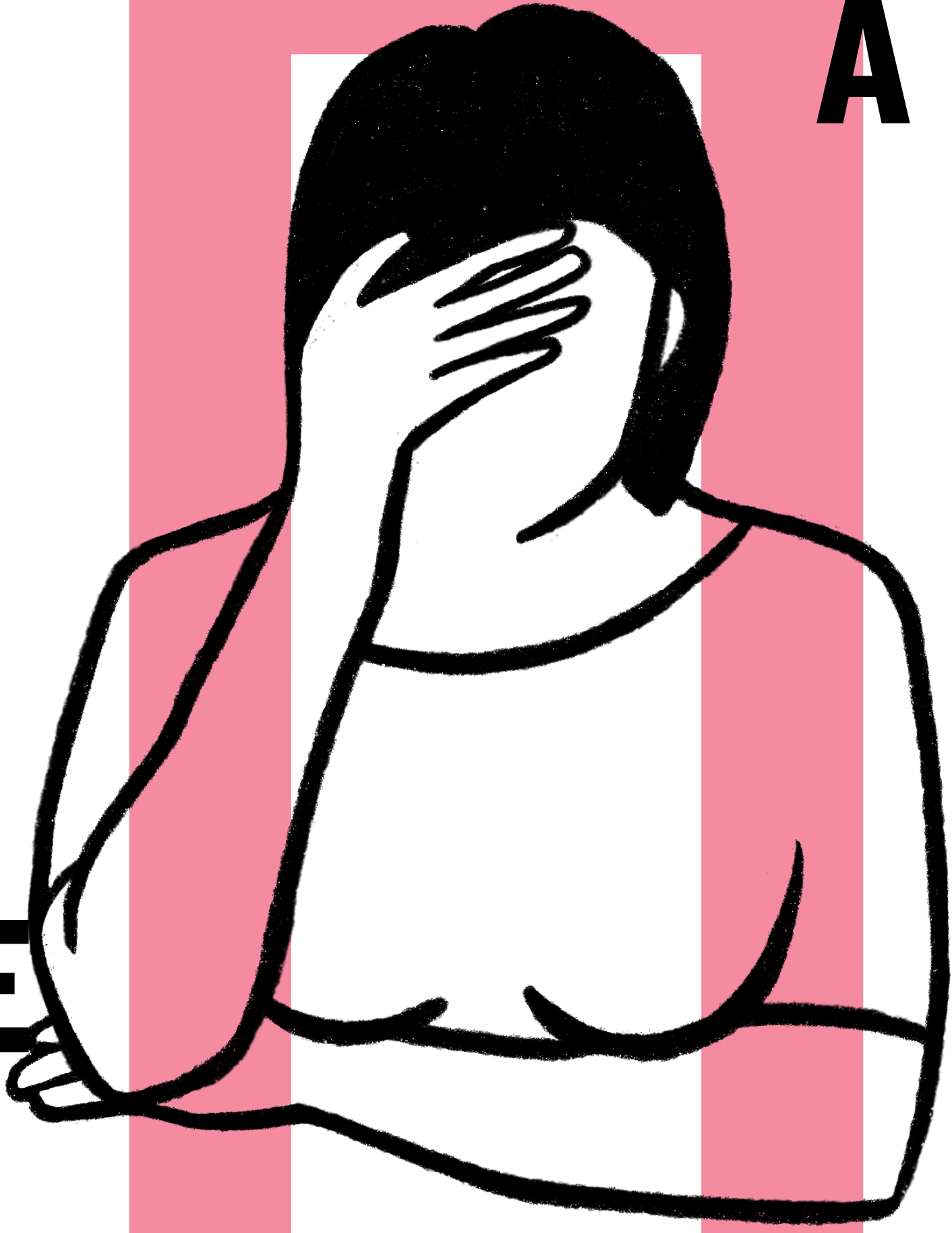


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*Unmasking Gender Inequity: Spotlight on Women's Mental Health*

Call 310-6789 for immediate mental health support in BC.

ADVOCATE | EDUCATE | DONATE

BC Women's Health Foundation

UNMASKGENDERINEQUITY.CA

**The mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are staggering; public health countermeasures have caused secondary impacts including isolation, job loss, increased care-giving responsibility, and increased risk of exposure to the virus due to the gendered nature of work.**

**Women are shouldering many of these burdens, and their mental health is suffering.**

**Spotlight on Women's Mental Health is the BC Women's Health Foundation's second piece in their new series, Unmasking Gender Inequity - revealing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's health in BC.**

We acknowledge that the BC Women's Health Foundation carries out our work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Swwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Sləlwətəə/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

BC WOMEN'S  
HEALTH  
FOUNDATION



Community Savings  
the unions' credit union

# LISTENING TO WOMEN IN BC

**NEARLY FOUR IN TEN WOMEN (38%) REPORT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH HAS WORSENE**  
**SINCE MID-MARCH 2020.**

**THIS IS REFLECTED IN AVERAGE CLINICAL SCORES OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY FOR WOMEN, WHICH HAVE BEEN INCREASING SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC IN ADDITION TO MEASURES OF LONELINESS, STRESS AND WORRY.**

**IT IS ALSO REFLECTED IN MENTAL HEALTH RELATED PRESCRIPTIONS: WOMEN CLAIMED 2.4 TIMES MORE PRESCRIPTIONS RELATED TO ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, OR SLEEPING SUPPORT THAN MEN FROM APRIL TO DECEMBER 2020.**

**YET, OUR SURVEY SUGGESTS OVER 40% OF WOMEN DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THEY NEED.**

I'M

EXHAUSTED

AND

CONFIDENTLY



Call 310-6789 for immediate mental health support in BC.

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Recent data suggests these statistics are being replicated across Canada:

**10% OF WOMEN REPORTED EXPERIENCING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS/FEELINGS IN SEPTEMBER.**

**3% OF WOMEN REPORTED DELIBERATELY HURTING THEMSELVES.**

**WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO INDICATE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAN MEN, INCLUDING BECOMING ANXIOUS, WORRIED, STRESSED, LONELY, ISOLATED, BORED, SAD, DEPRESSED, AFRAID, HOPELESS, PANICKED, AND UNPREPARED.**

# SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF WOMEN REPORT

*financial worries, feelings of depression or  
hopelessness, exhaustion, and persistent worrying.*

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# ADDED LAYERS IMPACTING WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH



## FINANCIAL INSECURITY

Since the pandemic, financial concerns are affecting nearly half of women (46%) resulting in mental health issues like worry, anxiety, stress and depression.

## AGE

Younger women report greater mental health concerns - over 50% of women under age 25 report their mental health as worse than pre-pandemic, compared to 38% overall.

## RACE

Indigenous women and those from a minority community are more inclined to rate their emotional health poorly (27% and 35% more likely respectively) since the beginning of the pandemic.



## ESSENTIAL WORKERS

72% experienced a change in work-related stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two thirds are experiencing worry, anxiety or stress, and two in five are experiencing depression.

## LGBTQ+

Non-binary and queer people report significantly greater levels of depression, anxiety, loneliness, stress, and worry than cis-men or cis-women.

## CAREGIVING

73% of women report negative health outcomes from increased caring for, or concern about, elderly or disabled family members, with anxiety being the main impact.



**OVER 40% OF WOMEN  
REPORTED NOT  
HAVING  
ACCESS TO  
THE MENTAL  
HEALTH  
SUPPORT  
THEY NEED**

*Call 310-6789 for immediate mental health support in BC.*

**ADVOCATE | EDUCATE | DONATE**

*BC Women's Health Foundation*

**UNMASKGENDERINEQUITY.CA**



# WHAT'S WORKING FOR WOMEN?

Here are the *top four successful strategies* women across Canada are using to successfully cope with stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

## 01

### WALKING OR EXERCISING OUTSIDE

Check out:  
[\*Best trails in British Columbia\*](#)

## 02

### MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP, EATING A BALANCED DIET, AND EXERCISING

Check out:  
[\*BC Healthy Living Alliance\*](#)

## 03

### CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Check out:  
[\*10 ways to connect virtually with family and friend\*](#)

## 04

### DOING A HOBBY

Check out:  
[\*50 Low-cost Hobbies\*](#)

**“ I HAVE HAD  
TO CASH  
IN RRSPS  
AND SELL  
MY CAR  
TO KEEP  
OUR FAMILY  
AFLOAT.  
I WAS  
WORRIED  
WE’D  
LOSE  
OUR  
HOUSE.”**



# RESOURCES FOR

*Designed for those living in BC, accessible from anywhere.*

## 01

Need help immediately?  
[Call the Crisis Line Association of BC](#) at 310-6789 for emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health (no area code needed).

## 02

[Mind Map BC](#) is a custom-made database of outpatient mental health services including professional counselling, peer counselling, support groups, and others.

## 03

[Wellness Together Canada](#) offers this five-minute self-assessment.

## 04

[This page](#) on the [BC government](#) site offers a list of support for healthcare workers, young people, students, educators, parents, seniors, and more.

## 05

[Here to Help](#) offers options for free psychotherapy or counselling.

## 06

[UBCP/ACTRA](#) offers a full list of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ Mental Health Supports.

## 07

[The Ending Violence Association of BC](#) offers a comprehensive list of victims services across BC.

## 08

[eMentalHealth](#) offers [this list](#) of publicly funded and free services for immigrants and newcomers.

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

## 09

[Bounce Back](#) is a free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry.

Thank you to the team leading the [Assessing the Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: A National Survey](#) at UBC for their contributions to this resource list.

# INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

## 01

### NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The *Native Women's Association of Canada* has a team of in-house Elders, available Monday–Friday, from 9–11 a.m. EST and 1–3 p.m. EST.

Thank you to Jennifer Murray for their contribution to this resource list.

## 02

### CANADIAN INDIGENOUS NURSES ASSOCIATION

The Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association offers *this list* of resources specific to healthcare workers.

## 03

### INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY

Indigenous Midwifery has developed *resources supporting postpartum wellness* during COVID-19.

## 04

### BC FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

*BC Friendship Centres* offers Mindful Mondays, morning wellness webinars.

**WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT MY CHILDCARE WAS GONE, AND WITH NO FAMILY SUPPORT I HAD TO MANAGE WORKING FULL TIME AT HOME WITH A TODDLER. I FEEL LIKE EVERYDAY THE WEIGHT OF IT ALL GETS A LITTLE HEAVIER. I AM NOT SURE WHICH WEIGHT IS HEAVIEST - THE GUILT I CARRY AS A MOM, OR THE SHAME I FEEL IN PERFORMING POORLY IN MY JOB...**



# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

## AS A WOMAN,

### VALIDATE

Let these learnings validate the experience. May the experiences from the women across BC assure you that you are not alone.

### EXPLORE

This list of free, evidence-based resources is available to support and manage your own mental health.

### CONNECT

Reach out to someone you trust. Talking about your mental health experience can be an important step towards getting the support you need.

## AS ANYONE,

### ADVOCATE

Consider ways you can lift up those around you, practise non-judgemental support, consider sharing your personal story to contribute to destigmatizing mental health.

### EDUCATE

Spend time with these facts, consider how they might impact your day-to-day life, and visit [umaskgenderinequity.ca](http://umaskgenderinequity.ca) to learn about more impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's health.

### DONATE

Contribute to *the research* that will inform leaders on how to centre women's mental health in pandemic recovery plans.

# DATA SOURCES + ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We are grateful to [Community Savings Credit Union](#) for generously partnering with us on Unmasking Gender Inequity: Spotlight on Women's Mental Health.

BC data is from a BCWHF commissioned survey of 1,000 women aged 16 and up collected September 2020 and conducted by Mustel Group. We thank the [Pacific Blue Cross Health Foundation](#) for their financial contribution to this survey.

Additional BC data is from the Women's Health Research Institute's [Rapid Evidence Study of a Provincial Population Based COhort for GeNder and SEx](#) (RESPONSE) study.

We thank Dr. Gina Ogilvie, Dr. Lori Brotto, Dr. Angela Kaida, Dr. Liisa Galea, and their investigative team.

Prescription medication data is from [Pacific Blue Cross](#) anonymized paid claims from April - December 2019 and 2020. We thank the [Pacific Blue Cross](#) for their ongoing Pillar Partnership with the BCWHF to enable gender-focused collaborations such as this.

Canadian data are drawn from the study [Mental health impacts of COVID-19](#) conducted in partnership between the [University of British Columbia](#) and the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#). We thank Dr. Corey McAuliffe, Dr. Emily Jenkins, Allie Slemon, Dr. Kimberly Thomson, Dr. Saima Hirani and Dr. Anne Gadermann for their research contributions and resource list.

*The term 'women' is used in this piece to reflect self-identified women.*

