



U-REPORT CANADA

July 2020

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

Poll 4: COVID-19 Developments and Service
Preferences

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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 July 7th to July 18th 2020, 129 young people responded to the fourth U-Report Canada poll on COVID-19. U-Reporters shared their views on vaccination against COVID-19, COVID-19 testing, and the anticipated contact tracing app. They also answered questions about their preferred services for mental health support and planning the future. Respondents were provided with resources and information to help support them with the issues addressed in the poll.

Key Takeaways

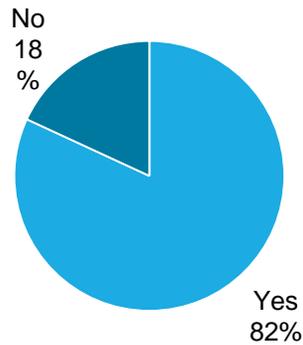
- Approximately 8 out of 10 U-Reporters say they will get vaccinated for COVID-19 when a vaccine becomes available. This compares to 70% of adults in Canada, according to the most recent survey from Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS).
- While the majority of U-Reporters (74%) say they would download a contact-tracing app, they have serious concerns about the potential for privacy issues and some question the usefulness if they are practicing social distancing and other health protection measures.
- If U-Reporters were concerned about their mental health before the pandemic, they say they would have been most likely to turn to a friend among different options to support their mental health. Many were also likely to go to a social worker, counsellor or psychotherapist. Respondents were less likely to consult a teacher, principal or guidance counsellor. Close to a third would not use a telephone helpline or online chat. Since the onset of the pandemic, about 6 in 10 U-Reporters say their mental health supports have changed and some are going without them, including the school-based services they previously relied on.
- Academic planning, career services and financial information were each ranked as “very helpful” school supports for planning for the future during the pandemic by over 70% of U-Reporters.

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 129 U-Reporters said:

When a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available, will you get the vaccination?

A majority (81%) of U-Reporters say they will get the vaccination for COVID-19.



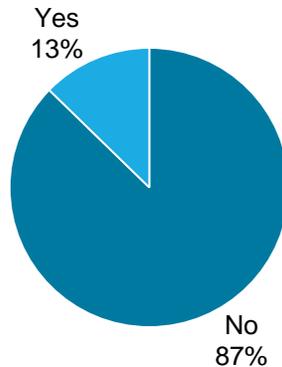
Why not?

Common Themes:

- Don't see the point
- Don't know enough about it (e.g. side effects, ingredients, effectiveness)

Have you been tested for COVID-19?

Just over 1 out of 10 U-Reporters have been tested for COVID-19.



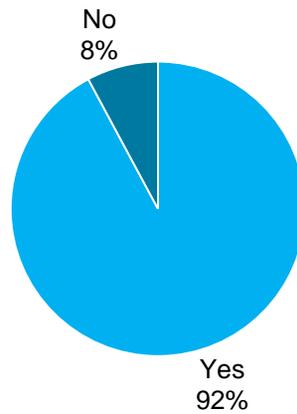
Why did you get tested?

Common themes:

- Required for work
- Experiencing symptoms
- Concerns about having been exposed

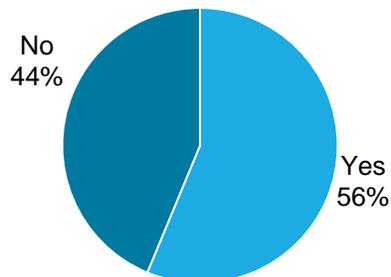
If you felt symptoms, would you get tested?

Most U-Reporters (92%) say they would get tested for COVID-19 if they felt symptoms.



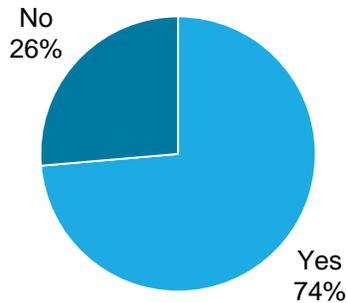
Soon, a mobile app will be available that will alert people who've come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. This app will be free and voluntary to download. Have you heard about this app?

Just over half of U-Reporters (56%) have heard of the app, while just under half (44%) have not.



When it becomes available in your province or territory, will you download it?

Approximately 3 out of 4 U-Reporters say they will download the app when it becomes available, and 1 out of 4 will not.



Why would you download it?

Common themes:

- To help stop the spread of COVID-19
- To protect those around me
- To keep myself safe
- To stay informed

Why wouldn't you download it?

Common Themes:

- Many concerns about privacy, security, and surveillance
- Don't see the utility; already isolating or social distancing

Is there anything you think the government needs to consider before rolling out this app?

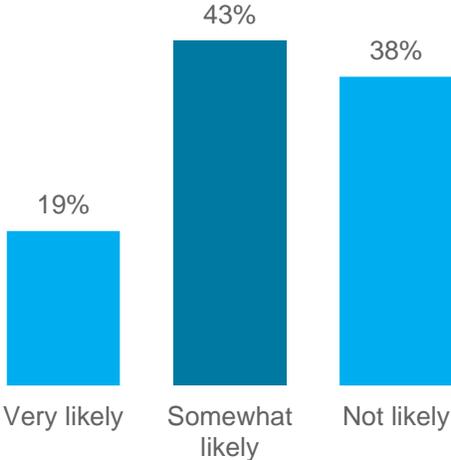
Common Themes:

- Carefully consider issues related to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and data security
- Make sure the app is effective and accurate before rolling it out

Throughout the pandemic, U-Reporters have told us how important mental health services are for young people. Before the pandemic, which of the following sources would you be likely to go to if you were concerned about your mental health?

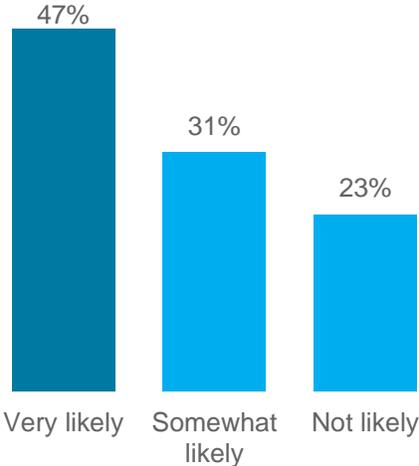
A. Family doctor/local health clinic

Almost 4 out of 10 U-Reporters say they would not be likely to consult their family doctor. A slightly larger portion (43%) say they would be somewhat likely.



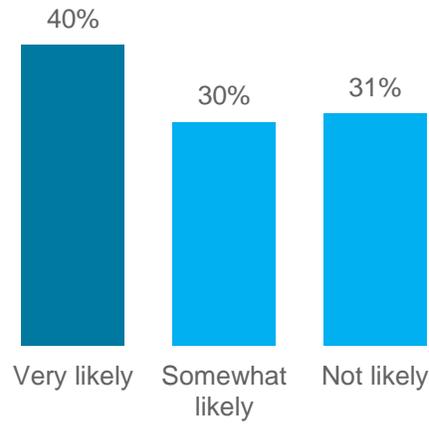
B. Social worker, counsellor or psychotherapist

A majority of respondents (78%) say they would likely to go to a social worker, counsellor or psychotherapist.



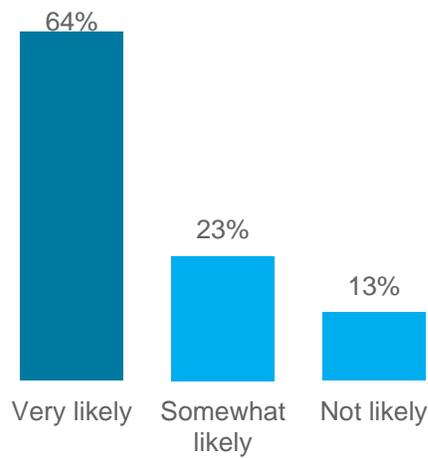
C. Psychologist or psychiatrist

A majority of respondents (70%) say they would be likely to consult a psychologist or psychiatrist. Almost a third say they would not.



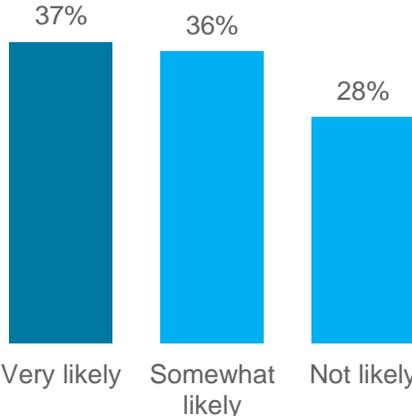
D. Friend

Almost 9 out of 10 U-Reporters say they would be likely to go to a friend. The largest portion (64%) say they would be very likely.



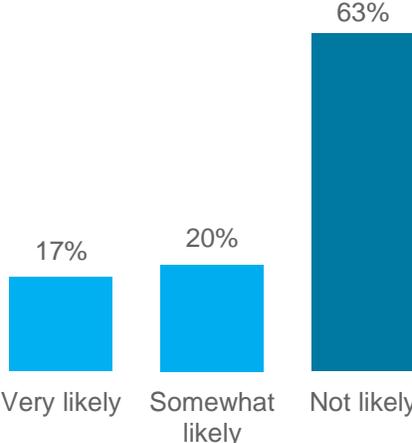
E. Family member

U-Reporters are divided about whether they would go to a family member. Almost a third (28%) say they would not, while a somewhat larger portion (37%) say they'd be very likely to.



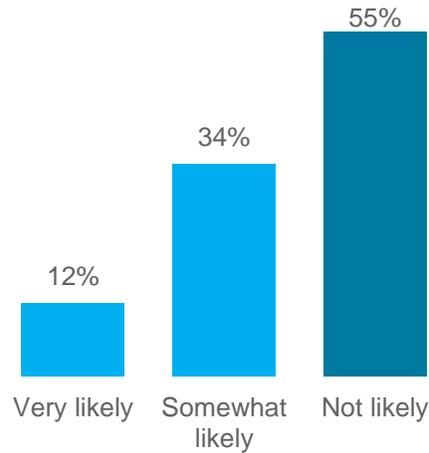
F. School teacher or principal

A majority of respondents (63%) say they would not be likely to consult a teacher or principal.



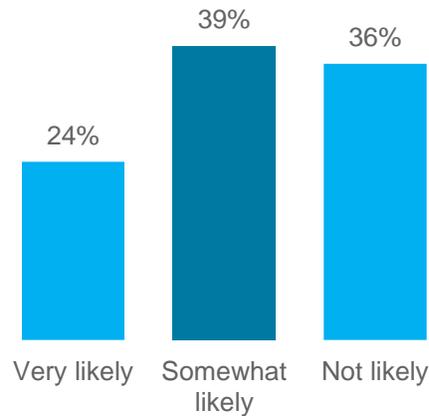
G. School guidance counsellor

Just over half of U-Reporters (55%) say they would not likely consult a guidance counsellor. A slightly smaller portion (46%) say they would be likely to.



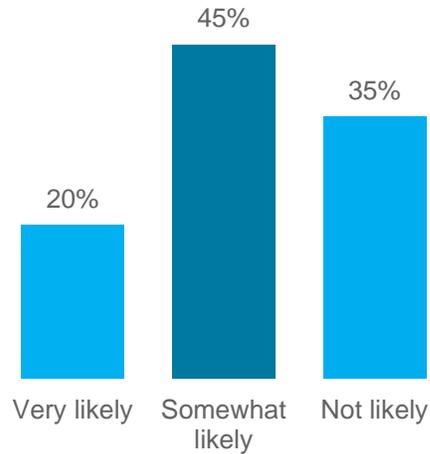
H. Telephone help-line

A majority of U-Reporters (63%) say they would be likely to use a telephone help-line. Just over a third (36%) say they would not.



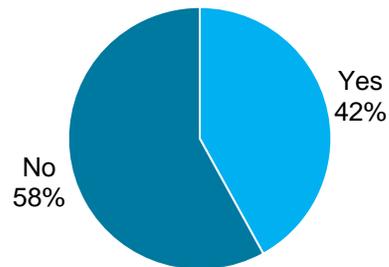
I. Online help chat

A majority of U-Reporters (65%) say they would be likely to use an online help chat. Just over a third (35%) say they would not.



Since the lockdown started, has the way you access mental health supports and services changed?

Almost 6 out of 10 U-Reporters say their access to mental health supports and services has not changed in lockdown, while 4 out of 10 say it has.



How has this changed?

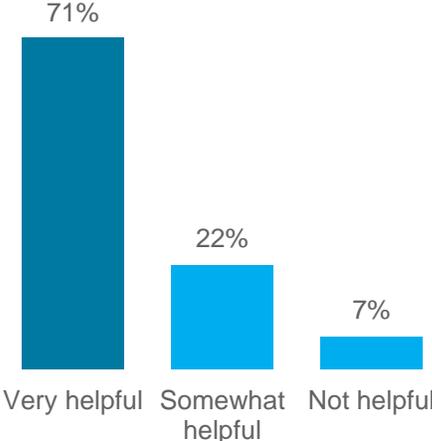
Common Themes:

- In-person services have moved online
- Loss of access to services (e.g. group therapy and services accessed through school)
- Reduced use of supports and services, because accessing them online rather than in person is difficult and discouraging

To help you plan and prepare for the future, what kind of school supports would be most helpful?

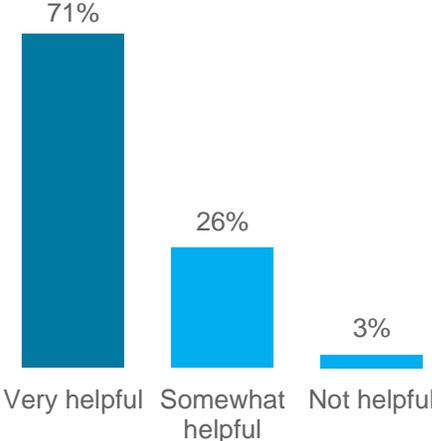
A. Academic planning (e.g. course/program selection advice)

7 out of 10 U-Reporters say support with academic planning would be very helpful.



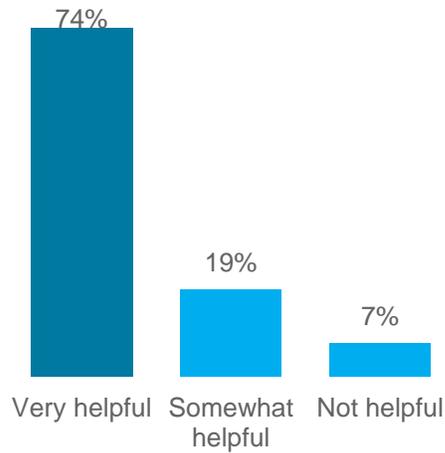
B. Career services (e.g. help with job search, interviews)

A large majority of U-Reporters (97%) say career services would be helpful to them.



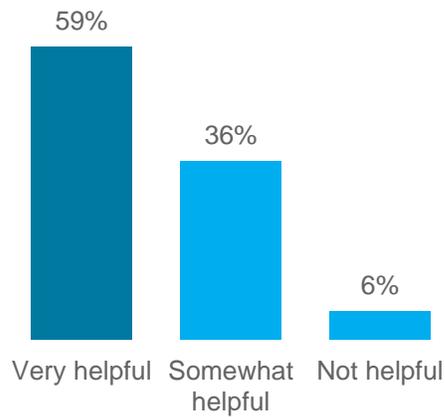
C. Financial planning (e.g. student loan & budgeting advice)

Approximately 3 out of 4 respondents say help with financial planning would be very helpful.



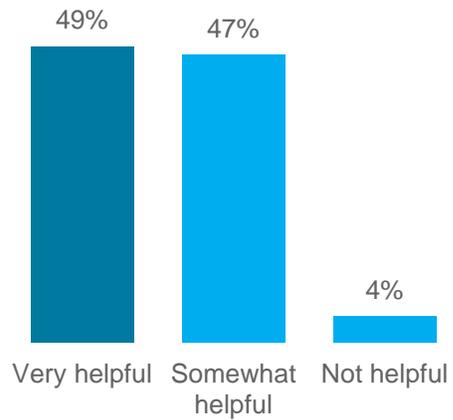
D. Volunteer opportunities

A majority of U-Reporters (59%) say that volunteer opportunities would be very helpful. Over a third (36%) say they would be somewhat helpful.



E. Skill-building workshops

About half of U-Reporters said skill-building workshops would be very helpful.



What should we be asking young people about to understand what life is like now?

Common Themes:

- How they're feeling, especially about mental health
- How their regular routines and plans for the near future have changed as a result of the pandemic
- How they have been coping with isolation

Demographics

