

Survey shows therapists in Canada have been affected by – but are adapting to – the pandemic

OTTAWA, December 6, 2021 – The COVID-19 pandemic has been a surreal experience that has not only affected the well-being of families in Canada but also those who support their health and well-being. Therapists have been facing the same changes, challenges and uncertainties as the families they serve, and new data from the COVID-19 IMPACTS: Family Therapists Survey show that the pandemic has not only affected the mental health of their clients but also their own well-being, and has changed how they are practising family therapy.

“This survey reveals the immense challenges facing therapists during the pandemic, supporting Canadians while dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on their own lives and family well-being” said Norah Keating, PhD, board member of the Vanier Institute of the Family.

To explore these impacts, adaptations and evolving needs, the Vanier Institute of the Family collaborated with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) and the Canadian Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) to conduct a two-phase crowdsourced survey one month and one year after the start of the pandemic to understand the impacts on counsellors and psychotherapists who work with couples, families, children and/or adolescents.

Data from this survey shed valuable light on practitioners’ experiences and well-being, with therapists reporting a negative impact on their health and well-being (albeit not to the same extent as the general population), as well as on their clients’ well-being. Like the families they serve, therapists report that they have been adapting their practice, though some note that clients have refused virtual therapy.

CCPA President-Elect Carrie Foster highlighted the importance of a healthy and thriving family therapy profession, identifying that “therapists and clients alike experienced a collective trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impacts were widespread. However, therapists reported personal and professional resilience during these challenging times, and a strong commitment to the clients and families they serve.”

Andrew Sofin, CAMFT President, shared that “findings from this survey – one of the first to explore the impact of COVID-19 on therapists who work with families – will provide decision-makers with a clearer picture and new understandings of how to best support the well-being of therapists in Canada.”

Panellists from each stakeholder organization will hold [a panel discussion at 12:30 p.m. EST today](#) to review the survey findings, discuss the positive and negative impacts, reflect on whether these impacts are temporary or permanent, and assess what this means for the future of the profession, our practitioners and the families that they support.

[Read the COVID-19 IMPACTS: Family Therapist Survey report](#)

This survey was jointly funded by CCPA, CAMFT and the Vanier Institute of the Family.

The Vanier Institute of the Family is a national, independent, charitable organization dedicated to understanding the diversity and complexity of families and the reality of family life in Canada. The Institute offers access to a range of publications, research initiatives, presentations and social media content to enhance the national understanding of how families interact with, have an impact on and are affected by social, economic, environmental and cultural forces.

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.

The Canadian Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) is the national non-profit association representing Couple/Marriage and Family Therapists in Canada. The CAMFT is comprised of student, affiliate, associate and RMFT members and has a mandate to promote the profession of Couple/Marriage and Family Therapy in Canada.

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