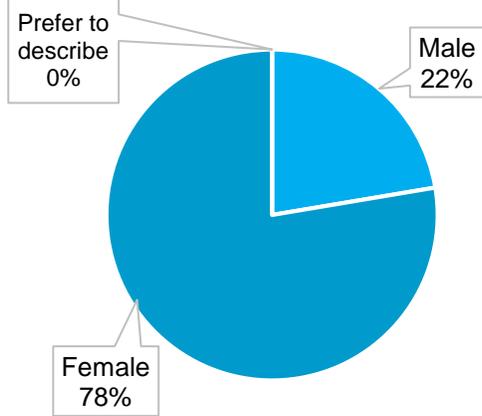
Thinking about the future, what are you most looking forward to?

Themes:

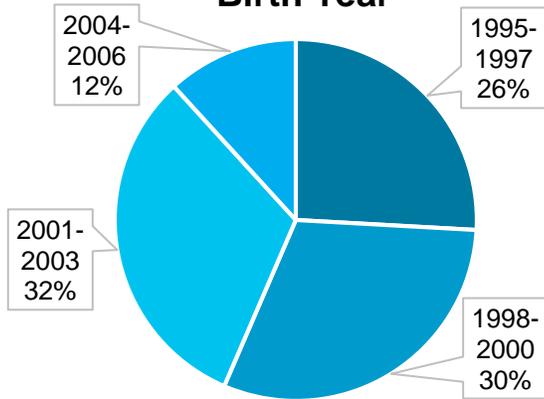
- Being able to travel safely
- Milestones like graduating, getting a job, going to university/grad school
- Returning to a normal routine, regaining a sense of normalcy

Demographic Information

Reported Gender



Birth Year



Province

