

# Family matters: New relationships after separation or divorce

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Families in Canada are becoming increasingly diverse. As a growing number of adults experience separation and divorce over their lifetime, the number of people who marry or live common law multiple times has also increased. This results in changes in family sizes, structures and life stories.

More than one in four Canadians aged 35 to 64 who were in a couple relationship in 2017 were in their second or subsequent marriage or common-law relationship. These individuals had experienced family life in more than one context, with different partners and often children from more than one union. The increase in the number of repartnered families has implications for personal time use, health and well-being, as well as for Canadian public policy and the economy.

The General Social Survey provides important and detailed information on family experiences. This May and June, the *Family Matters* Series will address themes related to marital status in Canada. Today's release includes an infographic on repartnering, that is, entering into a new marriage or common-law union after a past separation or divorce.

## More than one in four adults in a couple relationship are in their second or subsequent marriage or common-law relationship

Of the 11 million people aged 35 to 64 who were in a couple relationship in 2017, 26% were in their second or subsequent marriage or common-law relationship, up from 23% in 2006.

In 2017, men and women in a couple relationship were about equally likely to be in their second or subsequent marriage or common-law union, with 25% of women and 26% of men having been married or lived common law more than once.

## Canadian-born more than twice as likely as the foreign-born to have repartnered

Being in a second or subsequent union was more common among the Canadian-born than among the foreign-born. For the population aged 35 to 64 who were in a couple relationship, 31% of those born in Canada and 13% of those born outside of Canada had had more than one spouse or partner by 2017.

## Quebec residents are more likely to have repartnered than those in other regions of Canada

Repartnering was more common among Quebec residents. Over one-third (36%) of individuals aged 35 to 64 who were married or common law were in their second or subsequent union. By way of comparison, 28% of British Columbia residents who were in a couple relationship were repartnered, followed by residents of Atlantic Canada (27%), the Prairie provinces (25%) and Ontario (19%).

## People in Canada remarry or repartner after an average of almost five years

On average, repartnered women had spent 4.8 years separated or divorced before marrying their current partner or starting their current common-law relationship, while repartnered men had spent 4.5 years separated or divorced.

## Subsequent unions tend to last more than a decade and often result in children

Half of previously divorced or separated adults aged 35 to 64 had been with their current partner or spouse for 12 years or longer as of 2017. Furthermore, almost one-third (32%) of those who were now in a common-law union and over half (56%) of those who were now married had children with their current partner or spouse.



In June, the *Family Matters* series will release information on separation and divorce for the population aged 55 and older.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4501](#).**

The infographic "[Family matters: New relationships after separation or divorce](#)" is now available online.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).