

Article

2008 General Social Survey Report

Social networks help Canadians deal with change



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2008 General Social Survey Report

Social networks help Canadians deal with change

by Leslie-Anne Keown

CST Overview

- More than four in ten adult Canadians reported a change in their lives in the last twelve months that had a significant impact.
- Types of change, their impact, and how they are handled, all vary by life stage. Young adults experience more and different kinds of major change than seniors.
- At every stage of life Canadians consistently identified family as the most helpful resource for dealing with major change. Other parts of the social network, such as co-workers, friends, professionals and the Internet, are accessed depending on the life stage and the specific type of change.

Social networks play an important role in modern life. Most Canadians have at least one or two people they are close to and many have a wider network of neighbours, friends, co-workers and other connections from daily activities. However, social networks may take many forms. These networks may include family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, religious and voluntary organizations, community groups, institutions or the Internet. The type of help a network can provide varies. For example, networks can supply goods or services, information, or emotional support. The common characteristic of any component in a social network is that it provides resources or benefits.¹

In today's society, families are more widely dispersed and households (as a group) spend more time in paid labour. Moreover, individuals and families rely increasingly on

information technologies in their day-to-day lives. Given these transformations in society, it is important to understand how social networks are accessed during periods of major change.²

Yet, until now it has not been possible at the national level to get an overall picture of the contribution people's networks make to help them get through periods of major change. To what extent are social networks—people, institutions and sources of information—helping Canadians going through changes such as finances, living arrangements, employment or health?

Whether positive or negative, planned or unplanned, change is hard to ignore. This article will use the 2008 General Social Survey (GSS) to explore the use of social networks to deal with major life changes, looking at: what type of changes Canadians experience; their impacts; and what

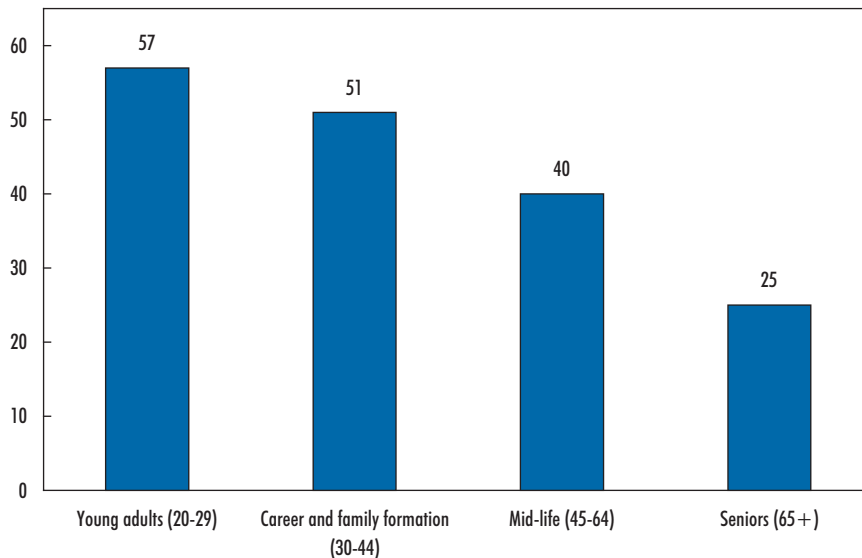
parts of their social networks are accessed to deal with change. Since social networks can change over the life course, the article will take a closer look at how they are accessed when going through changes during four broad life periods—young adulthood (aged 20 to 29), career and family formation (30 to 44), mid-life (45 to 64) and later life (65 years and older) (For concepts and definitions, see "What you should know about this study" and "Definitions").

Major change varies by life stage

Change is a frequent occurrence in Canadians' lives. In 2008, more than four in ten Canadians 20 years and older had experienced at least one major change that had a large impact on their lives in the last twelve months (43%). However, the percentage of Canadians experiencing change varied by life stage. Young

Chart 1 Canadians experience fewer major changes in later life stages

% reporting at least one major change



Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

adults in their twenties experienced the most change with 57% noting at least one. In contrast, individuals in other life stages were less likely to experience change, with seniors noting the lowest percentage at 25% (Chart 1).

The change of greatest impact also varies by life stage

Of all the major changes that Canadians experienced, respondents were asked to identify the one that had the greatest impact. This article will focus on the change of greatest impact (unless otherwise noted), which shows considerable variation by life stage (Table 1).

Two changes were common to all life stages. The first involved finances, with about 14% of all Canadians 20 years and older indicating this as having the greatest impact on their lives. The second was the death of a loved one, a more common change

Table 1 The change experience: An overview by life stage, 2008

	Life stage				
	Overall	Young adult† (aged 20 to 29)	Career and family formation (aged 30 to 44)	Mid-life (aged 45 to 64)	Seniors (aged 65 and over)
	percentage				
Change of greatest impact					
Finances	14	16	13	15	10*
Health	15	6	10*	18*	38*
Death of a loved one	13	7	10	16*	24*
Employment	14	18	15	14	2E*
Parenting or child care	11	12	18*	5*	1E*
Living arrangements	8	11	9	6*	5*
Personal achievements	7	9	8	6	4E*
Family relationships	7	6	7	7	4E
Care of a sick or disabled person	5	2E	3	8*	10*
Education	4	11	4*	2E*	x
Legal matters	2	1E	2	2	1E
Other	1	x	1E	1E	x

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at p < 0.05

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Due to rounding, percentage totals may not add up to 100.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

GST What you should know about this study

This article is based on data collected by the 2008 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is an annual survey that monitors changes and emerging trends in Canadian society. In 2008, Cycle 22 of the GSS collected information on social networks, and social and civic participation. Information was also collected on major changes in respondents' lives and the resources they used and needed during these transitions. Respondents' answers reflect their perception of the economic and social situation at the time the information was gathered and this may vary from current perceptions.

The target population of the 2008 GSS included the non-institutionalized population aged 15 and over, living in Canada's ten provinces. Data were collected from February 1, 2008 to November 30, 2008. Over this period, approximately 20,000 individuals were successfully interviewed.

This article only uses respondents who were aged 20 years and older. The analytic sample was composed of over 19,000 respondents representing approximately 25 million Canadians. This article focuses on the 10.9 million Canadians who had experienced at least one change in the last twelve months that had a major impact on their lives.

Methodology

This study uses descriptive statistics and cross-tabular analysis throughout. Differences of statistical significance were determined by non-overlapping confidence intervals using bootstrapped and weighted estimates and variances. Suppression was done where estimates were not reliable. Missing information varied by variable; percentages in each table reflect this.

Note: For further clarification of analytical concepts, please see "Definitions."

in later life stages. Of those who had experienced at least one change in the last twelve months, 24% of seniors had experienced the death of a loved one and had identified it as having the greatest impact compared to 7% of young adults.³

Most young adults experienced many varied changes and transitions throughout all areas of their lives. The changes of greatest impact most often noted were employment, finances, living arrangements, death of a loved one, education, and parenting or childcare. These changes are similar to transitions identified in previous research, such as leaving the parental home and completing post-secondary education.⁴

For those in the career and family formation stage, the most common changes involved two areas of life—economic and personal. On the economic side were finances and employment. Parenting or childcare, death of a loved one and health were most often noted on the personal side.

By mid-life, as could be expected, there is a shift away from parenting or

childcare. The most common personal changes were death of a loved one, health, and care of a sick or disabled person. Economic changes in finances and employment were also common for this life stage.

Amongst seniors, there is greater focus on their health or on the health of someone they are caring for. The most common changes identified were those associated with health, death of a loved one, finances, and care of a sick or disabled person.

The impact and perception of change varies through life stages

Change impacts life in different ways depending on the life stage. In earlier life stages, change was seen by the majority as a positive experience (Table 2). However, fewer than 40% of seniors perceived change as positive.

Respondents were asked about the impact of change on four major life situations: finances, employment, physical health and mental health. There was considerable variation by type of change within each life stage.

Young adults saw their financial situation shift as a result of the change of greatest impact with 21% reporting a worsening situation and 41% reporting an improvement in finances. However for seniors, change had little impact on finances. The employment situation for young adults tended to improve or remain the same because of change, but by mid-life change did not affect the employment situation. Focusing on changes in the area of health, seniors were more likely to report a worsening health situation than their younger counterparts. The majority of respondents reported that their mental health situation remained unchanged regardless of life stage.

Canadians were also asked if they had gained and/or lost personal contacts as a result of the change they experienced. The volatility for those in earlier life stages is also seen here. Young adults were most likely to report that they had gained social contacts as a result of a change compared to those in later life. Of course, a change might also result in losing contacts. Those in earlier

Table 2 Impacts of change: An overview by life stage, 2008

	Life stage				
	Overall	Young adult† (aged 20 to 29)	Career and family formation (aged 30 to 44)	Mid-life (aged 45 to 64)	Seniors (aged 65 and over)
	percentage				
Perception of change					
Negative	28	14	22*	38*	55*
Neither positive nor negative	6	6	5	7	6
Positive	66	80	72*	55*	39*
Contacts gained or lost due to change¹					
Gained	45	55	49*	39*	28*
Lost	28	31	29	29	16*
Financial situation due to change					
Worse	27	21	29*	30*	23
Same	46	38	42	48*	69*
Better	27	41	29*	22*	8*
Employment situation due to change					
Worse	15	12	14	18*	...
Same	56	46	57*	62*	...
Better	29	42	29*	20*	...
Physical health due to change					
Worse	21	14	18*	26*	33*
Same	58	62	61	55*	53*
Better	20	24	21	19*	14*
Mental health due to change					
Worse	20	14	20*	23*	21*
Same	51	50	49	50	64*
Better	30	36	32	27*	15*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

life stages were also the most likely to lose social contacts as a result of change, with fewer seniors reporting a loss in social contacts. These findings confirm past research that has suggested that there is more flow in social networks in earlier life and that social networks become more stable in later life stages.⁵

The Internet is useful in dealing with change, but family is the most important resource for all life stages

Major changes that impact our lives often require us to reach beyond ourselves and access various

components of our social network to manage or cope with it. Canadians accessed many parts of their social networks to deal with change.

In every life stage, family far outweighed any other part of the social network as the most commonly accessed and most helpful resource (Table 3).

Close friends were commonly accessed resources across all life stages. Professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, were also used, especially by seniors. Co-workers, other friends, media resources and business people were reported as common social network resources. These types of

social network resources were less likely than family to be cited as the most helpful resource.

The Internet deserves special note, given the increasing role of this resource in gathering information and enhancing personal contact through such activities as e-mail and social networking.⁶ The Internet was used by 39% of adult Canadians to help deal with change. However, it declined steeply as a social resource across the life stages. Between 47% and 50% of those in the young adult and the career and family formation stage noted that they had used the Internet to deal with change, versus

	Life stage				
	Overall	Young adults† (aged 20 to 29)	Career and family formation (aged 30 to 44)	Mid-life (aged 45 to 64)	Seniors (aged 65 and over)
	percentage				
Type of resource used¹					
Family	69	75	68*	65*	68*
Close friends	59	64	61	56*	49*
Professionals (including doctors)	45	36	46*	48*	58*
Internet	39	50	47	31*	11*
Co-workers	36	36	44*	37	5*
Other friends	35	34	39	35	28*
Other media/information sources	34	36	39	31	22*
Business people (including employer)	32	33	35	33	12*
Neighbours	23	15	23*	25*	34*
Social service or health organization	21	17	22*	22*	25*
Government resources (all levels of government)	16	17	19	14	10*
Public institutions (for example, libraries or universities)	13	25	13*	8*	4 ^E *
Religious organization	11	9	11	13*	16*
Law or justice organization	6	4	7*	7*	3 ^E
Other community organization	6	5 ^E	7	6	6
Most helpful resource in dealing with change²					
Family	44	52	42*	39*	43*
Professionals (including doctors)	14	6	12*	18*	26*
Close friends	11	12	13	11	8
Internet	7	8	9	6	x
Business people (including employer)	4	3 ^E	4	4	x
Social service or health organization	4	2 ^E	3	6*	8 ^E *
Government resources (all levels of government)	3	4 ^E	3	3	2 ^E

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of resource to deal with the change of greatest impact.

2. Only the most commonly identified resources are shown. Only those identifying at least one resource are included.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

31% of those in mid-life and 11% of seniors.

Regardless of life stage, the Internet was seldom noted as the most helpful resource. Family was clearly the most helpful resource in individuals' social networks. While the Internet may be a valuable tool in Canadians' lives, it shows no signs of replacing the importance of people—at least in dealing with change.

Social networks provide varied types of help

Family, friends, professionals and the Internet may all be tapped to deal with change but what kind of help do they provide? Help drawn from the social network is often categorized into three broad types of support: emotional, instrumental (e.g. assistance or support with finances, transportation, or the provision of

goods or services), and informational (e.g. informal advice, information, training or referrals).⁷

Canadians use all three types of support almost equally, varying little by life stage. The only exception is that informational help is less commonly accessed by those in the mid-life and senior life stages (Table 4).

The following sections show more detailed analysis by life stage.

Rather than discussing generations, it is often helpful to discuss the different stages of life. The following life stages were chosen after taking into account the data available in the GSS 2008.

Young adults: (Aged 20 to 29) The data show a fair amount of variability for the 15 to 19 year age group with regard to change. There is, however, more uniformity in the 20 to 29 year age group, allowing the focus to be on strategies to cope with change rather than on the change itself.

Career and family formation: (Aged 30 to 44) This life stage includes those focusing on raising families and/or advancing careers.

Mid-life: (Aged 45 to 64) Commonly referred to as Boomers but renamed to reflect life stage.

Seniors: (Aged 65 and over) This life stage includes many who are retired.

GST Table 4 Type of help received to deal with change: An overview by life stage, 2008

	Life stage				
	Overall	Young adults† (aged 20 to 29)	Career and family formation (aged 30 to 44)	Mid-life (aged 45 to 64)	Seniors (aged 65 and over)
	percentage				
Type of help received¹					
Emotional	66	66	65	67	68
Instrumental help (at least one of the types below)	66	67	67	64	70
Professional services or expertise	46	37	46*	48*	58*
Financial	26	41	27*	19*	9*
Help with household work or childcare	19	14	23*	15	24*
Transportation	13	12	11	12	25*
Material goods	11	12	13	9	11
Personal care or health needs	10	5	8*	12*	20*
Informational help (at least one of the types below)	62	71	68	57*	38*
Information or informal advice	57	64	62	53*	35*
Referrals, networking or help making new contacts	14	17	15	13*	6*
Teaching, coaching, or training	9	14	11	7*	3 ^E *

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Young adults: Major changes, transitions, and information

- Young adults experience numerous and different types of change.
- Employment was the most common change of greatest impact experienced by young adults (18%), followed by finances (16%) and parenting or childcare (12%).
- Young adults access many types of resources to deal with change. The resources vary in important ways by the type of change being experienced.

About 4.5 million Canadians were young adults (aged 20 to 29 years old) in 2008 and 57% had experienced at least one major change in the last twelve months. The changes of greatest impact revolve around the transitions this group commonly experiences—in finances, employment, education, living arrangements and parenting or child care. No one type of change dominates.

Young adults often see change as positive

Overall, young people reported changes as positive. The most positively perceived changes involved parenting or childcare, or education (Table 5). The type of change reported influences different aspects of life. For instance, in 2008 the financial situation of the young adult was better when the change involved finances or employment (67%). The financial situation was reported as worse when it involved parenting or childcare (39%) or education (33%).

Young adults' social networks are fluid: Change both expands and contracts the number of social contacts

Transition involves change in the young person's life, and also involves their social networks. At this stage, social contacts are fluid in the face of change with contacts being both gained and lost. While change may produce many new social contacts

it may also involve others falling away. The magnitude of this gain/loss varies by the type of change reported. Many of those whose change involved employment reported a gain in social contacts, more than one and a half times those whose change of greatest impact involved finances (72% versus 44%). Employment changes often also meant a loss in social contacts (44%) and a similar percent noted a loss in social contacts when the change involved living arrangements. Other changes produced a smaller loss in social contacts.

Young adults use an array of resources to deal with change but family is the most helpful

Young adults accessed these fluid social networks to deal with change (Table 6). The type of resource varied by type of change. When finances were involved, the resources used most often were family, business people (including employers), and the Internet. When employment was the change of greatest impact, similar resources were tapped but close friends also played an important role.

Changes involving living arrangements, education and parenting or childcare also showed increased utilization of friends as a resource. The Internet was used for all types of changes but showed particular importance for parenting or childcare, and education. The Internet was often used as a resource but was seldom reported as the most helpful.

Co-workers were important when dealing with changes involving employment. Government resources, at all levels of government, were used more commonly when the change involved employment, education, and parenting or childcare.

However, young adults saw their families as the most helpful resource in their social network. Across all types of change, family was the most helpful resource for 39% to 75% of young adults, depending on the type of change. Close friends were cited second as the most helpful resource for young adults across all types of change (12%) (Results not shown).

The type of help needed from the social network varies by the change being experienced

Family is the most helpful resource in the social network, but the type of help used from all parts of the social network does vary. When change involved education and parenting or childcare, and to a lesser extent finances, instrumental and informational help were accessed more often than emotional support (Table 7). If employment was involved, informational support was the most common type of help, with emotional and instrumental support being sought less often. If the change involved living arrangements, 81% of young adults sought instrumental support, while emotional and informational support were important but less commonly accessed.

	Change of greatest impact				
	Finances†	Employment	Education	Living arrangements	Parenting or childcare
	percentage				
Perception of change					
Negative	x	x	x	13 ^E	x
Neither positive nor negative	x	x	x	16 ^E	x
Positive	72	83	92*	71	91*
Contacts gained or lost due to change¹					
Gained	44	72*	69*	62	54
Lost	20	44*	39*	46*	21 ^E
Financial situation due to change					
Worse	16 ^E	20 ^E	33*	17 ^E	39*
Same	17 ^E	13 ^E	31	37*	46*
Better	67	67	36*	46*	15 ^{E*}
Employment situation due to change					
Worse	9 ^E	14 ^E	11 ^E	x	17 ^E
Same	29	12 ^{E*}	39	50*	66*
Better	62	75*	50	x	17 ^{E*}
Physical health due to change					
Worse	11 ^E	18 ^E	x	x	15 ^E
Same	66	50	68	69	73*
Better	23	32	x	x	13 ^{E*}
Mental health due to change					
Worse	13 ^E	12 ^E	x	11 ^E	12 ^E
Same	52	47	58	55	65
Better	35	41	x	33	23 ^E

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 20 to 29 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Due to rounding, percentage totals may not add up to 100.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Major change is often interrelated

The 2008 GSS shows that changes can be interrelated. Of Canadians that had experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months, 51% reported that other changes were interrelated with the change of greatest impact. Most commonly this interconnectivity of change was seen in the earlier stages of life and declined in later life. For instance, more than half of young adults reported a change that was interrelated to the change of greatest impact, compared to one quarter of seniors (60% versus 26%).

Some types of change are often intertwined. The interrelationship involving finances and employment is the most common. Except for seniors, the majority of respondents who reported finances as a change of greatest impact said that a change in employment was interrelated. The reverse was also true—a change of employment was related to a change involving finances.

Of note for those in midlife and for seniors: If the change of greatest impact was the care of a sick or disabled person, two changes were commonly related—finances and the person’s own health.

Table 6 Resources used to deal with change: Young adults (aged 20 to 29), 2008

Type of resource used ¹	Change of greatest impact				
	Finances†	Employment	Education	Living arrangements	Parenting or childcare
	percentage				
Family	62	67	77	81*	87*
Business people (including employer)	35	42	28	28	32
Internet	40	48	68*	51	62*
Close friends	32	52*	58*	81*	73*
Other media/information sources	23	33	40	32	65*
Co-workers	22 ^E	45*	32 ^E	27	36
Professionals (including doctors)	17 ^E	24	23 ^E	34*	67*
Government resources (all levels of government)	14 ^E	21	26 ^E	13 ^E	28*
Public institutions (for example, libraries or universities)	10 ^E	28*	75*	x	18 ^E
Other friends	11 ^E	27*	29 ^{E*}	45*	37*
Social service or health organization	5 ^E	x	x	x	53*
Neighbours	x	6 ^E	x	15 ^{E*}	34*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of resource to deal with the change of greatest impact.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 to 29 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table 7 Type of help received to deal with change: Young adults (aged 20 to 29), 2008

Type of help received ¹	Change of greatest impact				
	Finances†	Employment	Education	Living arrangements	Parenting or childcare
	percentage				
Emotional	36	56*	72*	68*	72*
Instrumental ²	65	51	81	81	87*
Informational ³	58	80*	86*	69	83*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.

2. Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.

3. Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 to 29 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Career and family formation life stage: Dealing with change on two sides of life

- In the career and family formation life stage, major change mainly impacts the personal and economic sides of life.
- The Internet is a social resource often used by those experiencing a change in parenting or childcare and health.
- Informational support is an important form of help in this life stage.

In the career and family formation stage of life (aged 30 to 44 years) people start to focus on family (including raising children) and/or establishing and advancing their career. This focus is evident in the changes that people in this stage of life report. In 2008, there were about 7.1 million Canadians in this stage of life and 51% had experienced at least one type of major change.

The change of greatest impact in this life stage is in either of two categories: economic or personal. On the economic side, changes of greatest impact noted most often were in finances (13%) and employment (15%). On the personal side, 18% of individuals in this life stage experienced change involving parenting or childcare and identified it as having the greatest impact, while another 10% did so with regard to their health.

Health changes are seen as both positive and negative

In 2008, changes on the economic side of life were generally perceived as positive (Table 8). On the personal side of life, perceptions varied. If the change of greatest impact involved health, 51% of people in the career and family formation stage noted the change was negative. When the change involved parenting or childcare, it was overwhelmingly seen as a positive one (88%) possibly reflecting the growth of families in this life stage.

The impact on various aspects of the respondent's life varied by the type of change involved. Changes of greatest impact involving the economic side of life tended to result in improved financial and economic situations and to leave physical and mental health unaltered or better.

If the change of greatest impact was health, then the financial and employment situation for the respondent largely remained the same. However, 47% of these 30- to 44-year-olds indicated their physical health was worse, and 30% reported their mental health was worse. If the change of greatest impact involved parenting or childcare, other situations in life tended to remain stable.

The Internet is often drawn upon as a resource by those experiencing changes with parenting or childcare and health

For those in the career and family formation stage, family is often the most drawn upon and is the most helpful part of the social network, regardless of the type of change experienced (Table 9). Other parts of the social network accessed vary by type of change.

Business people (including employers) were the most helpful resource for 34% of individuals whose change of greatest impact involved finances. Co-workers were resources for 53% of those impacted by changes involving employment. People in this life stage also turned to the Internet as a resource. Those dealing with changes in parenting or childcare turned most often to family, but also accessed close friends, professionals, the Internet and other media sources.

In 2008, 85% of those experiencing health changes turned to professionals (including doctors), the family (76%), close friends (67%) and the Internet (60%). Those experiencing a change involving parenting or childcare also used the Internet fairly often (61%).

Informational support was important to those in the career and family formation life stage

The kind of help drawn from social resources varied for those in the career and family formation stage of life (Table 10). Changes involving the personal side of life needed all three types of help. Informational support was important regardless of the type of change and played a particularly important role when employment or parenting or childcare was the change of greatest impact. Emotional and instrumental support was sought more often when the change was on the personal side of life.

Table 8 Impacts of change: Career and family formation life stage (aged 30 to 44), 2008

	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Parenting or childcare
	percentage			
Perception of change				
Negative	35	16*	51*	8 ^{E*}
Neither positive nor negative	5 ^E	8 ^E	x	5 ^E
Positive	60	76*	x	88*
Contacts gained or lost due to change¹				
Gained	36	66*	34	54*
Lost	25	49*	23	20
Financial situation due to change				
Worse	32	24	37	42
Same	13	22*	54*	49*
Better	56	53	10 ^{E*}	9 ^{E*}
Employment situation due to change				
Worse	16	17	22	13
Same	40	16*	69*	76*
Better	44	67*	9 ^{E*}	11*
Physical health due to change				
Worse	13	14	47*	17
Same	66	54	18 ^{E*}	72
Better	21	32*	35*	11*
Mental health due to change				
Worse	18	15	30*	15
Same	51	40	36*	64*
Better	31	44*	35	21

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 30 to 44 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Due to rounding, percentage totals may not add up to 100.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

When faced with the death of a loved one, people mostly turn to family for support

Just over one in ten Canadians aged 20- to 64-years-old experienced the death of a loved one and noted it as the major change of greatest impact. Of this group, 38% reported other related changes in their lives. Overall, the death of a loved one did not significantly influence other life situations, such as finances, employment or physical health, but 27% said their mental health situation got worse (Table A.2).

Most people who reported death of a loved one as their change of greatest impact turned to their social networks for emotional support (95%). The majority reported that family was their most helpful resource. Family and close friends were drawn upon most frequently, while co-workers, other friends, neighbours and business people were also accessed as sources of help through this change.

Table 9 Resources used to deal with change: Career and family formation life stage (aged 30 to 44), 2008

	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Parenting or childcare
	percentage			
Type of resource used¹				
Family	42	52	76*	84*
Business people (including employer)	34	41	31	32
Internet	26	46*	60*	61*
Close friends	26	49*	67*	71*
Other media/information sources	22	30	43*	62*
Co-workers	18	53*	46*	44*
Professionals (including doctors)	20	24	85*	66*
Other friends	13	31*	38*	48*
Government resources (all levels of government)	14	23*	15	33*
Neighbours	7 ^E	12 ^E	20*	36*
Public institutions (for example, libraries or universities)	6 ^E	14*	6 ^E	19*
Social service or health organization	9 ^E	7 ^E	32*	51*
Religious organization	4 ^E	x	11 ^{E*}	13*
Other community organization	x	4 ^E	x	13*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of resource to deal with the change of greatest impact.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 30 to 44 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table 10 Type of help received to deal with change: Career and family formation life stage (aged 30 to 44), 2008

	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Parenting or childcare
	percentage			
Type of help received¹				
Emotional	33	54*	77*	70*
Instrumental ²	56	48	89*	87*
Informational ³	49	76*	73*	81*

† reference group

* statistically significantly different from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.

2. Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.

3. Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 30 to 44 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Mid-life stage: Dealing with changes in health

- People in mid-life reported that major changes on the personal side of life were dominated by dealing with one's own health or with someone else's health through care for a sick or disabled person.
- Instrumental help is especially important when the change was on the personal side.
- Of those in midlife noting a change involving health, 56% perceive that change as negative.

As Canadians move from starting and building careers and families into mid-life, the focus often shifts from children to other aspects of life. In mid-life, the pace of change in life for Canadians begins to slow down. Of approximately 9 million Canadians in mid-life (aged 45 to 64 years) in 2008, 40% had experienced at least one major change in the last twelve months. This is less than in the stages of young adults and of career and family formation.

The nature of the changes experienced by those in mid-life also shifts, particularly on the personal side of life. The two types of personal change, besides death of a loved one (16%), that are most prevalent involve health—a change in the respondent's health (18%), or a change in the care of a sick or disabled person (8%). On the economic side, a change in finances (15%) or a change in employment (14%) was the most common change of greatest impact.

When health is the change of greatest impact it is often perceived as negative

In 2008, the perception of change on the economic side during mid-life varied depending on the type of change experienced. Individuals in mid-life were fairly evenly divided in how they felt about a change in finances—50% thought the change was negative while 45% thought the change was a positive one (Table 11). Those, who in 2008 reported a change in the past 12 months in employment, tended to see the change as a positive one (66%).

Turning to the personal side of life, changes in the respondent's health were more often seen as negative (56%). When the change involved care of a sick or disabled person, individuals in mid-life were more diverse in their perceptions about the direction of change—49% felt the change was negative, 35% thought the change was positive while 16% indicated the change was neither positive nor negative.

Major change in mid-life does not appear to impact important aspects of life unduly. With financial change, just over one third indicated their financial situation was better because of it (39%). An almost equal percent indicated that their financial situation was worse (41%). A change in finances tended to leave the employment, physical health, and mental health situations of the respondent the same as before. The pattern observed for finances in 2008 was similar to the one for employment. The one exception was where a change in employment tended to improve the overall employment situation.

In mid-life when the respondent's health was the change of greatest impact, their employment and financial situation tended to remain unchanged. However, almost half noted that their physical health was worse and over one quarter also noted worsening mental health (49% and 30%). When the change of greatest impact was in the care of a sick or disabled person, other aspects of the respondent's life appeared to remain unchanged.

Professionals (including doctors) are important resources in the social network when change is on the personal side of life

Canadians in mid-life drew on many resources in their social networks to deal with change. When the change of greatest impact was financial, individuals most often turned to family, business people, close friends, Internet and other media for support. Family was largely seen as the most helpful resource (35%) (Results not shown).

When the change of greatest impact was employment, the most commonly accessed resources were family, close friends, co-workers, and business people. Once again, family was usually cited as the most helpful resource (29%). Co-workers were cited by 12% as the second common most helpful resources (Results not shown).

When the change of greatest impact involved health or care of a sick or disabled person, professionals and family were commonly accessed parts of the social network (Table 12). The third most commonly accessed resource was close friends for those noting a change in health. Of those noting a change involving care of a sick or disabled person, 65% noted that they had turned to a social service or health organization. Family and professionals were often cited as the most helpful resource when the change of greatest impact revolved around health or care of a sick or disabled person (Results not shown).

Instrumental help was used most often when the change of greatest impact was on the personal side of life

In mid-life, the type of help received from the resources of the social network varied depending on the type of change experienced (Table 13). For those in this group who stated

the change of greatest impact was financial, 53% required instrumental help, 41% informational help, and 36% emotional support. When the change involved employment, informational help was used by 72% (For clarification of analytical concepts, see "Definitions").

On the personal side of life, instrumental help was needed by most people with a change in health and in the care of a sick or disabled person (91% and 87%). Emotional and informational supports were also used by the majority of those experiencing one of these two types of change.



Table 11 Impacts of change: Mid-life stage (aged 45 to 64), 2008

	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Perception of change				
Negative	50	27*	56	49
Neither positive nor negative	4 ^E	7 ^E	6 ^E	16 ^{E*}
Positive	45	66*	38	35
Contacts gained or lost due to change¹				
Gained	24	54*	35*	46*
Lost	24	49*	31	25
Financial situation due to change				
Worse	41	38	38	x
Same	20	27	55*	66*
Better	39	35	7 ^{E*}	x
Employment situation due to change				
Worse	27	31	30	x
Same	45	17*	64*	78*
Better	29	52*	7 ^{E*}	x
Physical health due to change				
Worse	23	19	49*	x
Same	58	51	20*	64
Better	19	30*	31*	x
Mental health due to change				
Worse	22	14	30	38*
Same	50	45	43	52
Better	29	41*	28	10 ^{E*}

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 45 to 64 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Due to rounding, percentage totals may not add up to 100.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table 12 Resources used to deal with change: Mid-life stage (aged 45 to 64), 2008

Type of resource used ¹	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Family	41	54*	76*	76*
Business people (including employer)	31	47*	27	19*
Close friends	29	48*	64*	53*
Other media/information sources	23	33	38*	34
Professionals (including doctors)	24	27	87*	75*
Internet	19	37*	44*	33*
Co-workers	17	44*	34*	30*
Government resources (all levels of government)	14	19	15	24*
Other friends	13	29*	38*	30*
Neighbours	10 ^E	11	33*	35*
Social service or health organization	9 ^E	7 ^E	35*	65*
Religious organization	5 ^E	4 ^E	14*	15 ^{E*}

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of resource to deal with the change of greatest impact.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 45 to 64 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table 13 Type of help received to deal with change: Mid-life stage (aged 45 to 64), 2008

Type of help received ¹	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Employment	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Emotional	36	56*	79*	73*
Instrumental ²	53	50	91*	87*
Informational ³	41	72*	68*	66*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.

2. Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.

3. Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 45 to 64 who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Seniors: Relying on professionals, family and close friends to deal with change

- Fewer major changes were reported by those in later life.
- Seniors often perceive change as negative, but it does not greatly impact finances or mental health.
- Seniors rely on professionals (including doctors) especially when change involves health. Family and close friends are also important resources.

Fewer changes were reported by those in later life. In 2008, there were approximately 4.3 million seniors (65 years and older) and a quarter of them had experienced at least one major change. Except for finances, change in the senior's life is concentrated mostly on the personal side of life. The most common changes of greatest impact were related to health (38%), death of a loved one (24%), finances (10%), and care of a sick or disabled person (10%).

Seniors often perceive change as being in a negative direction

Many seniors saw the change in their lives as negative (Table 14). However, if the change of greatest impact was noted as involving health, death of a loved one, or care of a sick or disabled person then the financial and mental health situations in their lives remained the same as before the change. In 2008, a change in finances tended to leave the financial situation worse than before but left other aspects of life unchanged. A change involving health often resulted in a

worse physical health situation than before (51%).

Care of a sick or disabled person may increase the social connectedness of seniors

Seniors' social networks do not appear to fluctuate—they seldom report either a loss or gain in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact. There is one notable exception. When the change involved the care of a sick or disabled person, 52% of seniors reported a gain in social contacts. This finding confirms previous work that found that some life-course factors and events increase the social connectedness of seniors.⁸

Professionals are a vital part of the senior's social network when health changes or involves the care of a sick or disabled person

Family forms the nexus of the social network for seniors especially when the change in their lives revolves around the death of a loved one (Table 15). Close friends also act as a

resource in these circumstances. On the economic side, there is no one dominant resource that is used in dealing with a change in finances.

If the change in the senior's life concerns their own health or the care of a sick or disabled person, professionals are often tapped as a resource along with family and close friends. Social service or health organizations are often used in care of a sick or disabled person. Seniors seldom turned to the Internet as a resource to deal with change.

Instrumental help was commonly used with change involving health or care of a sick or disabled person

Seniors utilized different forms of help from their social networks depending on the type of change they experienced (Table 16). The death of a loved one most commonly involved emotional support. For changes in health or in the care of a sick or disabled person, seniors used the social network for instrumental and emotional support. Informational help was less commonly sought in all types of change.

Table 14 Impacts of change: Seniors (aged 65 and over), 2008

	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Death of a loved one	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Perception of change				
Negative	62	...	64	62
Neither positive nor negative	x	...	6 ^E	x
Positive	x	...	30	x
Contacts gained or lost due to change¹				
Gained	15 ^E	20	22	52*
Lost	12 ^E	13	15	18 ^E
Financial situation due to change				
Worse	61	13*	x	x
Same	17 ^E	80*	80*	77*
Better	23 ^E	7 ^{E*}	x	x
Physical health due to change				
Worse	x	14	51*	x
Same	67	80	27*	53
Better	x	6 ^E	22	x
Mental health due to change				
Worse	22 ^E	19	23	x
Same	66	75	63	58
Better	12 ^E	6 ^E	13 ^E	x

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.

Notes: This table includes respondents aged 65 years and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months. Due to rounding, percentage totals may not add up to 100.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Women use social networks differently than men

Men were slightly more likely than women to feel that the major change with the greatest impact involved employment or finances. For women, the type of change that they noted as having the greatest impact was more likely to involve health or death of a loved one.

Men and women were quite different in how they used their social networks to deal with change. Women were between 7 and 9 percentage points more likely than men to

use family, friends or professionals (e.g. doctors, lawyers). They were also more likely than men to indicate that family was their most helpful resource. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to indicate that business people, including their employer, had been their most helpful resource. They were also less likely than women to seek emotional and instrumental support (Table A.1).

Table 15 Resources used to deal with change: Seniors (aged 65 and over), 2008

Type of resource used ¹	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Death of a loved one	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Family	27 ^E	80*	77*	73*
Business people (including employer)	21 ^E	17	4 ^{E*}	x
Other media/information sources	15 ^E	12 ^E	28	21 ^E
Professionals (including doctors)	19 ^E	28	91*	67*
Government resources (all levels of government)	18 ^E	6 ^{E*}	8 ^E	15 ^E
Close friends	x	65*	53*	41*
Neighbours	x	41*	38*	44*
Other friends	x	38*	26*	28 ^{E*}
Religious organization	x	27*	14	15 ^E
Social service or health organization	x	10 ^E	35*	65*
Internet	x	x	13	x

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of resource to deal with the change of greatest impact.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 65 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table 16 Type of help received to deal with change: Seniors (aged 65 and over), 2008

Type of help received ¹	Change of greatest impact			
	Finances†	Death of a loved one	Health	Care of a sick or disabled person
	percentage			
Emotional	21 ^E	84*	73*	73*
Instrumental ²	50	39	95*	92*
Informational ³	28 ^E	17	45*	51

† reference group

* statistically significant different from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.

2. Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.

3. Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 65 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Summary

Major change, whatever its type, is a feature of modern life for many Canadians. Dealing with change means tapping into social networks and using them in various ways. The 2008 GSS showed that Canadians' life stage affected their change experience, the resources of the social network they used, and the type of help they received from those resources.

Though the Internet is often tapped for help, it is people, particularly family, that remain the most helpful resources in social networks.

Young adults (aged 20 to 29) experience considerable levels of change reflecting the many transitions typically experienced in this stage of life. They view change as a positive experience for the most part and use many parts of their fluid social networks to deal with change, with family being the most helpful resource.

Those in the career and family formation stage of life (aged 30 to 44) are dealing with changes both in the economic and personal sides of life. Social network resources such as family and friends are often tapped to deal with change. Instrumental help is often valued, especially when the change of greatest impact involves parenting or childcare and health.

In the mid-life stage (aged 45 to 64), change becomes a somewhat less common experience. Changes on the personal side of life are dominated by health—either the individual's own health or someone else's. Instrumental help is often drawn from the social network especially with changes in the personal side of life.

Seniors (aged 65 and older) experience the least amount of change. Change is seen as negative but does not greatly impact other areas of life such as finances or physical health. Reliance on professionals within the social network becomes pronounced at this life stage. Family and close friends were also important resources.



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1. Lin, N. (2001). *Social capital: A theory of social structure and action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
2. Lin. (2001); Putman. (2000).
3. Change involving death of a loved one will be dealt with in a box for all life stages except seniors – for seniors it will be handled in the section on seniors. This is because previous research has indicated that in earlier life stages this change is dealt with in a common way, but amongst seniors this change has a different impact and is handled differently (Cornwell, Laumann, and Schumm, 2008; Torges, Stewart, and Nolen-Hoeksema, 2008).
Cornwell, B., Laumann, E. O., and Schumm, L. P. (2008). The social connectedness of older adults: A national profile. *American Sociological Review*, 73(April), 185-203.
Torges, C., Stewart, A., and Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2008). Regret, resolution, aging, and adapting to loss. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(1), 169-180.
4. Clark, W. (2007). Delayed transitions of young adults. *Canadian Social Trends*, 84, 13-21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008.
5. Cornwell, Laumann, and Schumm. (2008).
6. Veenhof, B. (forthcoming). Online activities of Canadian boomers and seniors. *Canadian Social Trends*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008.
7. McColl, M. A., Lei, H., and Skinner, H. (1995). Structural relationships between social support and coping. *Social Science Medicine*, 41(3), 395-407.
8. Cornwell, Laumann, and Shumm. (2008).

Change: Respondents were asked:

Which of the following changes, either positive or negative, have you experienced during the past 12 months? Have you experienced changes to do with:

- ... finances or income?
- ... employment?
- ... health?
- ... parenting or childcare?
- ... home care of a sick or disabled person?
- ... death of a loved one?
- ... education?
- ... legal matters?
- ... living arrangements (for example, moving to a new house, moving in with another family member, a change of responsibilities within the household)?
- ... family relationships?
- ... personal achievements?
- ... any other change?

Major change: Respondents were asked to identify the impact of the identified change on a scale of one to five with one denoting very little impact and five indicating a very large impact. Those who indicated an impact score of 4 or 5 were considered to have experienced a major change for the purposes of this study.

Major change of greatest impact: For respondents who identified only one type of major change, it was treated as the change of greatest impact on their life. Respondents with two or more major changes were asked to identify the one that had the greatest impact.

Two groupings of change were used in this article for some life stages:

Economic changes were changes in finance and employment.

Personal changes could include changes in parenting or childcare, health, care of a sick or disabled person, and death of a loved one.

Social network: Social networks are the people, institutions, and resources that individuals interact with for information, support, and relationships of all types. To identify the resources used to deal with the change of greatest impact, respondents were asked: "Did you get help from: family, close friends, friends other than close friends, co-workers, neighbours, local government resources, other government resources, business people, professional people, a public

institution, a social service or health organization, a law or justice organization, a religious organization, another community organization, the Internet, other information or media resources, any other type of resource?" The respondent was then asked to identify which of these resources was the most helpful.

Help received from the social network: For each type of social network resource identified, respondents were asked to identify the type of help received. Possible types of help were emotional or moral support, financial support, material goods or gifts, transportation or running errands, professional services or expertise, information or informal advice, help with household work, home maintenance or child care, help with personal care or health care needs, referrals, networking, or making new contacts, teaching, coaching, or training, support for political action, and other.

Three groupings of type of help were used for the purpose of this article:

Emotional help included the help concerning emotional or moral support.

Instrumental help included at least one of the following: financial support, material goods or gifts; transportation or running errands; professional services or expertise; help with household work, home maintenance or child care; and help with personal care or health care needs.

Informational help included at least one of the following: referrals, networking, or making new contacts; teaching, coaching, or training; and support for political action.

Perception of change: Respondents were asked: "Do you think this change has been more positive or negative?" There were 5 possible answer categories which were collapsed to three for the analysis—positive (includes "positive" and "from negative to positive"), negative (includes "negative" and "from positive to negative"), and neither positive nor negative.

Impact on important life aspects: Respondents were asked about the state of important life aspects as a result of the change of greatest impact. The aspects examined were: financial, employment, physical health and mental health situations. They were given five possible response categories. For this analysis, the response categories were collapsed into three—better, same, and worse. This question was not asked of those who identified death of a loved one as a change of greatest impact, and these respondents are coded as missing when this variable is used.

	Women†	Men		Women†	Men
	percentage			percentage	
Experienced any major change in the last 12 months	47	40*	Business people (including employer)	30	34*
Change of greatest impact¹			Neighbours	25	20*
Employment	12	17*	Social service or health organization	23	18*
Finances	12	17*	Government resources (all levels of government)	16	17
Health	17	12*	Public institutions (for example, libraries or universities)	13	14
Death of a loved one	14	11*	Religious organization	13	9*
Parenting or child care	10	11	Law or justice organization	6	5
Care of a sick or disabled person	6	4	Other community organization	7	5*
Perception of change			Most helpful resource in dealing with change⁴		
Negative	30	26*	Family	46	41*
Neither positive nor negative	7	5*	Professionals (including doctors)	14	13
Positive	63	69*	Close friends	11	12
Contacts gained or lost due to change²			Internet	6	8
Gained	44	46	Business people (including employer)	3	5*
Lost	28	29	Government resources (all levels of government)	3	3
Type of resource used³			Type of help received⁵		
Family	72	65*	Emotional	71	60*
Close friends	63	54*	Instrumental ⁶	68	63*
Professionals (including doctors)	49	40*	Informational ⁷	62	63
Internet	39	39	Financial situation worse due to change	28	25
Co-workers	37	35	Employment situation worse due to change	16	13*
Other friends	39	31*	Physical health worse due to change	24	18*
Other media/information sources	36	31*	Mental health worse due to change	23	15*

† reference group

* statistically significant difference from the reference group at $p < 0.05$

- Not all types of changes are shown. For further details contact the author.
- Respondents could report both a gain and a loss in social contacts due to the change of greatest impact.
- Respondents could report more than one type of help to deal with the change of greatest impact.
- Only the most commonly identified resources are shown.
- Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.
- Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.
- Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 and over who experienced at least one major change in the last 12 months.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.

Table A.2 Resources accessed when the major change is death of a loved one

	Percentage		Percentage
Type of resource used¹		Public institutions (for example, libraries or universities)	
Family	89		3 ^E
Close friends	85	Most helpful resource in dealing with change²	
Co-workers	59	Family	64
Other friends	61	Close friends	15
Neighbours	44	Professionals (including doctors)	8
Business people (including employer)	44	Religious organization	5 ^E
Professionals (including doctors)	38	Type of help received³	
Religious organization	27	Emotional	95
Other media/information services	21	Instrumental ⁴	50
Internet	18	Informational ⁵	34
Social service or health organization	15	Financial situation worse due to change	
Other community organization	8		13
Government resources (all levels of government)	8	Employment situation worse due to change	
Law or justice organization	8		6 ^E
		Physical health worse due to change	
			17
		Mental health worse due to change	
			27

1. Respondents could report more than one type of help to deal with the change of greatest impact.
2. Only the most commonly identified resources are shown.
3. Respondents could report more than one type of help received to deal with the change of greatest impact.
4. Instrumental help includes using at least one of the following types: professional services or expertise; financial; help with household work or childcare; transportation; material goods; personal care or health needs.
5. Informational help includes using at least one of the following types: information or informal advice; referrals, networking or making new contacts; teaching coaching, or training.

Note: This table includes respondents aged 20 to 64 whose change of greatest impact was death of a loved one.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008.