

**FOOD SECURITY & HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES**



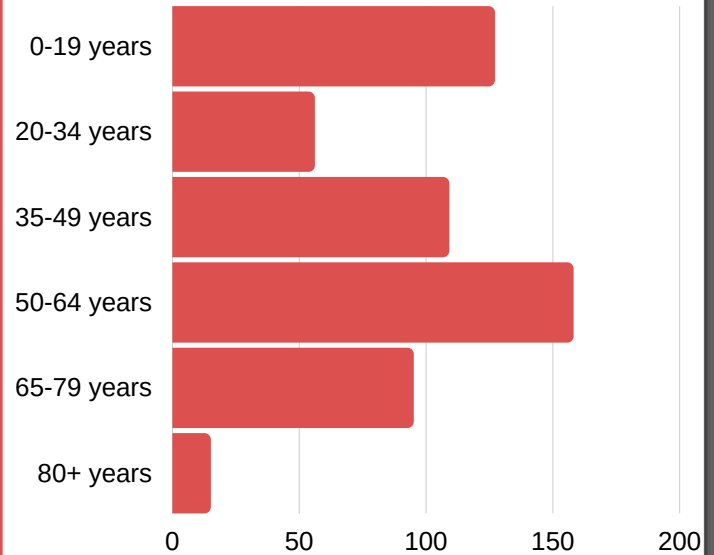
The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many aspects of our lives that we might take for granted, including food security and household activities, presenting us with new challenges to the way we go about our daily routines. In the early days of uncertainty, nowhere was this more apparent than in the ways we access food. Activities surrounding food security were at the forefront of nearly everyone's minds as we navigated how to safely and efficiently conduct grocery trips, how to plan meals and make use of what's on hand, learning new skills such as baking and preserving, and even growing, raising or producing our own food supply.

How we spent our time in isolation is illuminating as well, as we find new ways to occupy ourselves, and coexist with the people we share living space with when other outlets may no longer be available.

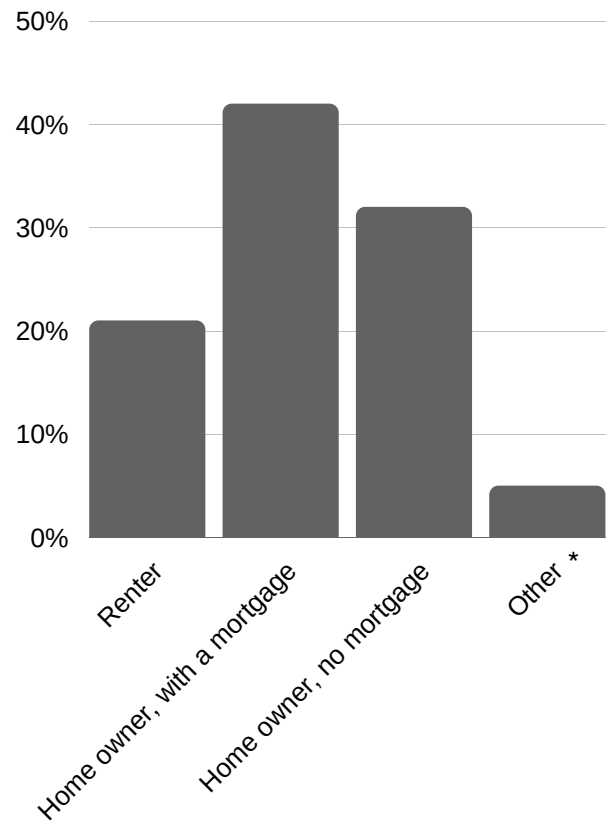
Through these surveys, we asked people and the community to reflect on the lessons that we should carry forward and how we can implement them as we continue to navigate the unique challenges brought by the pandemic.

**262** ...total number of respondents to Survey #1

**Ages Represented in the Households of Survey Respondants**

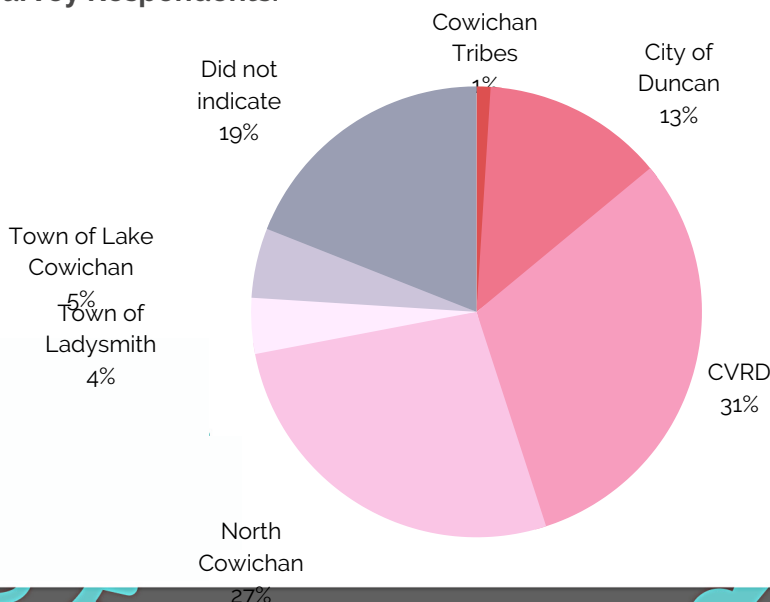


**Housing Situation:**



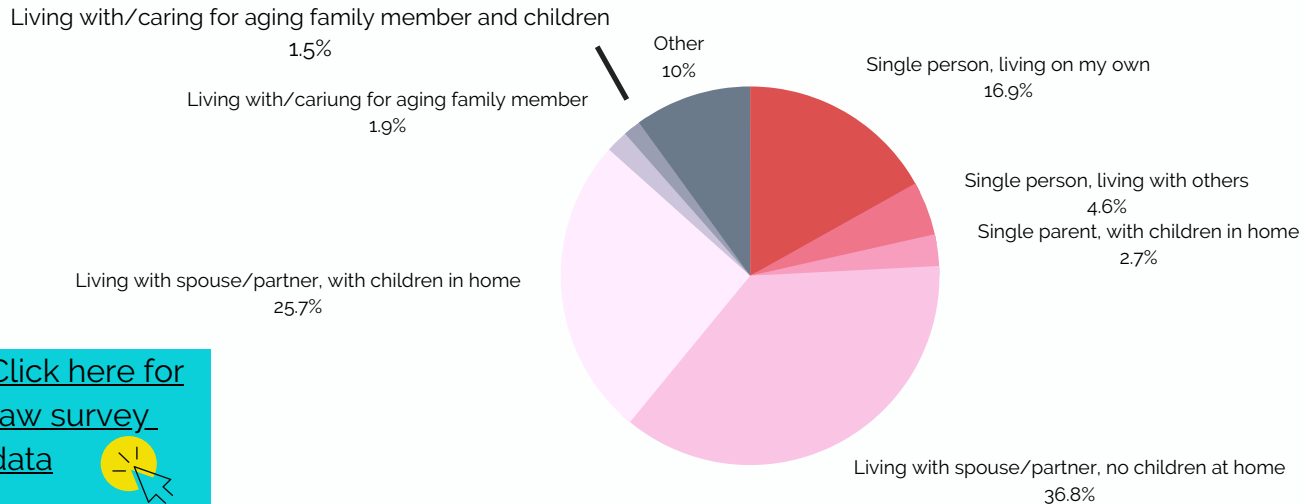
\*Other: work for board, living in a car/rent free/ subsidized/temporary housing, small cabin/off grid

**Household Locations of Survey Respondents:**





## Household Makeup of Survey Respondents:



[Click here for raw survey data](#)



## COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD ACCESS TASK FORCE

The Cowichan Green Community (CGC) has been leading an Emergency Food Access Task Force in response to the impact that COVID-19 is having on our emergency food system. Many of the emergency service providers listed on this [COVID-19 Food Resource List](#) are represented on this 'virtual' task force. These organizations are working tirelessly, with less staff and volunteers, to continue to feed those in need in the Cowichan Region. They are working together to ensure each organization has the support and specifically the food that they need each week. You'll find the latest copy of the COVID-19 Food Resource List [here](#).

## FOOD INSECURITY

Defined as as the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources.

In their report on food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic, StatCan observed the following:

- **Almost one in seven Canadians report food insecurity**
- **Canadians living in households with children are more likely to be food insecure**
- **Canadians who were absent from work due to COVID-19 were almost three times more likely to be food insecure than those who worked**

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00039-eng.htm>



## COVID-19 led to increases in the following household activities:

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| House Cleaning by 34%              | Games/puzzles by 41% |
| Watch shows/movies by 53%          | Crafting by 39%      |
| Internet/gaming/screen time by 59% | Art projects by 29%  |
| Renovation projects by 35%         | Playing music by 33% |

**FOOD SECURITY & HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES**



**The need for transportation shifted in the following ways:**

- Traveling long distances (>50km trips) ↓ 63%
- Commuting to work ↓ 33%
- Vehicle costs (fuel, maintenance) ↓ 73%

**45%**

of survey respondents indicated an increase in producing their own food with **9%** also raising chickens/livestock

**15%**

of survey respondents indicated an increase in producing more food to feed the community.

**Changes in how households access food:**

- Wild/traditional food harvesting ↑ 11%
- Canning/preserving food ↑ 22%
- Making bread, cheese, beer, wine, etc. ↑ 39%

**Other ways:** shopping local, Cow-op, farm stands, trading, sharing, reduced grocery trips, online ordering & delivery, less take-out/more take-out, bulk buying, using food in freezer, pre-made meal delivery, food bank, free meal service

**Tools and learning opportunities people want, to enable growing more food:**

- Free access to seedlings/seeds and soil (50%)
- Access to advice from a resident gardener/other expertise (34%)
- Webinars on growing food and other topics (30%)
- Tool loaning program (22%)
- Community gardening plot (14%)

**How has the COVID-19 Crisis impacted your household when it comes to the following activities?**

	INCREASED	DECREASED	NO CHANGE	N/A
Eating fast food:	4.56%	47.3%	29.05%	19.09%
Eating take-out:	17.01%	48.55%	21.58%	12.86%
Cooking at home:	60.74%	2.48%	34.3%	2.48%
Baking:	52.7%	1.66%	39.0%	6.64%
Eating meat:	6.28%	12.13%	76.99%	4.6%
Purchasing locally grown food at farm stands:	21.4%	9.47%	57.2%	11.93%
Purchasing locally grown food online:	19.09%	2.07%	36.1%	42.74%
Purchasing locally grown food at farm markets:	12.92%	22.08%	49.17%	15.83%
Consuming Alcohol:	20.08%	8.79%	51.05%	20.08%
Our weekly food budget has:	40.42%	22.08%	35.42%	2.08%

**68%**

of survey respondents indicated a decrease in connecting with friends/family

**34%**

of survey respondents indicated that their household has become more self-sufficient through the COVID-19 crisis.

**What are some ways people increased their in self-sufficiency?**

Cooking / baking from scratch · Growing vegetables and fruit · Raising livestock · Canning / Preserving food · Bartering · Collecting rainwater · Using what we have on hand to avoid trips out · Creating more garden space · Making soap and other cleaning products · Reusing items



"Not travelling to visit my kids and grandkids on the mainland. Some food shortages (ie. salt), canned goods, flour... Long lines. There is no running in to pick up a store bought item quickly. Giving up a whole morning or afternoon to run the simplest errand or doing without. Less time with friends engaging in social activities and gatherings."

"Accessing hand soap and other similar products at a reasonable price is nearly if not impossible. This means we are trying to clean in different ways and almost at the point of using bleach mixed with water. But with dogs, this is our last resort. Buying food is now different as we would normally buy the non-perishable and frozen stuff less often but this is considered bulk buying and not allowed. Thus, we now have to buy foods like that more often. Stress is becoming unbearable as we don't get to see friends in person or visit them. Rarely seeing family as we try to ensure their health."

"Food - much of what we do seems to revolve around how to use what we have better and decrease waste. The sight of empty or depleted shelves was frightening, the current improvement - I'm concerned is only temporary and worry there will be food shortages."

"Changes to grocery shopping habits, having to be more organized with lists and limiting frequency of shopping. Challenges of short supply of food on shelves when you do get to grocery store."

"Our physical health and food security have been my biggest concerns. Not working has been a challenge and since my work is feeding my community I have been trying to find other ways to help people build more food security for themselves."

"Difficult when I share rental unit with others. My food is being stolen."

**Regarding food and household activities, what have been your biggest concerns during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"Washing everything as soon as it comes in the door. Not using cloth bags."

"I find it very stressful washing every thing before coming into the house. It's a half day event practically. Some people don't do this but I feel I should."

"We are rarely leaving the house. We normally would be hiking, playing sports or going to beaches but now we only walk in our neighborhood. Rarely use our vehicles."

"Worried about farmers adapting and selling as the farmers market is much smaller and restaurants closed. Wondering how we can support them better so we can increase local food security. Also worried about lower-income folks who may suffer more if global food prices start to increase substantially."

"Grocery bill has increased significantly because I cannot shop the way I usually shopped. Before, I picked up sale items when I knew I would eventually use them. Now, I buy what I need at non-sale price and when I try to buy sale items from the store flyer, they are often not included in my order. I cannot look at the products myself and am often disappointed in what the store sends to me."

**Questions for the future...**

- How can we increase our neighbourhood resilience, including food security, as a Region?
- How can we make sure the lessons learned during this time are not forgotten once things get back to some semblance of normal?

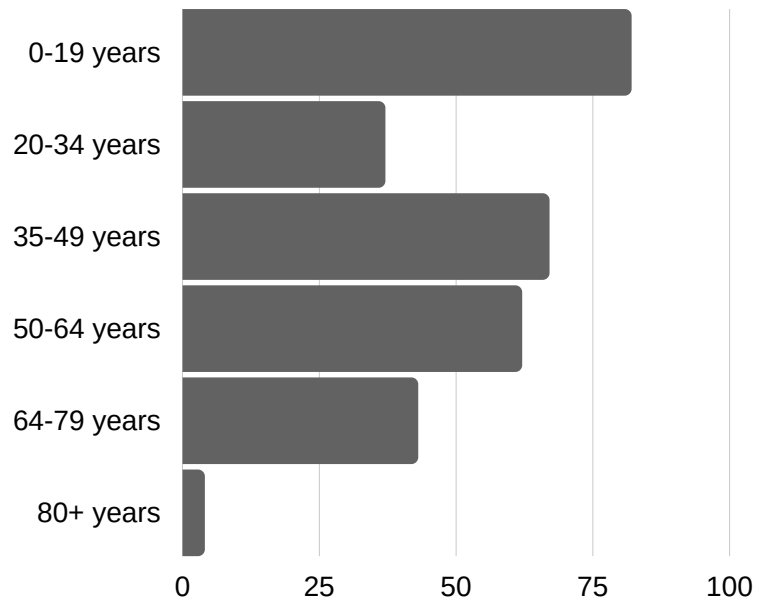




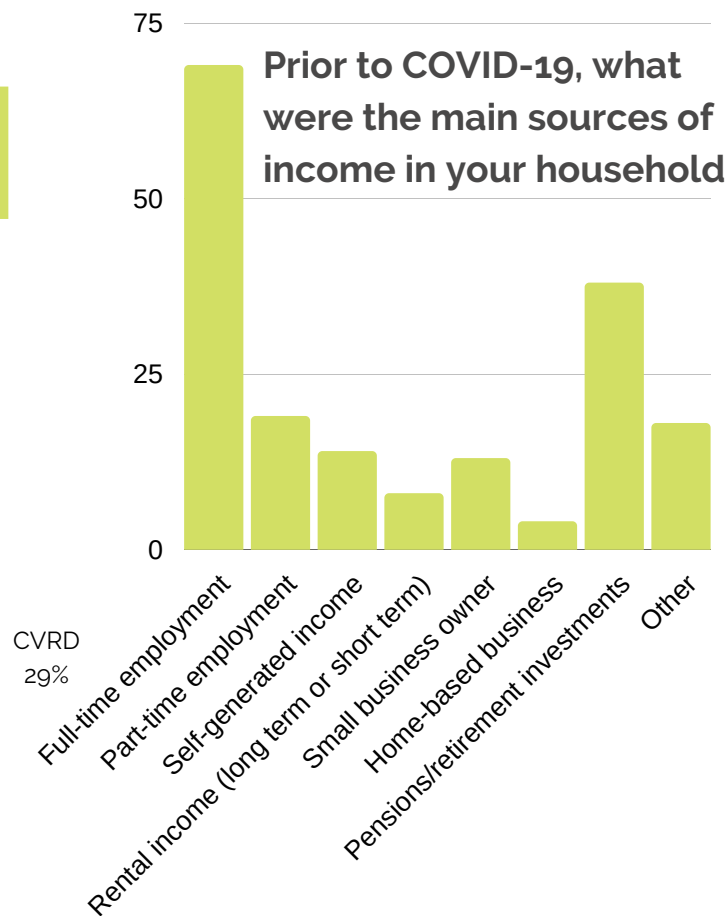
From lawyers to labourers, executives to educators, the sudden onset of COVID-19 has drastically changed the way nearly all of us earn a living. While many were able to pivot toward working from home and telecommuting (for better or worse, as our surveys found), others did not have that option, and were instead forced to remain on the "front lines", changing their work procedures to include physical barriers, personal protective equipment, and increased hygiene measures as they adapt to the increased risk posed by the virus. Further to those fortunate enough to implement these types of changes to their work routines, many experienced a significant loss of income in businesses and industries that were forced to shut down altogether, either temporarily, or in many cases permanently due to the pandemic. How have the people of the Cowichan Region been able to manage with these drastic changes to their lives and livelihoods?

**126** ...total number of respondents to Survey #2

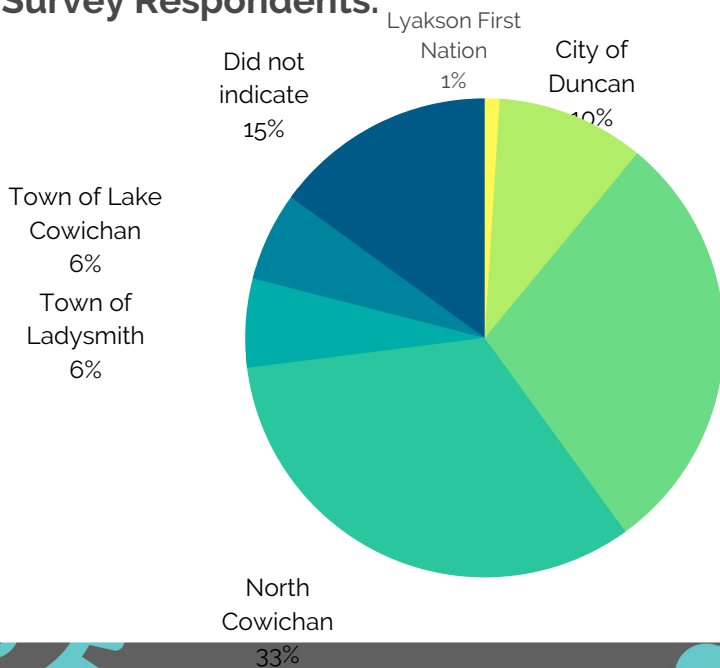
**Ages Represented in the Households of Survey Respondants**



**Prior to COVID-19, what were the main sources of income in your household?**



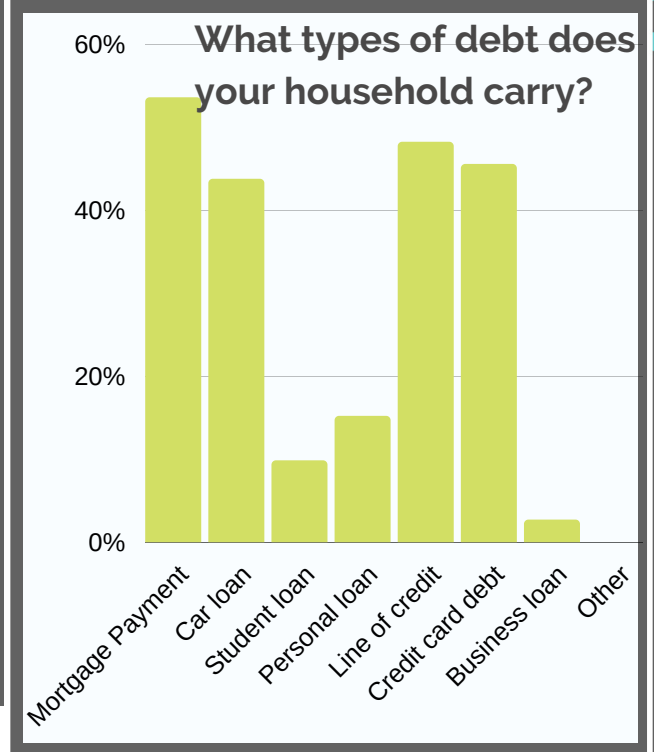
**Household Locations of Survey Respondents:**



## WORK & HOUSEHOLD INCOME

How has the COVID-19 Crisis impacted you financially, when it comes to the following?

	INCREASED	DECREASED	NO CHANGE
Your household income:	4.76%	52.38%	42.86%
Your overall household expenses:	21.60%	36.80%	41.60%
Your ability to assist other family members financially:	9.52%	34.92%	55.56%
Your ability to meet your financial obligations (i.e., pay bills on time):	3.17%	23.02%	73.81%
Your ability to pay your mortgage or rent:	1.59%	13.49%	84.92%
Your household savings or other investments:	3.97%	51.59%	44.44%
Your retirement savings or other investments:	0%	48%	52%



### Impacts of COVID-19 on Cowichan Businesses:

- 56% have temporarily/indefinitely shut down
- 3% (2) of the 70 businesses surveyed have closed their doors permanently
- 62% seeing revenue reductions of at least 75%, compared with April of 2019
- 54% have reduced staff from pre COVID-19 levels
- 37% experienced disruptions to the supply chain they depend on to operate their business

Source: Cowichan COVID-19 Business Survey Results. Published June 16, 2020

[Click here for raw survey data](#)

### 43% of respondents reported that at least one member of their household is considered an essential service worker.

What are some of their occupations that have deemed them essential?

- Farmer · Community Organizer · Geologist · Childcare provider · Armed Forces / Coast Guard · BC Ferries · Nurse / Healthcare Professional · Non-profit / community support · Paramedic / Emergency services · Teacher / Educational Assistant · Logger · Accountant / Bookkeeper · Electrician · Real estate services · Essential services management · Journalist · Counselor / Mental Health Support · Pharmacy assistant · Trucker / Warehousing · Food Service / Production · Legal service · Banking · Local, provincial, or federal government · Insurance services · Waste management · Construction · Essential retail worker (Grocery, liquor etc) · Shelter worker

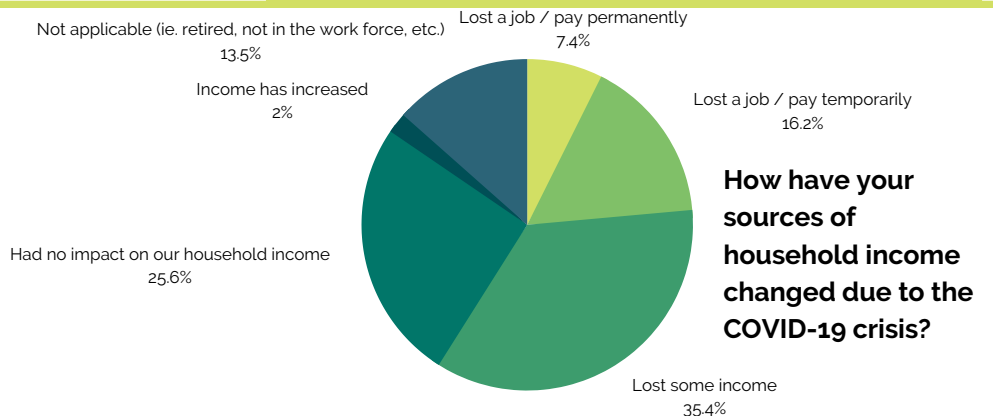
### Some common answers...

#### Where have you increased your household spending?

- Food/Groceries
- Electricity
- Alcohol

#### Where have you saved money?

- Transportation (vehicle costs, gasoline, etc.)
- Eating out
- Entertainment





**Federal COVID-19 Benefits & Support:**

**Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB)**

**Eligibility:** Canadian residents at least 15 years of age who have stopped working for reasons relating to COVID-19 and who had employment/ self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application and have not quit their job voluntarily. Individuals who are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits, or who have recently exhausted Employment Insurance regular or fishing benefits may also be eligible.

**Benefit:** \$2,000 (taxable) for a 4-week period, for up to 24 weeks (March 15 to October 3rd 2020, or retroactively up to December 2nd 2020).

**Statistics** (as of July 19th, 2020):

- Total Applications received: 21.36 million
- Total unique applicants: 8.40 million
- 1, 124, 880 British Columbians have applied for CERB
- Total dollar value of CERB benefits paid so far: \$61.26 billion

**Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)**

**Eligibility:** Canadian employer whose business has been affected by COVID-19. Reduction in revenue compared to same month last year or average of January and February 2020 must be at least 15% for March 2020, 30% for April, May and June 2020. Enables businesses to re-hire workers laid off as a result of COVID-19

**Benefit:** Subsidy of up to 75% of employee wages for up to 24 weeks, retroactive from March 15, 2020 to August 29, 2020.

**Statistics** (As of July 21st, 2020):

- 724, 000 approved applications.
- 269,940 unique applicants with approved claims
- Total dollar value of subsidies paid: \$22.26 billion

**Canadian Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) Eligibility:**

Post-secondary students, and recent post-secondary and high school graduates who are unable to find work due to COVID-19. This benefit is for students who do not qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) or Employment Insurance (EI). Applicant must be unable to work due to COVID-19, or looking for but unable to find work due to COVID-19.

**Benefit:** \$1250 per 4-week period from May to August 2020. If applicant has a disability or dependent (12 or under), they can apply for an additional \$750 per each 4-week period.

**Statistics** (as of July 23rd 2020):

- 1,518,490 approved applications
- 664, 875 unique applicants
- Total dollar value of CESB payments so far: \$2.08 billion.

**BC Emergency Benefit for Workers**

**Eligibility:** For BC residents who lost employment or self-employment income on or after March 15, 2020, are eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and have not received provincial Income Assistance or provincial Disability Assistance.

**Benefit:** One-time, tax-free \$1,000 payment.

**Statistics:**

- 16,389 people applied for the benefit in the first 45 minutes of the application being open.

**33%**

...of survey respondents reported having applied for the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

**64%**

...of survey respondents feel that a universal income should be implemented.

**Do you think that the benefits are sufficient?**

**Here are some selected responses:**

- They are sufficient yes. And have been provided rapidly and with minimal effort, I'm very grateful.
- No, \$2000 covers mortgage and a bit towards groceries.
- Concerned about the implication on taxes to repay this spending by all levels of government.
- Not enough to feed a family of six.
- Yes, however too many people falling through cracks. If you're not on CERB, other supports don't apply. I don't qualify for CERB as currently on EI, so I can't access other help. Adult son doesn't qualify for CERB as he was not working when world shut down, having just completed a program 2 weeks earlier. Western Marine Institute not covered by BC student aid programs. No rent support, or BC worker support or anything else because not on CERB...very frustrating
- They are very helpful for our situation, for the past couple of months. For families, they would be pitifully low.
- They wouldn't meet our debt load.
- Yes. Just enough for food and bills. I also get the child tax benefit that keeps us afloat also.



"Being a paramedic, paid the crappiest wages. Would be better to stay home and suck up the COVID funds . They make way more money sitting at home than paramedics make. Why bother going to work and risk getting a life threatening disease . BC needs to pay their paramedics properly. Sick benefits needed . 65% of paramedics have no sick benefits."

"I will be laid off work on the 15th May, not Covid-19 related. I am concerned about how to find a job when there are not many opportunities in my field of work at this time. I spend quite a bit of my day researching and thinking about alternative work or a new career"

"Being able to pay for rent and utilities."

"Lack of job opportunities"

"Wellbeing of lower wage folks. Survival of small businesses."

"I'm temporarily not working and my partner has taken a temporary 30% pay reduction so his company hopefully doesn't have to lay anyone off. My main concern is that as the primary income, if my husband's job goes we will be in trouble. My other concern is that I'll not be able to go back to work in the Hearing Clinic I manage because the owner/Practitioner has to close. And if so, jobs will be hard to come by, especially now if lots of people are looking for work, and it's already a difficult place to find work anyway. Lastly, although I'm very grateful to receive the CERB, I'm uncertain about what happens after my allotted eligibility time expires if I'm not back at work; I think I can go to regular EI but I'm not sure. Hopefully all these concerns will not come to be!"

"My work. I am working so much it has impacted my entire family"

**Regarding work, income and finances what have been your biggest concerns during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"Busier at work than usual, so added stress"

"Husband has been working from home because he has COPD. His work are not renewing his contract because he can't go back to work due to COVID. This is not right. We have lawyers involved."

"Our income has been halved."

"Uncertainty of the economy, job market, healthcare, etc. Added stress from working at home."

"My husband transitioned from self-employment as a contractor to full-time employment at the same company on April 1st. While this was a significant reduction in income, he now has a stable job with benefits and a pension, that he can do from home. In order to do this we've had to reduce our expenses dramatically. Income from my practice as a counsellor dropped significantly through March and April as I transitioned to online work, but has picked up again to 75%-80% of normal levels. We're now revisioning how we spend money (...) As long as we can keep our expenses very low, we can carry on with this situation. We're also still in the process of consolidating our pre-existing debtload into one smaller monthly payment, which will also help a lot."

"Working in hospital essential services-the concern of washing and keeping from bringing home the virus. Fear of getting COVID or transferring to immune compromised family. Guilty not able to support elderly family not living in my home. Money issues are not a problem and am grateful."

**Questions for the future...**

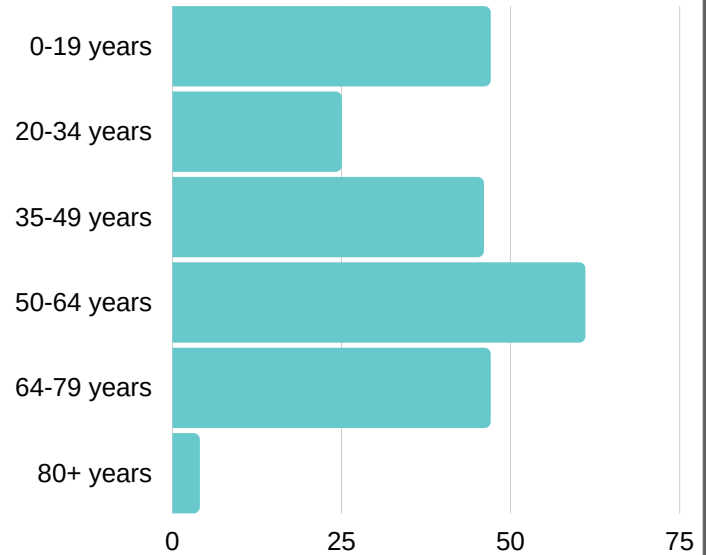
- "What will a "reopening" of the economy look like?
- What sacrifices will we have to make, personally and as a society, to get our economy back on track?



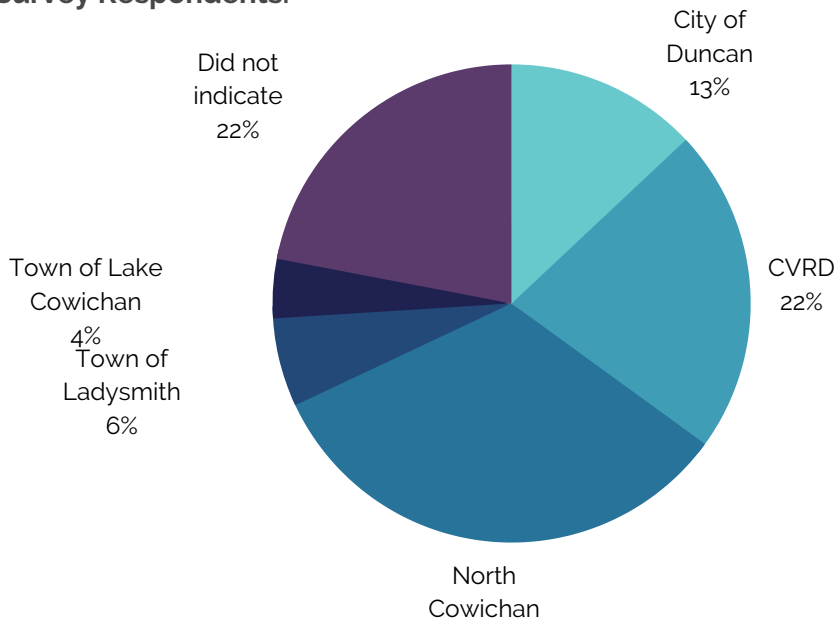


The COVID-19 crisis has tested our resilience as individuals, families and communities. In Phase 1, it has impacted Personal and Family Well Being in a multitude of ways, both positive and negative. Our survey on personal and family well being found that because of the COVID 19 crisis, for some households and families it has been a benefit to reduce overall activity, spend more family time together and appreciate greater simplicity. For others isolation at home has created interpersonal conflict and challenges in the home. For households where COVID has affected family income and created uncertainty about the future, this is causing increased anxiety and stress. Others households worry about the impact that extended social isolation and increased screen time will have on their children.

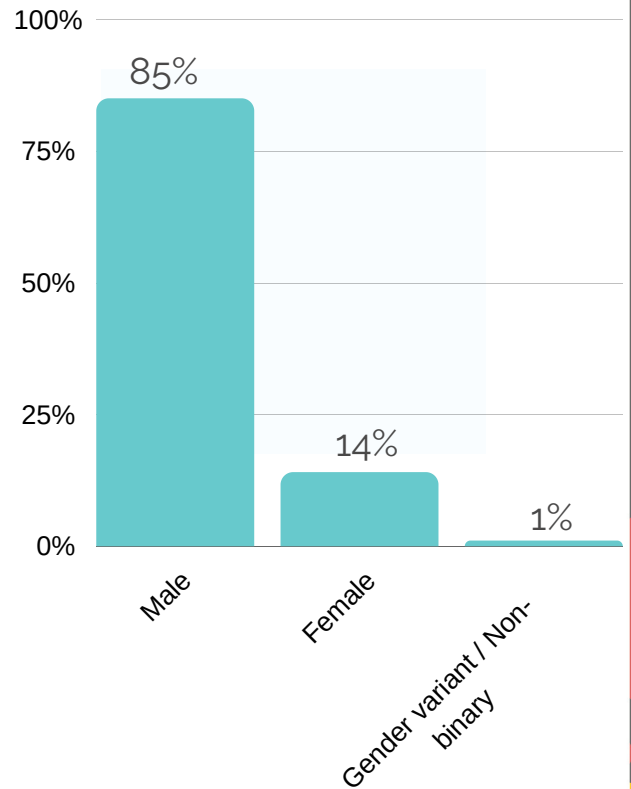
**Ages Represented in the Households of Survey Respondents**



**Household Locations of Survey Respondents:**



**What is your gender?**

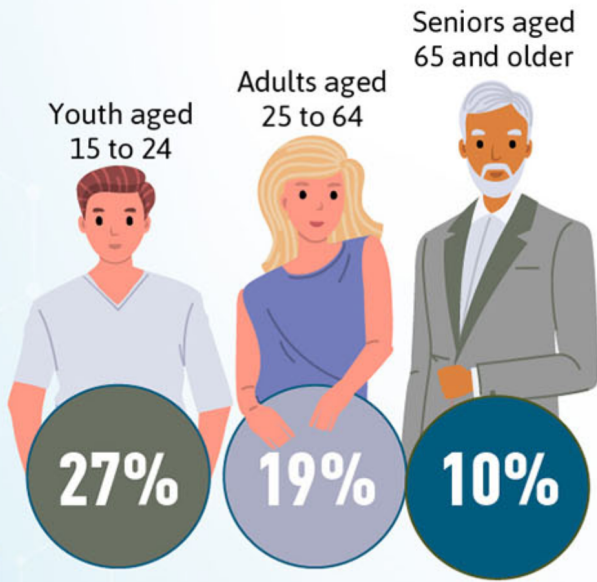


Here is what Canadians reported doing in May.



Source: Stats Canada: Mental Health of Canadians during COVID-19 Pandemic, May 2020

**120** ...total number of respondents to Survey #3



Compared with younger Canadians, Canadians aged 65 and older reported lower rates of symptoms of moderate to severe anxiety.

Source: Stats Canada: Mental Health of Canadians during COVID-19 Pandemic, May 2020

**What are you doing to address mental health challenges? Most to least:**

- Get outdoors
- Hiking and walking
- Yoga and meditation
- Staying connected virtually
- Prayer
- Zoom church and devotional practices
- Creative pursuits
- Volunteering and helping others

**While many mental health supports and services have been shut down due to COVID-19, many respondents are accessing online counselling, GP appoints, yoga and AA meetings. For some it is challenging not having home support**

**Mental Health Impacts**

**38%**

...of survey respondents say that their personal and family mental health is a little or a lot **worse** since the COVID-19 crisis hit.

**9%**

...of survey respondents say that relationships with those they share living accommodation are a little or a lot **worse** during this time of isolation.

**23%**

...of survey respondents say that their personal and family mental health is a little or a lot **better** since the COVID-19 crisis hit.

**15%**

...of survey respondents say that relationships with those they share living accommodation are a little or a lot **better** during this time of isolation.

**Why is your mental health worse?**

- worry and anxiety from loss of social connection
- not seeing aging parents and other family
- not participating in church and community activities
- closing down of support services such as counselling, AA, church
- worry about losing work and income
- more physical pain and lack of access to support

**Why are relationships worse?**

This has caused increased interpersonal conflicts due to factors such as difficulty dealing with children who feel isolated, teens who want to be with friends and family with mental health challenges.

**Why is your mental health better?**

- more time for self care
- reduced anxiety from less stress
- slowing down
- more time for walking
- time for focussing on spiritual and wellness practices
- more time for family

**Why are relationships better?**

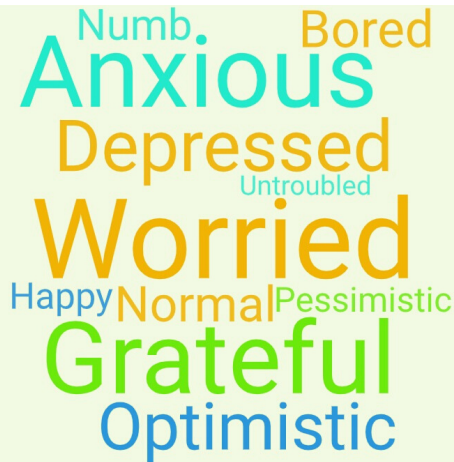
The benefits of more time together with less stress and time constraints are improved communications and greater connection.



**31%** consuming more **alcohol**

**10%** consuming more **cannabis**

How do you feel?



**Physical Health Impacts:**

**45%** physical well-being is worse since COVID 19

**20%** physical well-being is better since COVID 19

**Common things said:**

No access to pool, gym, fitness classes, yoga, tai chi, dance has resulted in weight gain, increased pain, increased blood sugar and blood pressure. Inability to have massage, chiro, physio is affecting pain levels and resulted in increased depression and anxiety and loss of motivation.

**COVID 19 crisis has pointed to:**

- An increased demand to provide safe shelter and support for women and their children fleeing physical violence.
- Increased anxiety and panic as women with post-traumatic stress navigate isolation.
- The Poverty Law Advocate is experiencing increased calls for support as the financial challenges worsen for women - child support payments are interrupted, WCB cases are on hold, and landlord/tenant issues are compounding.

**Belonging and Participation**

The Cowichan Valley is an active community where artists create, people play sports, gather for rallies and causes and volunteer in many ways. In the beginning of COVID-19, these activities disappeared overnight and people had to adapt and find other ways to stay connected:

- **77%** are staying connected with family and friends
- **69%** have an adequate support network
- **63%** feel that their family is doing well
- **69%** say family members are feeling restless

**Impacts of COVID-19 on Well Being of Cowichan Business Owners:**

- **26%** either feel exhausted/have no energy/overwhelmed, experience anxiety or depression
- **31%** are either stressed or very stressed
- **13%** have been severely negatively impacted by COVID-19
- **11%** expressed that they or their staff were fearful/worried to resume work
- **29%** identify no impact/minimal impact, feel i or that they "now see the light at the end of the tunnel"

Source: Cowichan COVID-19 Business Survey Results. Published June 16, 2020



[Click here for raw survey data](#)





"Our son is feeling very vulnerable about the pandemic. He is afraid of getting sick (although he is not at risk). He also doesn't want to return to school. He has isolated himself from his friends by choice, but this has also worn him down.. He misses going to the library, recess and socializing at school."

"I am very worried about aging and medically frail parents that we are used to seeing often in a week. Both sides including parents and in-laws have had significant health challenges during this time. Missing time with a new grandchild when facetime does not fulfil holding her. Missing time with friends, family and children when we are used to being together weekly"

"Stressed about bills, landlord has become abusive."

"Initially - additional stress, anxiety (work, income, health, loved ones). Settled now, drawing on resources and spiritual and wellness practices to support."

**What have been your biggest concerns during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"I have a severe back condition and use the pool 6 times a week for aerobic exercise and swimming as well as Tai Chi twice a week. Without these outlets my body is seizing up because I cannot walk more than 110 metres without pain."

"An enormous part of our continued well being has been our trust in our local health care system, and in the B.C. government's response. We know we are in good hands, and that sensible, science based decisions are being made to keep us all safe. We see that our neighbours near and far are pitching in and doing their best to contribute to everyone's safety. I can only imagine the emotional and mental toll of living in a part of the world where this doesn't happen."

"It's reassuring that there's an increased awareness of those people in our community who are the most vulnerable, especially elderly in care homes, people dealing with mental or physical challenges, the homeless community."

**Are there any positive experiences or opportunities you have seen take place during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"We try to find ways to be grateful and stay healthy."

"I have had time to slow down and reflect."

"I love that now that people are less busy, they have time to put energy into relationships."

"I'm less stressed from working in the office, getting more sleep, because able to sleep longer because no commute."

**Questions for the future...**

- What is the longer term impact of disconnection and isolation?
- How can we ensure support for those most vulnerable in our community?
- How can we bring awareness to impacts on domestic violence, opioid use and suicides during this crisis?
- What is the impact of losing support services and closing services that benefit those most vulnerable, such as the pool and library services?



**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,  
AGING FAMILY MEMBERS,  
&/OR SPECIAL NEEDS/  
MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

COVID-19 led to unprecedented closures in all areas, including schools and daycares, in-person care services, day programs for elders and those with special needs as well as any respite services for caregivers. This intensely increased responsibilities at home for parents and caregivers with little indication of how long it would last.

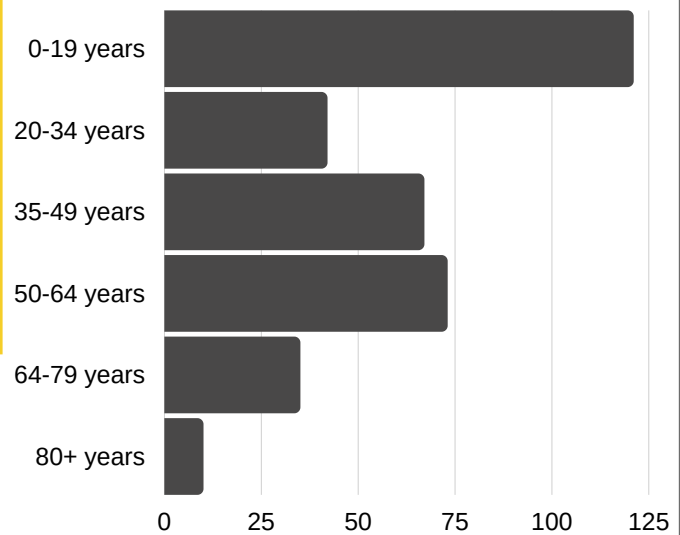
Isolation and missing family and friends was of course the most common challenge for many, while others appreciated extra time without the stress of daily commutes, errands and activities outside the home.

Those living in residential care homes were extremely isolated as they could no longer have visitors. The unintended consequences of physical distancing and new safety protocols led to extreme loneliness causing an increase in anxiety and depression.

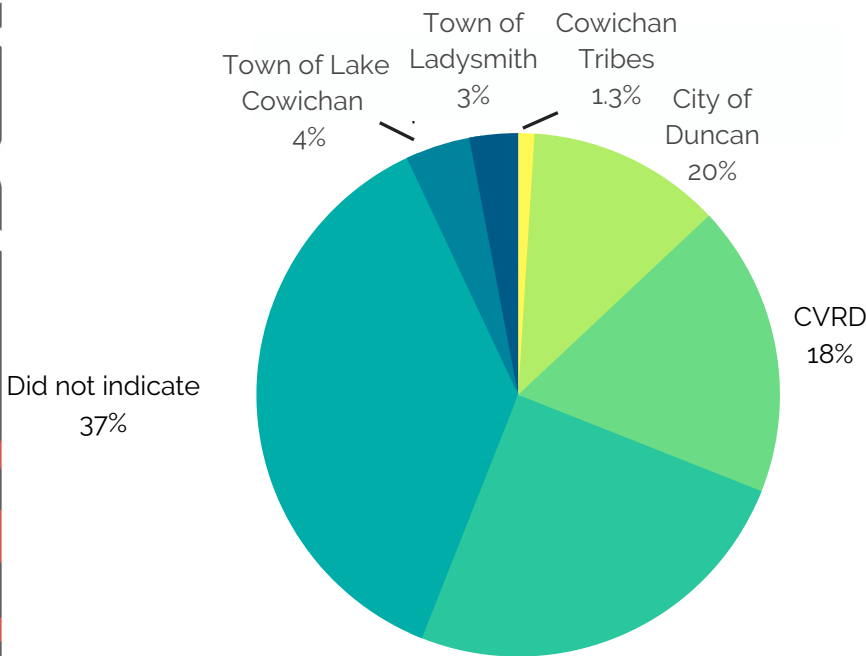
Depending on the circumstances, this time of shutting down was a welcome break for some but harmful for others.

**150** ...total number of respondents to Survey #4

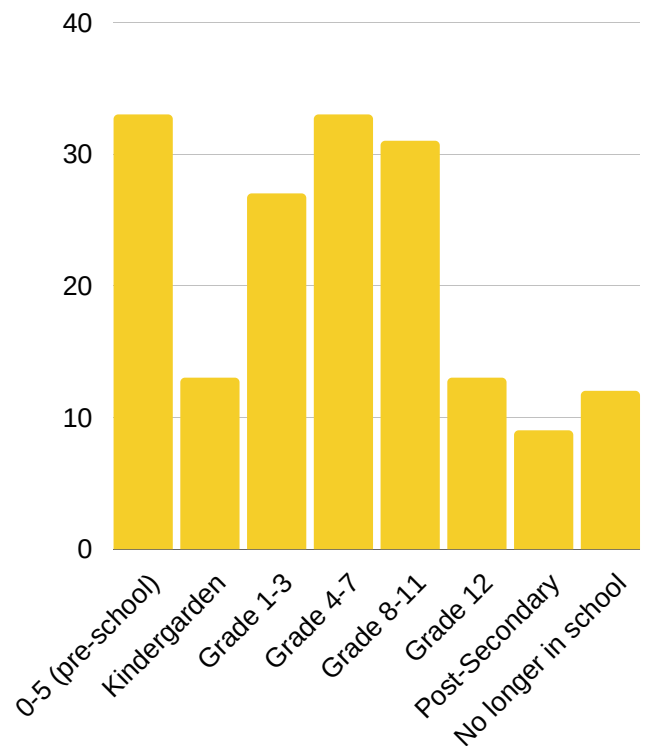
**Household Age Representation of Survey Respondents**



**Household Location**



**School Levels for Children at Home**



**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,  
AGING FAMILY MEMBERS,  
&/OR SPECIAL NEEDS/  
MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

**76%**

of survey respondents with children indicated their screen time had increased and observed the following changes in their child as a result...

- Increased outbursts, moody and impulsive behaviour & irritability
- More argumentative
- Poor sleeping habits, over tired, lethargy
- Less focused/more distracted, unmotivated
- Headaches

### Benefits for Children & Families

- More quality time together - one-on-one and as a family unit
- Improved bonds and relationships
- Increase in outdoor activities & creativity
- Improved health including less stress, fewer colds/flu & more rest

### Access to Internet & Technology

15% of respondents with children did not have the technology needed for at home learning due to:

- out of date technology
- competing needs with working parent(s) and/or siblings
- School District 79 loaned iPads with 3 months of free internet\*

Respondents with aging family members got creative with technology by:

- talking on the phone through a window
- teaching/learning new video applications, email
- Care staff facilitating virtual connections

### Ways Children Are Learning Outside of School Curriculum

- Reading, Educational Webinars, Online Learning Series/Apps, YouTube
- Nature walks, gardening
- Cooking, baking, crafts

### Top Ways of Addressing Childcare

- 52% of parents who responded are not working/were laid off
- 21% have two parents taking turns
- 19% indicated children take care of themselves or each other/Non-parent family member(s) are helping out
- 16% rely on extra screen time

### Biggest Challenges for Children

frustration  
isolated confusion school  
hugs stressed quiet  
friends aggressive  
bored listless depressed  
missing irritated distant  
afraid lonely worried  
angry sad needy arguing  
restless confused  
family emotional  
anxious weary  
moody



[Click here for raw survey data](#)



**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,  
AGING FAMILY MEMBERS,  
&/OR SPECIAL NEEDS/  
MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

**Top Concerns for Aging Family Members**

56% of survey respondents were caring for/concerned about aging family members, who may or may not be living with them. Top concerns included:

- Not being able to see/visit them
- Loneliness, isolation and impacts on mental wellbeing
- Risks to health, existing health concerns/compromised immunity
- Confusion about the virus and social distancing

**67%**

of survey respondents with aging family members could only interact with them virtually or over the phone.

**37%**

of survey respondents have family members with special needs or mobility issues.

**Challenges for Caregivers**

Caregivers experienced extra stress with limited opportunities for support due to canceled services. Many stated they were not able to prioritize their own needs or take a rest.

- 16% of survey respondents felt the changes to their caregiving situation was unsustainable
- 13% experienced limited opportunities for residential respite or day programs
- 25% were concerned with allowing outside community support services in the home
- Added stress if aging family member was admitted to hospital as they could not be there to advocate or support them.

**Services or Care Supports No Longer Accessible or Available**

Assisted Bathing - Foot Care - Doctor  
Dentist - Physiotherapy - Counselling  
Cleaning Services - Hearing Specialist  
Optometrist - Massage - Chiropractor  
Aqua Therapy - Mental Health Supports  
Occupational Therapy - Mobility Training  
Home Support - Utility Service Workers  
Home Maintenance - Day Programs  
Respite Care - Case Workers

**COVID-19 changes people want to see continue as we move forward:**

Quality family time - Less spending/Less shopping - Cleanliness - Caring for/Helping each other  
Slower pace of life - Telehealth - Supporting local - Time in nature - Growing food - Cooking  
Appreciation for Frontline workers - Driving less - Less pollution - Work from home - Kindness  
CERB into Universal Basic Income - Delivery/Curbside pick up - Gratitude

**Questions for the future...**

- How long should parents expect to work from home without child care or their children going back to school?
- What resources will be available for children who may not be able to return to school?
- When will there be respite for caregivers or other support services available?
- Will our systems (finally) make permanent shifts to accommodate accessibility for everyone?
- How long can we sustain living in isolation with increasing mental health and wellbeing concerns?

**FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN,  
 AGING FAMILY MEMBERS,  
 &/OR SPECIAL NEEDS/  
 MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

"My eldest child has had a tremendous expansion in her creativity... I don't believe she would have tapped into this well of creativity without this time away from her regular activities. Our younger child is calmer and spends more time reading on her own...".

Increased family time is a positive for us. One of my children benefits from not being in school and is more fulfilled at home. We have been able to spend more time in the garden and also reflect on our family values.

"It gave us an excuse to take their (aging parent's) car off of the road!"

"Our children have formed a close bond and have very little conflict. Previously they were often tired and had less energy for each other."

"Yes a focus on the simpler things. Slow pace. Less exterior pressures. Less shopping trips!"

**Are there any positive experiences or opportunities you have seen take place during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"Renewed interest in cooking & gardening"

"One child has experienced a substantial reduction in anxiety and has a much more positive outlook on life"

"Increased TV watching and decreased motivation to do other activities with less social opportunity."

"We have learned that our day to day life with school and two parents working is not the way we want to live..."

"This has increased Mom's anxiety and cognitive decline. Dad carrying the load alone primarily so his health issues have increased.."

"Their health both physical and mental well-being is a concern."

"They don't understand social distancing or the rules to protect them"

"...Unfortunately, we will have to get back to this schedule eventually."

**What are the biggest concerns or challenges you have had during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?**

"The care home staff has arranged Facetime calls, but Dad loses interest very quickly. Maybe he has forgotten us already."

"I have concerns about visiting but then have concerns about them (aging parents) being alone for too long and something happening."

"Timely access to online delivery, supply shortage of medicine, hand sanitizer and masks"



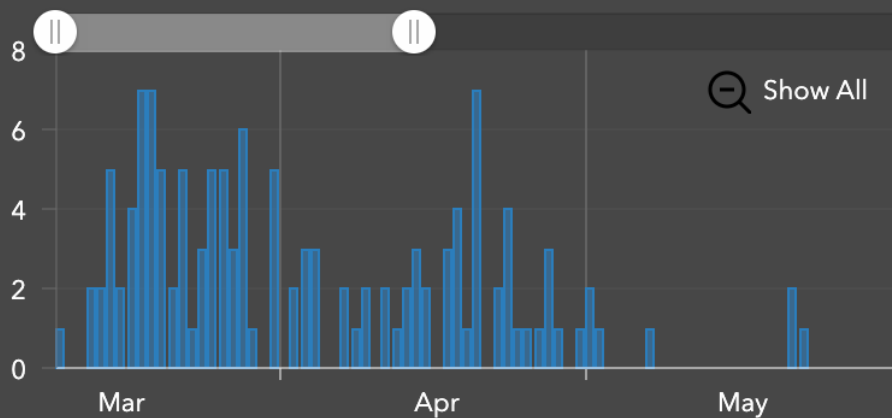
The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our day to day lives in unprecedented ways. On March 17, the provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry declared a public health emergency and over the course of the following days, restrictive measures were put in place that would have non-essential members of our community self-isolating for close to 2 months. During Phase 1 of the provincial emergency response Social Planning Cowichan began gathering information and collecting experiences on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on individuals and households in the Cowichan Region. We asked our community to reflect on how these times were affecting them - What have you found challenging or has given you hope? How do you feel about the future as we start on the other side of this crisis?

Four surveys were launched and available to complete between May 1st to June 15th:

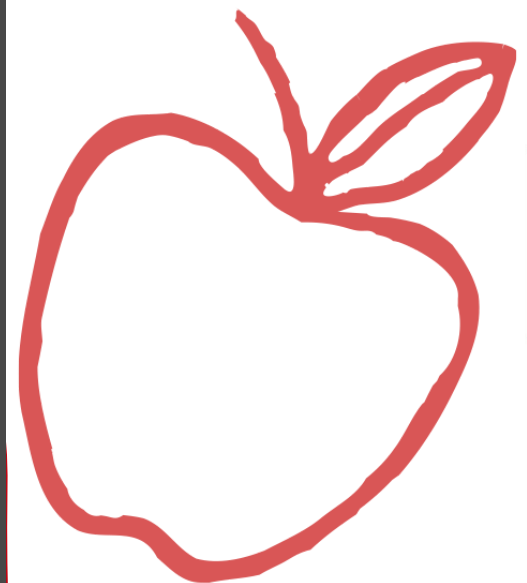
- Food security and household activities
- Work and household income
- Personal and Family Well Being
- Families with children, aging family members and/or special needs/mobility challenges



Health Authority Cases Reported to Public Health by Day



**Daily Cases on Vancouver Island**



**March 11:** Pandemic declared by the World Health Organization

**March 12:** Provincial Health Authorities in BC recommend all events over 250 people be cancelled; Recommend against all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including USA; Those returning should self-isolate for 14 days.

**March 16:** Public health officials advise British Columbians to work from home if able; Gatherings of more than 50 people are banned; Businesses that cannot avoid large groups of people, like restaurants, bars and casinos, are ordered to shut down; Restaurants move to take-out service only; Visits to long-term care homes are restricted to essential workers.

### **PHASE 1**

**March 17:** Provincial Health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry declares a public health emergency. Classes cancelled indefinitely for K to 12.

**March 18:** Provincial state of emergency declared; Announcement that Canada-U.S. border will be shut down to non-essential travellers like shoppers and tourists.

**March 21:** BC Ministry of Health orders personal service businesses to shut down immediately. Essential services allowed to operate.

**March 26:** Care home staff are ordered to stop working at multiple facilities at once. Federal government imposes strict mandatory quarantine rules on travellers returning to Canada (heavy fines, jail time can be awarded if people ignore these regulations).

**April 8:** Government of BC announces mandatory self-isolation plan for returning travellers. All provincial parks and campgrounds are closed.

**April 15:** Provincial state of emergency extended to April 28th.

**May 1:** BC begins accepting financial applications for its Emergency Benefit for Workers (one time \$1000 payment for affected workers).

**May 14:** Some restrictions begin to ease, provincial parks open for day use.

### **SOURCES:**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/covid-19-bc-timeline-1.5520943>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/phase-3>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/covid19-bc-update-july-23-1.5660471>

<https://www.theprogress.com/news/covid-19-heres-a-phase-by-phase-look-at-how-b-c-hopes-to-re-open-parts-of-society/>

The COVID 19 community surveys were developed by the Social Planning Cowichan team, with guidance and input from Michael Lait, Social Planning Cowichan chair and post doctoral fellow at Vancouver Island University, whose expertise is conducting community-based social impact research. We also liaised with staff from the Economic Development Department at the CVRD to ensure collaboration with their efforts to survey the business community.

We used SurveyMethods, an online survey tool with pre-built and customizable templates for both choice and open-ended responses.

The surveys were promoted through Facebook and distributed by email through multiple community networks and local business associations throughout the region. The surveys were sent out to all media outlets in the Cowichan Valley, with uptake from The Discourse Cowichan, an online independent news forum. Paper copies of the survey were sent out through Emergency Food Access Task Force Food Basket program.

### **Number of respondents for each survey**

**Survey #1 Food security and household activities - 262**

**Survey #2 Work and household income 126**

**Survey # 3 Personal and family well being 120**

**Survey #4 Families with children, aging family members  
and/or special needs/mobility challenges 150**

