

# Vermilion Area COVID Well-Being Survey Summary

## What You Said (June 2021)



In June 2021, County of Vermilion River FCSS and Town of Vermilion FCSS partnered to administer the COVID-19 Well-Being Survey. The FCSS Programs engaged with the public through various methods to get their feedback on how the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted the community.

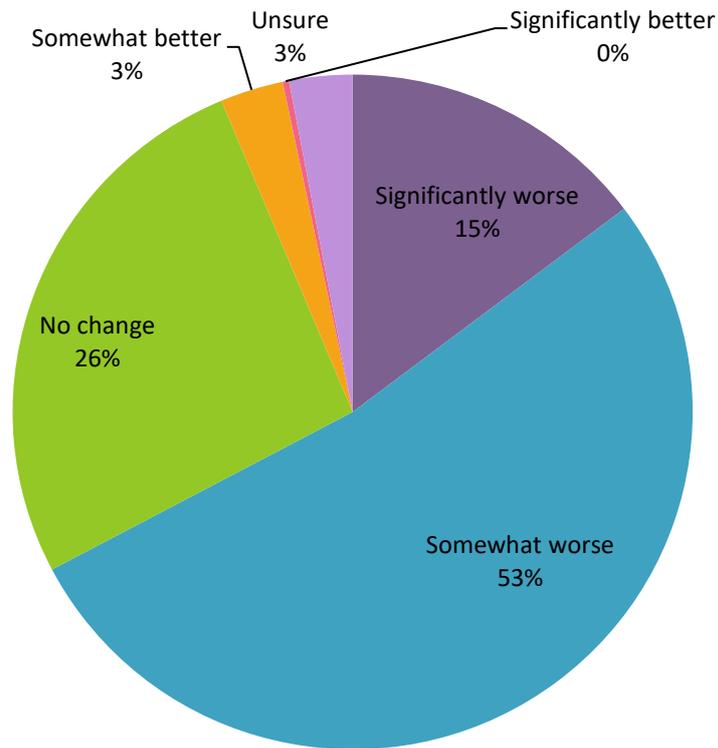
The survey purpose was to gather data to assist with future program planning and to help understand and respond to our community's needs. Although the sample size is small, this report captures a snapshot of how our residents have been impacted by COVID-19. We hope that this survey report will generate further discussion and collaboration amongst service providers.

Please feel free to contact County of Vermilion River FCSS at 780.846.2244, email to [jgoad@county24.com](mailto:jgoad@county24.com) or Town of Vermilion FCSS, 780.581.2413 email [fcss@vermilion.ca](mailto:fcss@vermilion.ca), if you have any further questions or comments.

In total, **299** respondents completed the survey (2.4% of the survey population).

- 53% of respondents report that their mental health and personal well-being are somewhat worse due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 58% of respondents report feeling more tired than usual.
- 57% of respondents report having experienced moments of anxiety.
- 48% of respondents report feeling helpless about the situation.
- 46% of respondents report loss of interest and pleasure in their daily activities.
- 44% of respondents report a change in quality or duration of their sleep.
- 41% of respondents report feeling irritable or experiencing moments of anger that they didn't have before.

**1.How would you say your mental health and personal well-being has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?**



Response	Percent
Significantly worse	14.7%
Somewhat worse	52.5%
No change	26.4%
Somewhat better	3.0%
Significantly better	0.3%
Unsure	3.0%

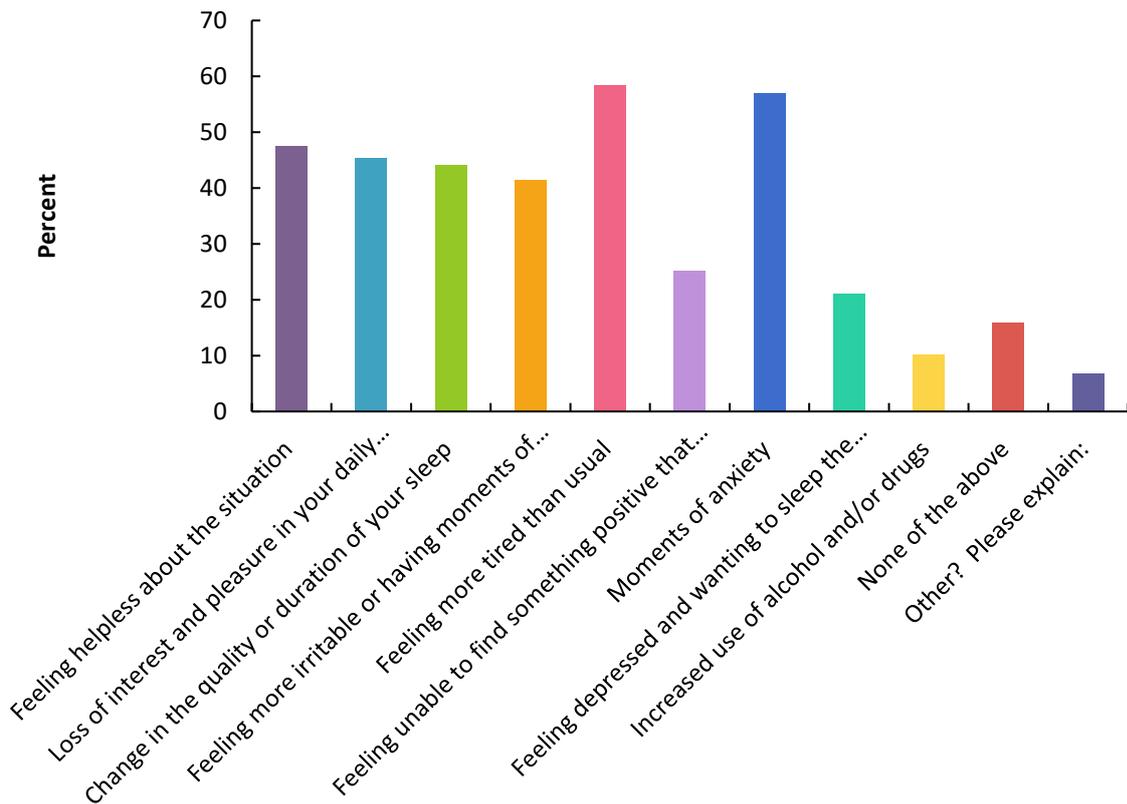
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most respondents indicated a somewhat worse to a significant worse state of mental health and personal well-being. There are others who indicated no change while a few indicated they are somewhat to significantly better during this time.

## 2.How concerned are you about the following impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Response	Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned
My own mental health	6.1%	16.6%	47.0%	30.4%
Family member's mental health	11.8%	25.3%	44.1%	18.9%
Turning to substances to cope	4.4%	9.2%	20.5%	65.9%
Family stress from confinement	12.8%	24.0%	40.5%	22.6%
Increase in disagreements and conflict in my home	5.4%	14.2%	25.3%	55.1%
Violence in my home	0.3%	1.0%	4.1%	94.6%
Accessing the essential goods and items that I need	4.4%	11.1%	33.7%	50.8%
Lack of access to services and programs	13.5%	23.0%	39.9%	23.6%
Uncertainty about the future	18.6%	24.7%	43.6%	13.2%
Loss of social connection	23.6%	29.0%	33.7%	13.8%

From the results above it appears that many are concerned about their mental health and the mental health of a family member. We do not see a high number of people choosing substances to cope although family stress due to confinement was present. There is a split 45% to 55% of “concerned” to “not concerned” for an increase in conflict in the home. Furthermore, violence in the home is not an issue for these survey respondents. The access to essential goods is a concern for half of the respondents. There was much concern regarding lack of access to services and programs as well as much concern for the uncertainty about the future and the loss of social connection.

3.Thinking about the current situation, have you experienced any of the following?  
(Check all that apply)



Response	Percent
Feeling helpless about the situation	47.5%
Loss of interest and pleasure in your daily activities	45.4%
Change in the quality or duration of your sleep	44.1%
Feeling more irritable or having moments of anger that you did not have before	41.4%
Feeling more tired than usual	58.3%
Feeling unable to find something positive that occurred during the day	25.1%
Moments of anxiety	56.9%
Feeling depressed and wanting to sleep the day away	21.0%
Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs	10.2%
None of the above	15.9%

Other? Please explain:

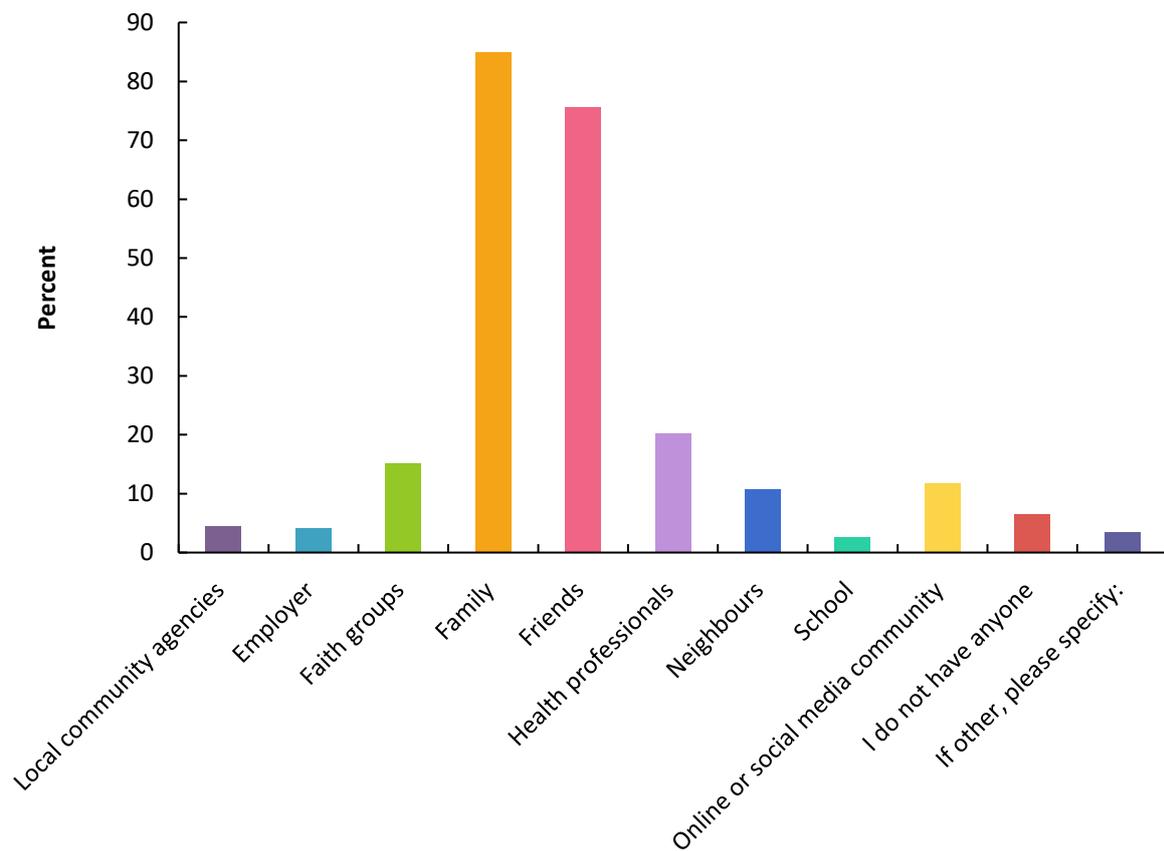
6.8%

Other? Please explain:

- Rejected by close family causing depression and hopelessness.
- Dealing with family that are hypersensitive to COVID
- Feeling betrayed by the government - all access to Canada should have been shut off to all foreigners immediately
- Frustration about how extreme some people have taken the mask mandate.
- I'm alone and lost.
- I've done nothing to change my life due to the pandemic. I'm not afraid of this virus. But the implications of the vaccine scares me
- Isolated Socially
- Just resigned to the fact that we are in lockdown and hoping it will soon end as missing social contacts.
- Lack of faith in all levels of government and the censorship of opposing information
- Living in seniors' home
- The damage created with the youth in this province.
- Unable to travel to visit relatives
- anger at the government. feeling a lack of support and resources from the government for education and teachers
- anger of the government.
- Boredom
- Grief
- media confusion
- shortness of breath caused by masks which also limits of my fresh air and water intake.

The top six areas of highest score in order from highest to lowest were feeling more tired than usual, more anxiety, feeling helpless about the situation, loss of interest and pleasure in daily activities, a change in sleep quality or duration, and feeling more irritable/having moments of anger. We can see from the comments the breadth of emotions experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. We hope this survey has assisted people with naming the emotions they have experienced. This data will support the priorities set by agencies to address these service areas.

4. In times of stress and need, who do you turn to for help and support? Please choose your top 3.



Response	Percent
Local community agencies	4.5%
Employer	4.1%
Faith groups	15.1%
Family	84.9%
Friends	75.6%
Health professionals	20.3%
Neighbours	10.7%
School	2.7%
Online or social media community	11.7%

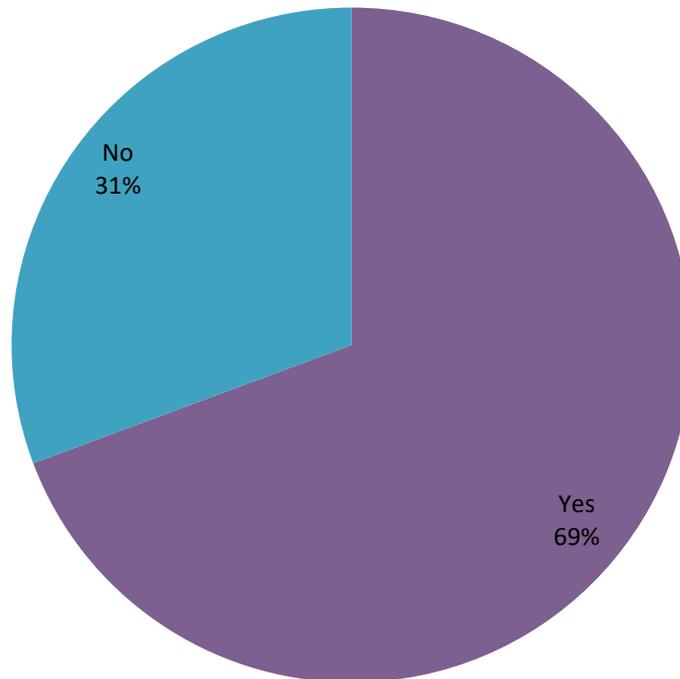
I do not have anyone	6.5%
If other, please specify:	3.4%

If other, please specify:

- Alcohol
- Books on Philosophy
- Drugs
- I just suck it up
- I rely on myself
- My belief in God . . . good orderly direction
- My faith in God
- Physical activity
- Men don't complain about their feelings. They deal with it.
- Reading and listening to the holy scripture of Quran

We see that most respondents have reached out to family and friends as their first resource of help. . Providing mental health education and skills regarding how to help a loved one with their mental health is a key element. Health professionals were the third resource for respondents seeking mental health supports, therefore making these services easily accessible and promoting what they can offer to those in need may require further marketing to the public. Seeking help from faith groups and neighbours were next in places to turn for help and support. Although further down the list of resources is social media/online community, there is opportunity for providing the public with information about how to discern those social media sites that are trustworthy.

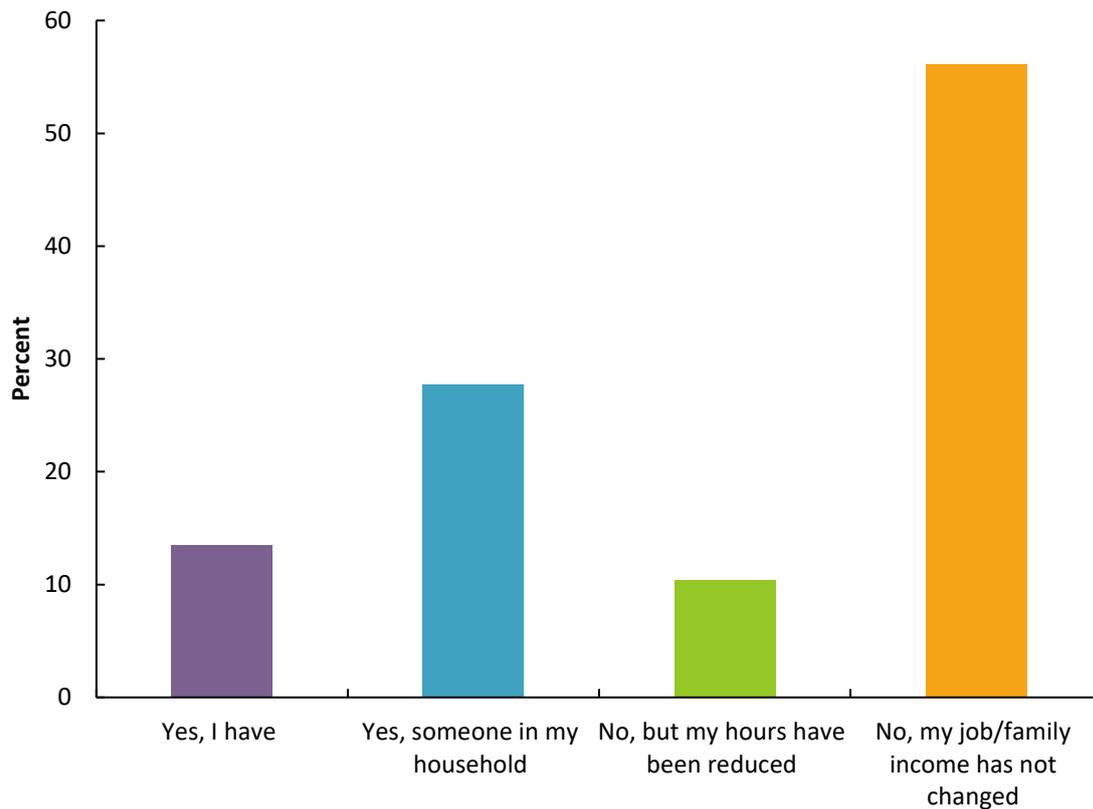
5.Are you aware of the mental health and personal well-being resources in your community?



Response	Percent
Yes	69.3%
No	30.7%

Most respondents are aware of mental health and personal well-being however there are a number who are not. The previous question indicated that these resources are not the first-place people look to for assistance. It is common that people do not take notice of the resources available to them until they need it or someone they know needs them. Agencies need to maintain continual promotion of their services so residents will remember what support options are available when the need arises.

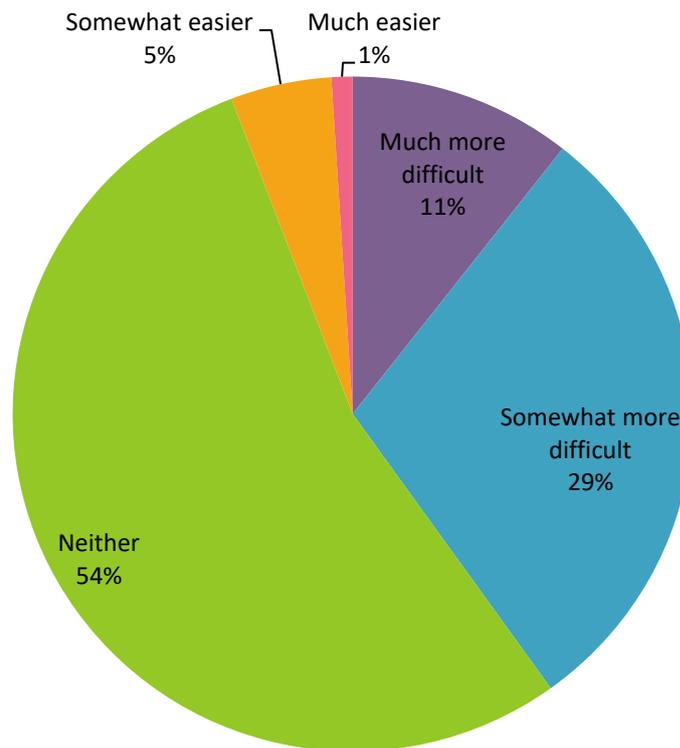
**6. Have you or anyone in your household lost their job or experienced job instability because of the COVID-19 pandemic? (Check all that apply)**



Response	Percent
Yes, I have	13.5%
Yes, someone in my household	27.7%
No, but my hours have been reduced	10.4%
No, my job/family income has not changed	56.1%

A little over half of the respondents had no change in their job or family income level. The remainder of respondents or someone in their household did have a change of some kind either by income or a reduction in hours.

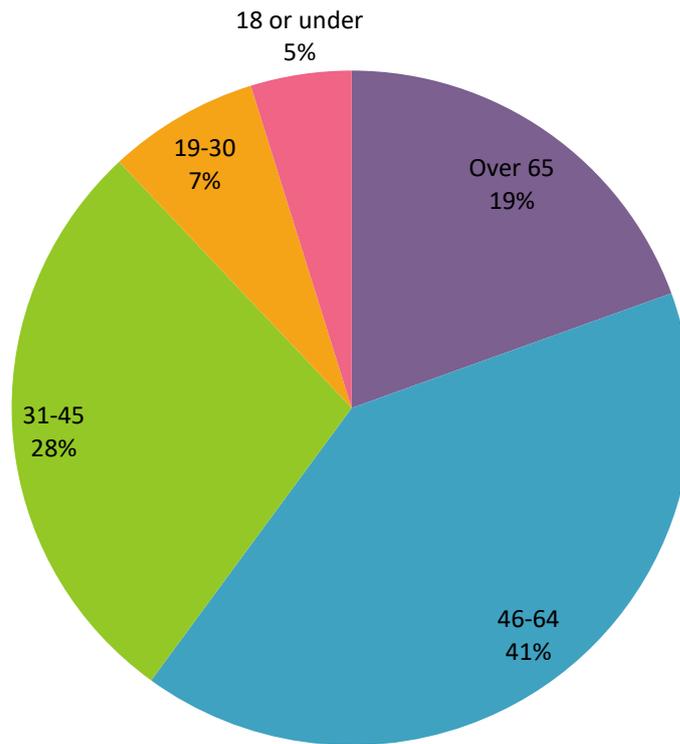
7. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, how has it been for you or your household to meet its financial needs?



Response	Percent
Much more difficult	10.6%
Somewhat more difficult	29.5%
Neither	54.1%
Somewhat easier	4.8%
Much easier	1.0%

About half of the respondents have not had any change in their ability to meet their financial needs. The remainder had somewhat more difficult to much more difficulty meeting their financial needs. A few people (5.8%) have even found it easier to meet their financial needs.

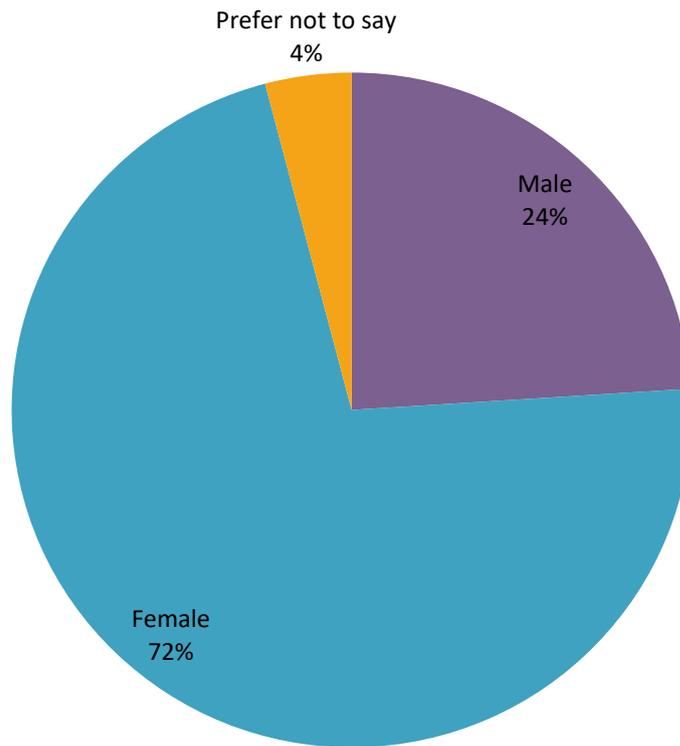
## 8. My age:



Response	Percent
Over 65	19.5%
46-64	40.6%
31-45	28.0%
19-30	7.2%
18 or under	4.8%

Most respondents were ages 31-64. The next higher age category was over age 65. We did not receive very many respondents in the age 30 and younger category. We thought the use of the QR survey code would promote the younger ages to participate. The month of June includes school exams and graduations which may have been a factor in the low number of replies in the younger age category. The survey was promoted in various social media sites, town and county newsletters, school newsletters, posters, and two local newspaper display ads.

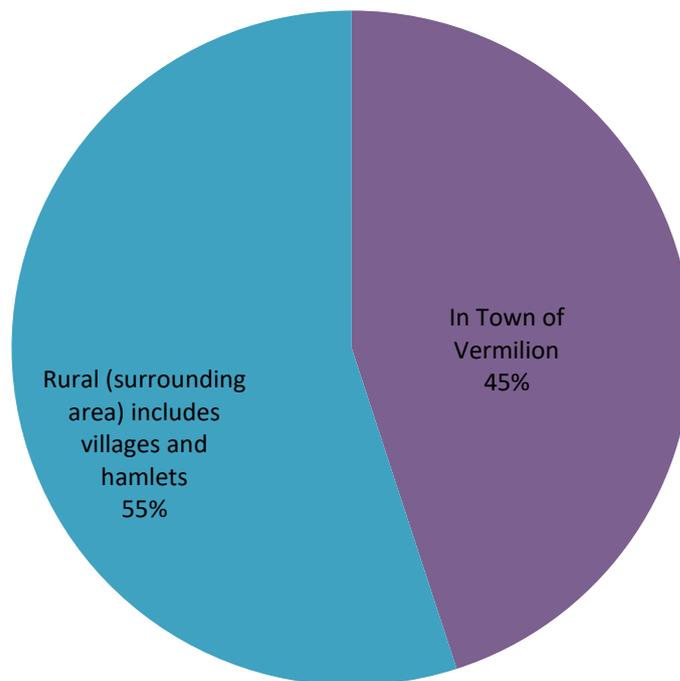
### 9.How would you describe your gender?



Response	Percent
Male	24.0%
Female	71.9%
Prefer not to say	4.1%

There was a high response from females (71.9%) to this survey.

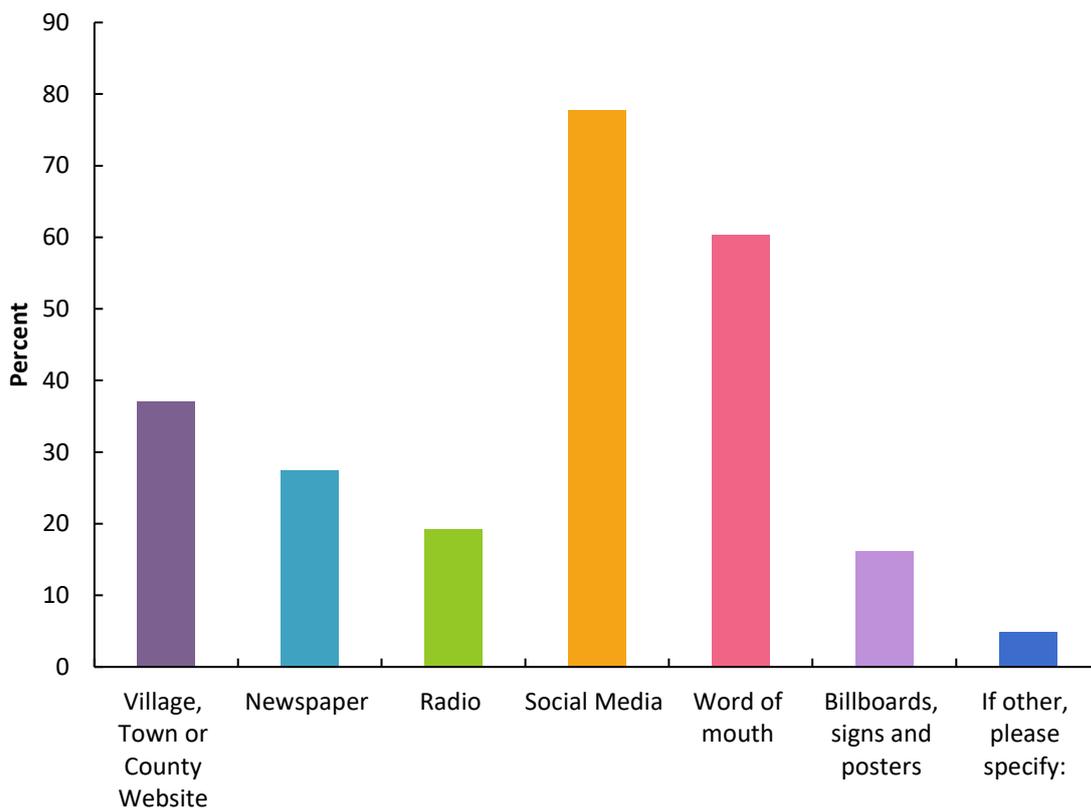
10. Which of the following best describes where you live?



Response	Percent
In Town of Vermilion	45.0%
Rural (surrounding area) includes villages and hamlets	55.0%

There was almost an even split between Vermilion residents (45%) to County of Vermilion residents (55%). This survey represented a mix of comments from residents living in each area.

**11.How do you find out information regarding services, programs and events?  
(Check all that apply)**



Response	Percent
Village, Town or County Website	37.0%
Newspaper	27.4%
Radio	19.2%
Social Media	77.7%
Word of mouth	60.3%
Billboards, signs and posters	16.1%
If other, please specify:	4.8%

If other, please specify:

- At work – in medical clinic
- Call local agencies directly, blue pages or trusted friends and family
- County newsletter
- School handouts
- I have no family, TV or internet
- News is biased, turned it off a long time ago.
- School (2)
- TV (2)
- Town utility bill
- Village newsletter
- Never see any
- Work

Regarding information sharing, social media and word of mouth are the primary sources residents look to for updates, followed by municipal websites and the newspaper. People need to be reminded of where to find reliable information on social media sites and the sites to avoid for unreliable news.

## 12. Please provide any other feedback or comments:

- Opportunities to connect with others online or in person and learn about ways to promote positive wellbeing are really helpful.
- Working in a medical clinic the toll it is taking on me isn't due to confinement. It is the complete opposite - that being the extra demand required of me at work.
- I have depression and anxiety that has worsened due to this so-called pandemic. I have called every mental health help facility from Bonnyville up to Edmonton and they are all packed because of COVID. If this was really about health then the gyms, mental health services, and ability to see friends and family would still be allowed.
- There will be some youth and adults that will not recover from this and their loss will be on the hands of the people in charge.
- I am very social and need face to face contact to recharge. It has been difficult, although necessary, to change to online visitation and greatly reduced in person visits. I don't want to feel like a burden to make calls and am also spontaneous with my visits. I cannot wait to get out and help my mental state again with reopening and vaccine rollouts!
- It is time to reopen Alberta and refuse access to the province to all international travelers.
- I believe some of the anxiety was coupled to the daily political situation under the Trump administration in the U.S. and also the response to their handling of the COVID pandemic. Stress and anxiety can also be attributed to lack of adequate response to seniors in long term care facilities and people being nonchalant in doing their part to help rectify our situation.
- Stress of having to work during COVID and knowing I am on the Frontline, feeling exposed and vulnerable every day, not having the choice to stay at home. Then adding and compounding to that is the frustration of the town office (my opinion an essential service) being inaccessible and not answering messages. Government/Provincial services by appointment only or closed all together (renew driver's license etc. which I consider essential services). I go to work every day wearing a mask and hand sanitize every 15 minutes which is do-able but important services shutting their doors makes no sense and adds to the stress of the whole situation.
- I am extremely concerned the UCP is going to poison our water with coal mining selenium - or divert our water all together.
- One of the lucky ones I guess as my work wasn't really affected, still came to work with minor adjustments to our safety program
- Should let people who want the vaccine to get in right away and not have to wait for your category.
- It was a grave mistake to keep people confined this way. Focus should have only been on protecting the vulnerable. We will never recover our freedom or income.

- Disappointed in the town largely shirking its responsibility for managing the COVID crisis, for it appears from the town messaging that the town was too cowed by the fringe conspiracy touting people, to the detriment of the whole community. Real leaders stand with the truth instead of ignoring it, especially during a crisis like this.
- Why isn't the town office open???
- Wait for other medical needs frustrating.
- The "rules" put in place to "protect" us, I feel, have done more harm than good.
- Make it go away!! Lol
- The GoA is providing inaccurate info on the COVID website - saying there is a supply of vaccines at our local drugstores - but the drugstores are consistently reporting being shorted on deliveries and are receiving conflicting information
- Thank you for offering this survey. I would just add that the pandemic had made my family more aware of our community's health as a whole. And how individual's decisions impact the whole community. I'm concerned about the low vaccine uptake in our community. (Only about 30% have first dose. We're amongst the lowest 3 regions in the province) Causing some anxiety about the health of our community (possible transmission and outbreaks) in the future.
- I feel concern for the local businesses that have had to navigate and try to survive the confusing 'on again-off again' cycles of inconsistent regulations dictating different levels of closure and operation .
- It has been a long hard time as it coincided with the first years of living alone after 57 yrs. of marriage. Most worrisome outcome is a loss of social energy & a weariness with making the effort to reach out through even the means available. Tired, tired, tired of it all, & struggling with anger at those resisting vaccination & slowing our progress towards hope.
- This whole journey of COVID has been confusing with so many professionals with mixed messages and restrictions changing. I would like some stability again . People like structure in their lives.
- Just wish that there was less animosity between people that wanted the vaccine and people that didn't. It is a personal choice. However, some tend to try to "dominate" others with their opinion. This doesn't help mental health in any way.
- Missing my family, have not seen my parents in over 10 months
- Please encourage our local government to speak for their constituents and end the lockdowns and restrictions
- In our rural community and being farming with family we had much more contact with others than many.
- Since the beginning of COVID my faith in our gov't , including our MLA, has plummeted. I have zero trust in our media and the medical field. The disconnect, anger and hurt in the community is disheartening and I don't see that improving any time soon. The damage

has been done thanks to the way this has been handled by our corrupt gov't, medical and media.

- My child and I miss the indoor playground. We miss community events.
- I am usually a very positive person, but I began to feel lonely and unable to find joy in my life with not being able to have people in my home and visit my family.
- Disappointed in some people who refused to follow guidelines. It may not have affected them, for other families it could of had a huge negative impact ... very frustrating.
- Why do you think Trudeau legalized pot. So his voters would not notice how much he is screwing them. Lol
- I think there are many people who are struggling both financially and mentally/emotionally right now. I consider myself to be lucky to be secure.
- The hardest thing about the Covid-19 pandemic and response to it is getting it in both ears from opposing viewpoints. I took the middle ground and respected the virus for what it is. Not paranoid, not dismissive, just did what I could to prevent spread.
- \$200.00 it cost for me to go to Wainwright for two doses for the covid-19 vaccination.
- You can't believe what they all say on TV. It has taken us too long to see what is going to happen.
- Even our institutions don't tell us the truth. I believe level of service/response/support has dropped significantly. NO motivation for people to deliver a good service and social assistance. Values are dropping badly, responsibility even worse, contact for services from government agencies terrible. May God bless us all. We are not in good shape, socially!
- There are a lot of seniors in Vermilion and not everyone has internet, Facebook and access to websites. A lot of us are pretty confined to our living quarters, so put notices on bulletin boards. Furthermore, we have no garbage container behind our building (Parkway Manor). We have to take our garbage to the container behind the Armories. Why? Some are getting around with walkers.

## Conclusion

This is a sample of how our residents have worked through the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been impacts on the mental health and well-being on individuals and that it will take time for people to regain trust and stability in many sectors of their life.

Most notably are the following:

1. 67.2% of respondents say their mental health is worse or significantly worse due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. Anxiety, tiredness, and a feeling of helplessness are the most common reported experiences.
3. Respondents turn to family and friends when needing help and support.

This data will uphold the work of support agencies as they apply for grants and choose their service delivery priorities.

Thank you to all who participated within the Town of Vermilion and County of Vermilion River.