

OTTAWA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS' FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19



Section 7: Mental Health and Wellness

Results are from the 2021 COVID-19 research survey of 1077 Indigenous community members in Ottawa that described their experience of COVID-19 from March 2020 to June 2021.



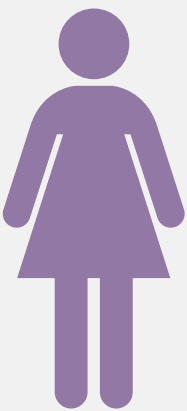
68%

indicated an increase in anxiety or depression

INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH STRESSORS

Sleep Quality

People who had sleep issues were about **2 times more at risk** of worsening anxiety or depression during the first year of COVID-19.



Women's Experiences

Women were significantly more likely to experience increased negative mental health such as;

Women		Men
65%	ISOLATION	44%
64%	ANXIETY	42%
59%	SLEEPING DIFFICULTIES	37%
58%	EATING CHANGES	40%
57%	DEPRESSION	38%

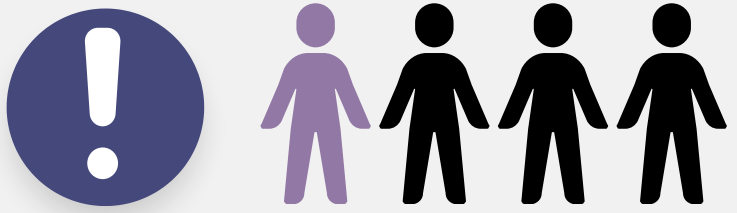
GRIEF AND LOSS



Lost Someone to Overdose

31%

of community members lost someone due to overdose in the first year of COVID-19.



Lost Someone to COVID-19

27%

of community members lost someone due to COVID-19 in the first year.

CONNECTING TO CULTURE: BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

*"I lost 40lbs as a result of being **active outside** – just like our ancestors did!"*
– Community Member

Smudging, prayer, sacred medicines, knowledge, ways of healing, nature, and the outdoors were a source of pride and influenced better health.

Positive Coping in Relation to Nature and Outdoors

For people who were able to access the outdoors, it was linked to their positive mental health and wellbeing.



"I OBSERVE AND ABSORB THE BEAUTY OF THIS WORLD WITH AS MANY SENSES AS POSSIBLE."



OTTAWA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS' FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19



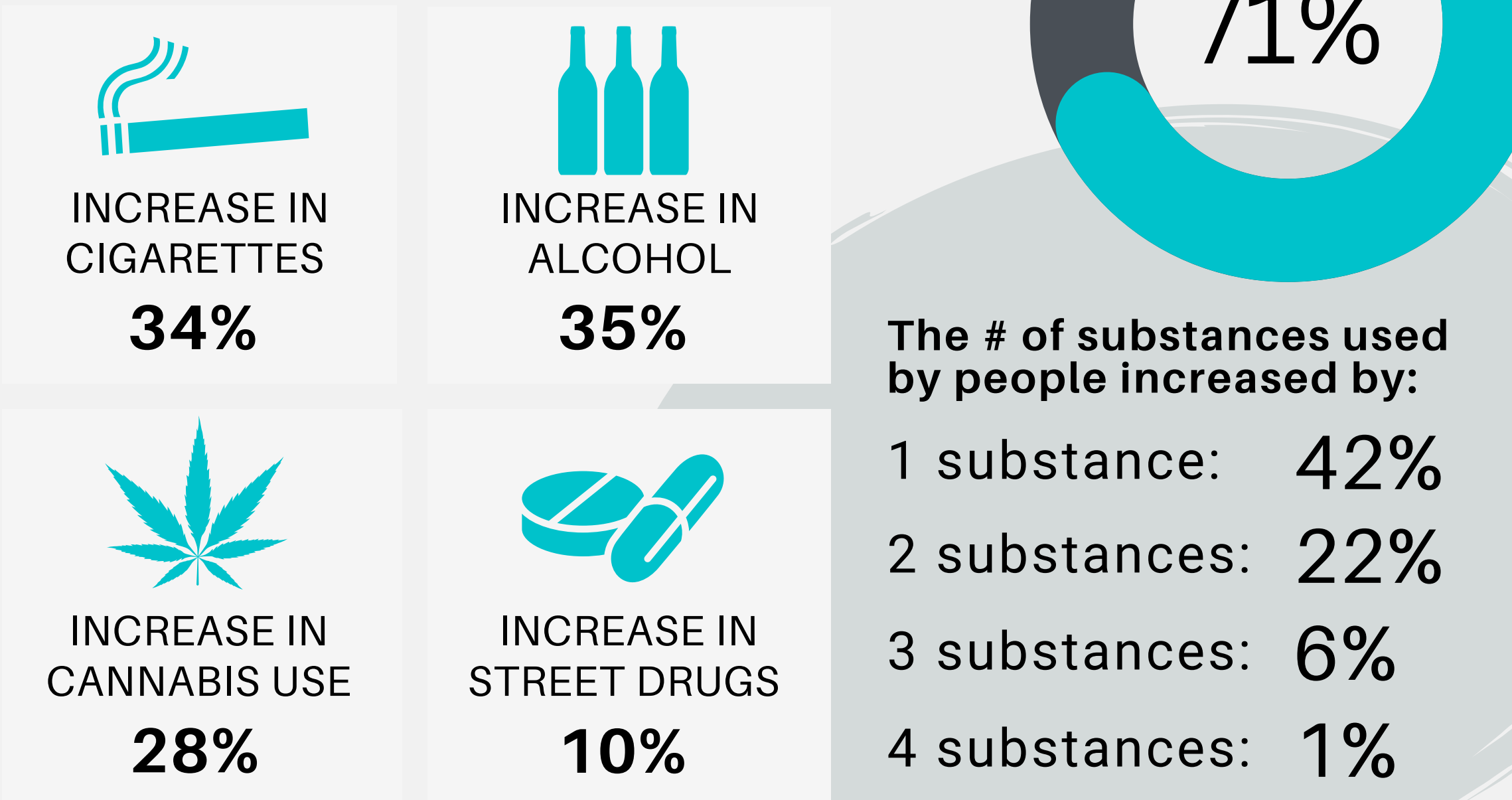
Mental Health and Wellness

INCREASED RESILIENCY BASED ACTIVITIES



RELATIONSHIP WITH SUBSTANCES

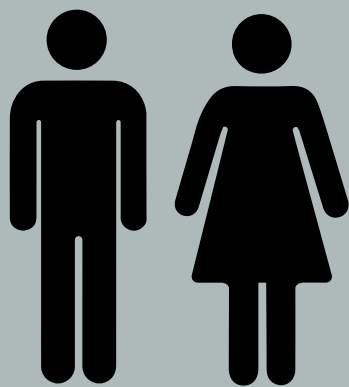
71% of people increased their substance use. This includes one or more of the following;



MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Men and women coped in different ways compared to the other gender.

More men increased alcohol (39%), cannabis (32%), and street drug use (15%).



More women increased spending (25%) and eating habits (58%).



OTTAWA INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS' FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19



Mental Health and Wellness



SUPPORTS

Community members talked about drawing on personal strength and also accessing support to decrease use.

- Therapy/Counselling through Indigenous Organizations
- Friends and Family
- Community Mental Health Organizations (Online)
- Doctors/Medical Professionals

RESILIENCY

Spirituality, new self-care habits, and identifying strengths in the community and oneself were all important examples of resiliency.

*"Learning on Zoom with the Western University knowledge network, skipping rope, bought a bunny, I smudge now, and have **kitchen dance parties** on the regular. I joined anti-human trafficking survivor-led committees but none in Ottawa sadly."*




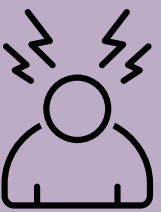
*"My **strength** was realizing that I had to continue to work on me and acknowledging what I feared."*

*"The community is so **strong**, everyone truly looked out for each other and kept everyone close even at times that make us distant."*

INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH STRESSORS


 **71%** DEPRESSION


 **56%** ISOLATION


 **55%** ANXIETY


 **49%** SLEEPING DIFFICULTIES

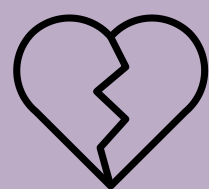
 **41%** RELATIONSHIP DIFFICULTIES

 **31%** BAD DREAMS

 **21%** THOUGHT OF SUICIDE

 **17%** OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

 **16%** DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

 **2%** SELF HARM

