

Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

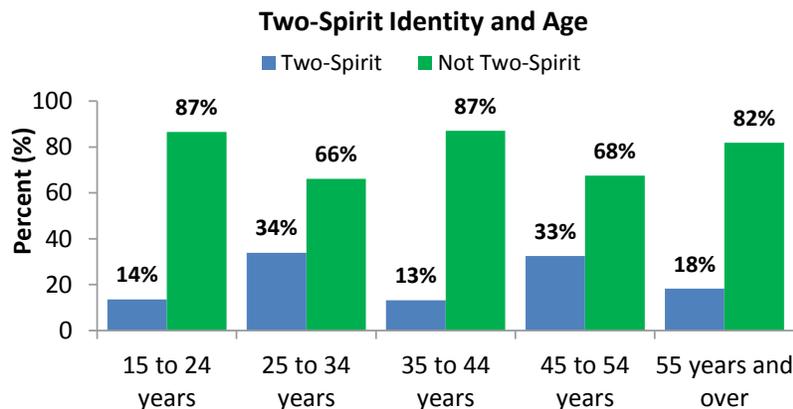
Two-Spirit Mental Health

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) details the goals of Canada’s Indigenous policies over time. These included the elimination of traditional Indigenous governments and livelihood and the planned expiry of treaty obligations through a process of assimilation. The implementation of these policies has influenced structural factors, such as inadequate housing, poverty, removal from traditional lands, destruction of culture and language, separation of families, restricted access to traditional medicine and limited access to supports, which continue to impact Indigenous peoples’ health and wellbeing. Colonization also brought different values and beliefs that impacted social structures and the way Indigenous peoples relate to each other. This has included shifting social norms, social constructs and structural risks for Two-Spirit and gender diverse populations. A focus on such structural risks, such as housing, poverty, and access to services can provide space to support Indigenous peoples’ health and wellbeing to thrive. Cultural revitalization and restoration can serve to ensure all members of Indigenous communities have a safe place.

“The term two-spirit . . . originated in Northern Algonquin dialect and gained first currency at the third annual spiritual gathering of gay and lesbian Native people that took place near Winnipeg in 1990. What we who chose this designation understood is that niizh manitoag (two-spirits) indicates the presence of both a feminine and a masculine spirit in one person.”¹

23% of Indigenous adults in Toronto identified as Two-Spirit.

Social Determinants of Health



83% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto live below the before-tax low income cut-off.

63% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults were unemployed.

48% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have completed high school or post-secondary education.

33% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults experienced homeless.

Resiliencies

Over **3/5** of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto had good, very good, or excellent ability at handling stress.

Of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults who rated their ability to handle stress as good, very good, or excellent:

79% participated in traditional Indigenous ceremony.

57% used traditional Indigenous medicines or practices to maintain their health and wellbeing.

81% had a strong sense of belonging to the Indigenous community.

99% felt good about their Indigenous heritage.

Two-Spirit Mental Health

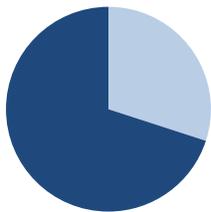
Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

29% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto reported very good or excellent mental health. Similarly, **32%** of Indigenous adults who did not identify as Two-Spirit reported very good or excellent mental health.



Over 6 in 10

feel happy and are interested in life almost every day/every day.



Over 70%

are confident to think or express their own ideas and feel that their life has a sense or direction and meaning almost every day/every day.

85%

liked most parts of their personality almost every day/every day.

80%

have experiences that challenge them to grow and become a better person almost every day/every day.

65%

are good at managing the responsibilities of their daily life.



Over 6 in 10

feel that people are basically good and that they have warm and trusting relationships with others almost every day/every day.

54%

feel that they belong to a community almost every day/every day.

44%

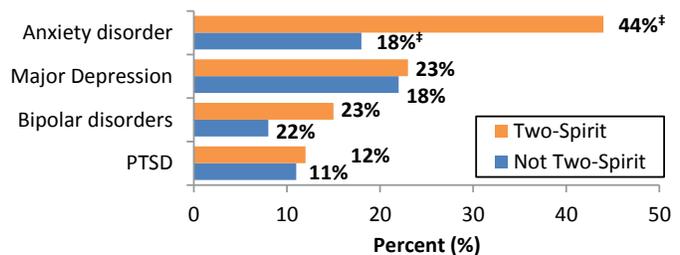
are satisfied with their life almost every day/every day.

Mental Health Diagnosis

62% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto have been told by a healthcare worker that they have a psychological and/or mental disorder.

58% of those who had a psychological and/or mental health diagnosis said that their condition(s) limited the amount or kinds of activities that they could do.

Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto have been told by a health care provider that they have one of the following at some point in their lives:



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Two-Spirit Mental Health



Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto have experienced discrimination from others because of an emotional or mental health problem.

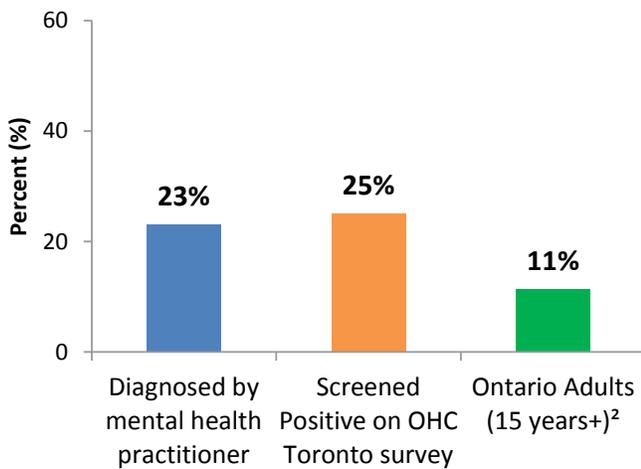
79% of those who faced discrimination because of their condition, reported that this prevented or delayed them from getting the care or support that they needed.

Screening and Diagnosis for Depression and PTSD

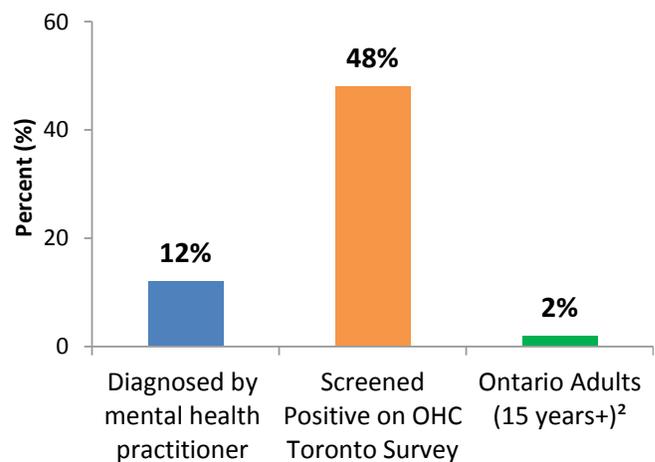


Two-Spirit Indigenous adults in Toronto experienced a large gap in the *diagnosis* by a mental health practitioner and *screening questions* in the survey for post traumatic stress disorder.

Depression



Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



Intentional Injury and Suicide

71% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have had a close friend or family member die by suicide. This is 1.3 times higher than those not identifying as Two-Spirit Indigenous adults (54%).[‡]

63% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have harmed themselves on purpose. This is 1.5 times higher than those not identifying as Two-Spirit Indigenous adults (42%).[‡]

Who has thought about dying by suicide?

7 in 10 Two-Spirit Indigenous adults.[‡]

5 in 10 non-Two-Spirit Indigenous adults.[‡]



These rates are 2.5 to 3.5 times higher than the rate for adults in Ontario. (**2 in 10** adults in Ontario).²

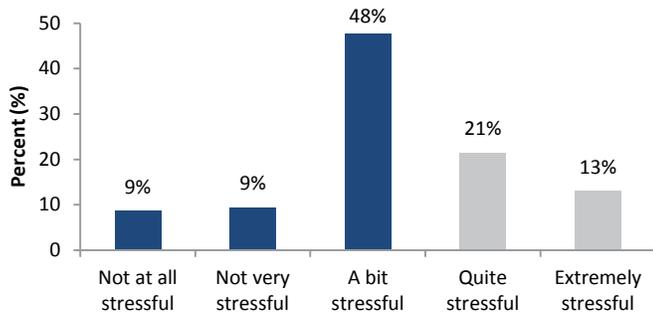
Almost 6 in 10 Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have attempted to die by suicide. This is 2 times higher than those not identifying as Two-Spirit (3 in 10).[‡]



Two-Spirit Mental Health

Stress and Coping

66% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults found most days a bit stressful, not very stressful, or not at all stressful.



Two-Spirit Indigenous adults were more likely to experience stressful work situations (32%) compared to non Two-Spirit adults (27%).[‡]

| Major Stressors | Two-Spirit | Not Two-Spirit |
|---|------------|----------------|
| Financial Situation | 72% | 62% |
| Own physical, emotional, or mental health | 63% | 51% |
| Personal Relationships | 42% | 35% |
| Time pressures/not enough time | 42% | 35% |
| Employment Status | 40% | 25% |
| Other personal or family responsibilities | 36% | 27% |
| Caring for own children and/or others | 25% | 30% |
| Discrimination | 23% | 14% |
| Personal and family's safety | 19% | 18% |

Racism and Discrimination

59% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have been treated poorly or unfairly because they are Indigenous.

42% of Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have been treated unfairly because of their gender compared to **22%** of adults who did not identify as Two-Spirit.[‡]

34% Two-Spirit Indigenous adults have been treated unfairly because of their sexual orientation compared to **2%** of adults who did not identify as Two-Spirit.[‡]

Access to Services

Two-Spirit Indigenous adults think there are inadequate services serving Indigenous people in Toronto to address:

- Services for suicide prevention (38%)
- Mental health services (34%)
- LGBTQQI community (30%)



Are you or someone you know in crisis?

| | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Anishnawbe 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Management Service: 416-891-8606 | Toronto Distress Centres: 416-408-HELP(4357) | Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200 | CAMH Emergency Department: 250 College Street | Call 911 or visit closest emergency department |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|

Definitions

Two-Spirit: Indigenous adults who identify as Two-Spirit to describe their identity and/or gender and/or sexual orientation; Indigenous adults: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or other Nation aged 15 years and older living or using services in the City of Toronto; Anxiety disorders: includes anxiety, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, Bipolar disorders, or manic depression.
[‡] Denotes statistically significant difference p<0.05

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

Sources

1. Anguksuar/Richard LaFortune, 1997; 2. Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health (CCHS-MH), 2012

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Two-Spirit Mental Health Reference

Our Health Counts Toronto is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada. Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Survey Question

RDS Prevalence Estimate
(95% Confidence Interval)

Do you identify as Two-Spirit?

Note: Two-Spirit is a term some Indigenous people use to describe their identify and/or gender and/or sexual orientation.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 22.6% (16.4, 28.8) |
| No | 77.4% (71.2, 83.6) |
| Age Group (Two-Spirit) 14 to 24 | 12.6% (5.6, 19.8) |
| 25 to 34 | 29.2% (16.1, 42.3) |
| 35 to 44 | 12.4% (5.9, 18.8) |
| 45 to 54 | 34.7% (18.1, 51.3) |
| 55 and over | 11.0% (3.2, 18.9) |
| Age Group (Not Two-Spirit) 14 to 24 | 23.7% (78.0, 95.0) |
| 25 to 34 | 16.6% (11.9, 21.4) |
| 35 to 44 | 24.1% (15.7, 32.5) |
| 45 to 54 | 21.1% (14.2, 28.0) |
| 55 and over | 14.5% (10.2, 18.8) |

Income (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| At or below before-tax low income cut-off | 88.2% (84.6, 91.7) |
| Above before-tax low income cut-off | 11.8% (8.3, 15.4) |

Income (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| At or below before-tax low income cut-off | 82.8% (74.5, 91.0) |
| Above before-tax low income cut-off | 17.2% (9.0, 25.5) |

Employment (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Employed | 22.1% (11.3, 32.9) |
| Unemployed | 62.6% (49.0, 76.3) |
| Not in labour force | 15.3% (6.8, 23.7) |

Employment (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Employed | 17.1% (12.6, 21.5) |
| Unemployed | 63.3% (54.6, 71.9) |
| Not in labour force | 19.7% (11.2, 28.1) |

Education (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Less than high school | 51.8% (36.9, 66.6) |
| Completed high school | 13.6% (5.9, 21.2) |
| High school or more | 34.7% (21.8, 47.6) |

Education (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Less than high school | 49.1% (40.0, 58.1) |
| Completed high school | 19.1% (12.3, 25.9) |
| High school or more | 31.8% (23.3, 40.4) |

Housing (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Stable housing | 59.9% (43.6, 76.1) |
| Precarious housing | 7.2% (2.4, 12.0) |
| Homeless | 32.9% (15.8, 50.1) |

Housing (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Stable housing | 66.5% (57.0, 75.9) |
| Precarious housing | 8.0% (4.6, 11.4) |
| Homeless | 25.6% (15.9, 35.2) |

Have you been treated poorly/unfairly because of your Indigenous identity?

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Yes | 59.1% (44.8, 73.3) |
| No | 40.9% (26.7, 55.2) |

Have you been treated poorly/unfairly because of your gender?

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Yes | 41.7% (27.1, 56.3) |
| No | 58.3% (43.7, 72.9) |

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Two-Spirit Mental Health Reference

Survey Question

Have you been treated poorly/unfairly because of your sexual orientation?

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Yes | 33.6% (20.4, 46.9) |
| No | 66.4% (53.1, 79.6) |

How would you rate your general health? (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Excellent or very good | 29.3% (17.3, 41.4) |
| Good, fair or poor | 70.7% (58.6, 82.7) |

How would you rate your general health? (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Excellent or very good | 31.9% (23.5, 40.4) |
| Good, fair or poor | 68.1% (59.6, 76.5) |

In the past month, how often did you feel... Happy?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 62.2% (47.9, 76.6) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 37.8% (23.4, 52.1) |

Interested in life?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 66.9% (53.1, 80.6) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 33.1% (19.4, 46.9) |

Satisfied with your life?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 43.8% (29.2, 58.3) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 56.2% (41.7, 70.8) |

That you belonged to a community?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 53.7% (38.5, 69.0) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 46.3% (31.0, 61.5) |

That people are basically good?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 63.0% (48.7, 77.4) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 37.0% (22.6, 51.3) |

That you liked most parts of your personality?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 84.6% (76.6, 92.7) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 15.4% (7.3, 23.4) |

Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 65.1% (51.3, 78.9) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 34.9% (21.1, 48.7) |

RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)

That you had warm and trusting relationships with others

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 61.9% (47.8, 75.9) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 38.1% (24.1, 52.2) |

That you had experiences that challenge you to grow and become a better person?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 80.1% (70.3, 89.8) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 19.9% (10.2, 29.7) |

Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 72.4% (61.1, 83.8) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 27.6% (16.2, 38.9) |

That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it?

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Every day/almost every day | 71.1% (59.2, 83.1) |
| 2-3 times a week or less | 28.9% (16.9, 40.8) |

Have you ever been told by a healthcare worker that you have a psychological and/or mental health disorder(s)?

| | |
|-----|--------------------|
| Yes | 61.5% (48.0, 75.0) |
| No | 38.5% (25.0, 52.0) |

Has/have this/these condition(s) limited the amount or kinds of activities that you can do?

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| Yes | 57.5% (34.0, 81.0)* |
| No | 42.5% (19.0, 66.0)* |

Have you been told you have any of the following psychological and/or mental health disorders...

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Anxiety disorder (Two-Spirit) | 43.5% (27.5, 59.5)* |
| Anxiety disorder (Not Two-Spirit) | 18.0% (11.1, 24.9)* |
| Major depression (Two-Spirit) | 23.1% (12.5, 33.8) |
| Major depression (Not Two-Spirit) | 22.3% (13.8, 30.9) |
| Bipolar disorders (Two-Spirit) | 14.5% (4.3, 24.8) |
| Bipolar disorders (Not Two-Spirit) | 7.6% (3.8, 11.4) |
| Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Two-Spirit) | 11.8% (4.5, 19.0) |
| Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Not Two-Spirit) | 11.0% (4.9, 17.2) |

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Two-Spirit Mental Health Reference

Survey Question

RDS Prevalence Estimate
(95% Confidence Interval)

What are the sources of stress that you experience? (Two-Spirit)

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Own physical, emotional, or mental health | 63.3% (47.5, 79.1) |
| Financial situation | 72.1% (61.0, 83.1) |
| Time pressures/not enough time | 41.6% (27.8, 55.5) |
| Personal relationships | 42.1% (28.0, 56.1) |
| Caring for your own children and/or others | 25.0% (14.3, 35.7) |
| Other personal family responsibilities | 35.6% (21.6, 49.7) |
| Own work situation | 31.9% (15.2, 48.6) ± |
| Employment status | 40.3% (24.2, 56.3) |
| Personal and family's safety | 19.3% (8.7, 29.9) |
| Discrimination | 23.2% (12.7, 33.7) |

What are the sources of stress that you experience? (Not Two-Spirit)

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Own physical, emotional, or mental health | 51.0% (41.9, 60.1) |
| Financial situation | 62.1% (53.0, 71.2) |
| Time pressures/not enough time | 35.0% (26.4, 43.5) |
| Personal relationships | 35.1% (27.0, 43.3) |
| Caring for your own children and/or others | 29.6% (22.3, 37.2) |
| Other personal family responsibilities | 26.5% (18.7, 34.2) |
| Own work situation | 15.8% (11.1, 20.6) ± |
| Employment status | 25.2% (18.7, 31.7) |
| Personal and family's safety | 17.5% (10.9, 24.1) |
| Discrimination | 13.8% (7.8, 19.8) |

For those who rated their ability to handle stress good, very good, or excellent...

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Participation in traditional Indigenous ceremony | 78.6% (65.5, 71.7) |
| Used traditional Indigenous medicines or practices | 56.6% (34.8, 78.4) |
| Had strong sense of belonging to the Indigenous community | 81.3% (69.2, 93.4) |
| Felt good about their Indigenous heritage | 99.3% (98.4, 100.0) |

Do you think there are inadequate community resources serving Indigenous people in Toronto for:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Suicide prevention | 37.7% (24.5, 50.9) |
| Mental health services | 34.0% (21.7, 46.3) |
| The LGBTQQI Community | 29.6% (18.0, 41.2) |

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Funding was provided by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Capacity Award
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