

Having someone to count on, January to March, 2022

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Three-quarters of people in Canada say they always or often have someone to count on

According to Canadian Social Survey data from January to March 2022, three-quarters (75%) of people aged 15 years and older said that they always or often have someone to depend on to help them when they really need it. In comparison, 17% said that they sometimes have someone to count on, and 7% said that they rarely or never do. Moreover, people living in rural regions (78%) were slightly more likely to say they always or often have someone to count on than people living in urban areas (75%).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical distancing practices used to combat the spread of the virus [have limited the social interactions of people in Canada](#). Within this context, it is important to understand the social support available to the Canadian population and how it may affect personal well-being. Having someone to count on is also shown to be connected to better mental health and feeling a stronger sense of belonging to their community.

"Someone to count on" is an indicator in Canada's [Quality of Life Framework](#), a framework that enables the federal government to identify future policy priorities and to build on previous actions to improve evidence-based decision making and budgeting.

Youth and seniors report higher levels of support than other age groups

Having someone to count on was most often reported in the early and late stages of life. This is perhaps not surprising given family structures in Canada, but it is a positive result given Canada's aging population as reported in the [Canadian Census of Population](#). [Canadian data are similar to that of our southern neighbours](#): younger and older age groups in the United States were the most likely to report receiving the social and emotional support they needed, when asked during the first year of the pandemic.

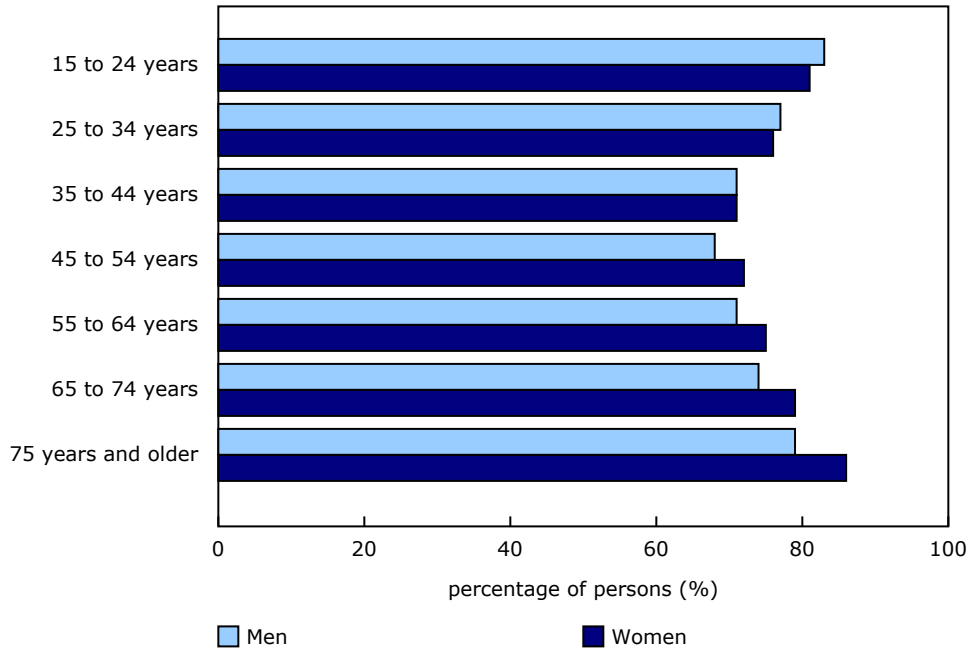
More than 8 in 10 youth aged 15 to 24 years (82%) and seniors aged 75 years and older (83%) reported always or often having someone to depend on to help them when they really need it. Results revealed that adults aged 35 to 64 years were the least likely among the age groups to say the same, at just over 7 in 10 (71%).

Overall, women (77%) were slightly more likely to report always or often having someone to count on when compared with men (74%). Notably, senior women aged 75 years and above (86%) reported a particularly high proportion of having someone to count on when compared with senior men of the same age group (79%).



Chart 1

Percentage of persons who always or often have someone to count on, by gender and age group, population aged 15 years and older, January to March 2022



Note(s): The difference between men and women is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) among the "65 to 74 years" and "75 years and older" age groups only.
Source(s): Canadian Social Survey – Well-being and Family Relationships (5354), January to March 2022.

People who lived alone (71%) reported lower shares of always or often having someone to count on than those in multiple-person households (76%). Focusing on Canadians who lived alone, women (75%) were more likely than men (65%) to say they always or often have someone to count on. Similarly, women aged 75 years or older (87%) living alone were more likely to say the same than men aged 75 years or older living alone (76%).

Groups designated as racialized are less likely to say they always or often have someone to count on

Among the three largest groups designated as racialized, the percentage who reported always or often having someone to count on was 73% for South Asians, 65% for Chinese and 66% for Black respondents. Due to sample size availability in the Canadian Social Survey, these proportions are not significantly different from one another, but they are lower than the rate reported by the rest of the population not designated as racialized (79%).

Looking at other diverse population groups, LGBTQ2+ people in Canada (72%) reported similar proportions of always or often having someone to count on as those who are not LGBTQ2+ (76%). Furthermore, respondents who reported having a disability, difficulty or long-term condition (71%) were less likely to say they always or often have someone to depend on for help than those without a disability, difficulty or long-term condition (78%).

People who said they have someone to count on are more likely to report a strong sense of belonging to their community

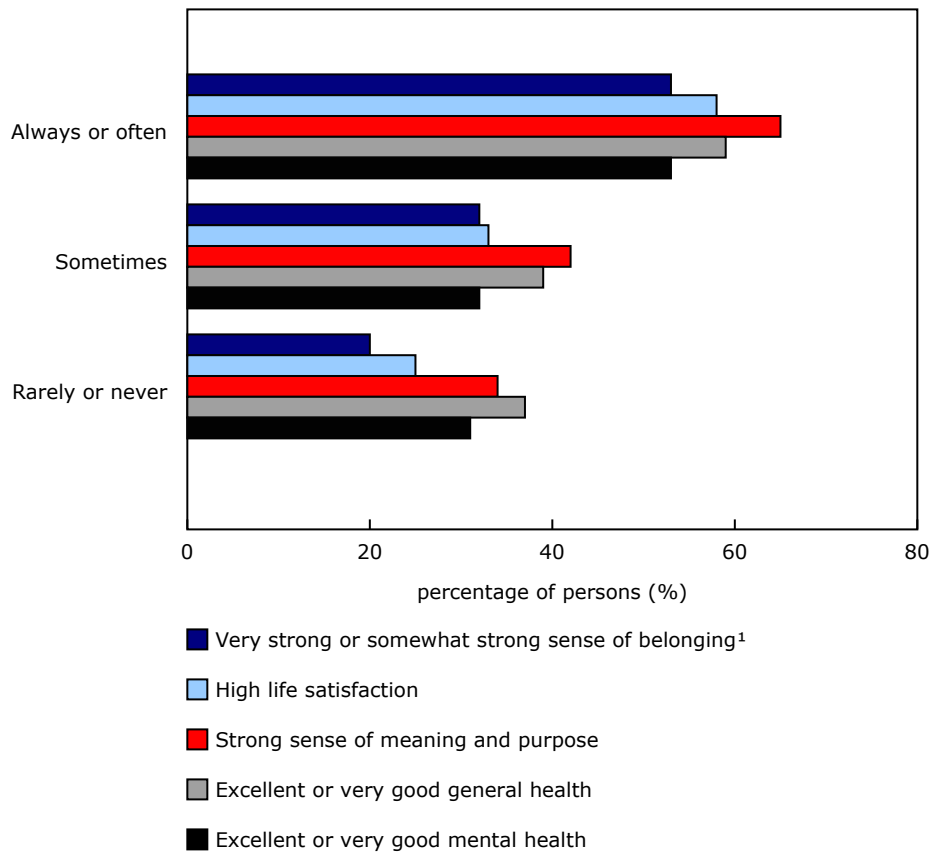
Canadians who have someone to count on report better health and personal well-being outcomes, including their sense of belonging to a local community, life satisfaction, sense of meaning and purpose, perceived health, and perceived mental health. These five indicators are included in Canada's [Quality of Life Framework](#).

People in Canada who say they always or often have someone to count on (53%) were much more likely to report a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to their local community than those who sometimes have someone to count on (32%) and those who rarely or never do (20%).

Also relevant for overall well-being in Canada, a similar pattern was observed for life satisfaction and sense of meaning and purpose outcomes. Of those who said they always or often have someone to count on, roughly 6 in 10 reported high life satisfaction (58%) and a strong sense of meaning and purpose (65%). Respondents who said they sometimes have someone to count on were less likely to report high life satisfaction (33%) or a strong sense of meaning and purpose (42%), as were people who reported rarely or never having someone to count on (with 25% reporting high life satisfaction and 34% reporting a strong sense of meaning and purpose).

Furthermore, more than half of individuals who said they always or often have someone to count on also said that they have excellent or very good health (59%) and excellent or very good mental health (53%). These shares were higher than for the same indicators among those who said they sometimes have someone to count on (39% for health and 32% for mental health) and those who said they rarely or never do (37% for health and 31% for mental health).

Chart 2
Selected health and personal well-being indicators, by frequency of having someone to count on, population aged 15 years and older, January to March 2022



1. To local community

Note(s): The difference between 'sometimes' and 'rarely or never' for general and mental health is not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source(s): Canadian Social Survey – Well-being and Family Relationships (5354), January to March 2022.

The [Quality of Life Hub](#) is an online portal for information and data related to the Quality of Life Framework. The Hub is currently in development, with additional quality of life indicators, data and visualizations being added over time. Today, pages with definitions, metadata and links to relevant data products are now available on the Hub for all indicators within the [Framework's society domain](#).

Additional pages with information on indicators from the prosperity, health, environment and good governance domains will be added in the coming months.

Do you have ideas or thoughts on what you'd like to see in the Hub? Visit the Quality of Life Hub today and send us your ideas and feedback. Your input will be invaluable as we continue to develop the Quality of Life Hub in 2022 and beyond.

Note to readers

The data in this release are from the fourth wave of the [Canadian Social Survey – Well-being and Family Relationships](#), for which data were collected between January 28 and March 13, 2022. They can be consulted in the tables 45-10-0050-01 and 45-10-0051-01. The goal of the Canadian Social Survey (CSS) program is to understand social issues rapidly by conducting surveys on different topics every three months. Statistics Canada would like to thank all Canadians who took the time to answer the questions.

The results of the Canadian Social Survey – Well-being and Family Relationships will provide important information about well-being, family relationships, changes to households, and intentions to have children. Results from the survey will provide important information about the quality of life of individuals and families in Canada and will help decision makers develop programs and policies to better serve all Canadians.

The target population for this voluntary survey is all non-institutionalized persons aged 15 years and older, living off reserve in Canada's 10 provinces. Statistics Canada collects the statistical information by either inviting a respondent to self-respond to an electronic questionnaire, or by having an interviewer contact a respondent to collect the information using the computer-assisted telephone interviewing method.

Survey respondents were classified as having high life satisfaction if they chose 8, 9 or 10 on a scale of 0 to 10 when asked the question, "How do you feel about your life as a whole right now?", where 0 meant "Very dissatisfied" and 10 meant "Very satisfied."

Sense of meaning and purpose in the CSS is measured with the question "Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'Not at all' and 10 means 'Completely', to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?". Responses of 8, 9 or 10 are used in this study to indicate having a strong sense of meaning and purpose.

There is currently no definition or standard for "racialized groups." Until further notice, derivation and dissemination of data for "racialized groups" follow the visible minority of person standard. "Visible minority" refers to whether or not a person belongs to one of the visible minority groups defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

Respondents were included in the LGBTQ2+ population based on self-reported information derived from their sexual orientation, sex assigned at birth and current gender. The LGBTQ2+ category includes people who reported their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, or another sexual orientation that is not heterosexual, and gender diversity populations including transgender men and women, as well as non-binary persons.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5354](#).

The infographic "[Having someone to count on](#)," which is part of *Statistics Canada — Infographics (11-627-M)*, is now available.

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).