



MUSTEL GROUP
MARKET RESEARCH

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'Tis the Season to be Stressing

The pursuit of happiness is an undertaking constantly challenged by the stressors of life, and the Holiday Season is a great example of this challenge. In fact, a Mustel Group poll reveals that 38 per cent of BC adults feel their general stress levels have increased over the past five years. Overall more than half (54 per cent) report to feeling stressed, women feeling it more than men.

The most relaxed are our seniors, the cohort 55 years of age and over. Two-thirds say they are not stressed overall. On Mustel Group's "stress-o-meter" they consistently average the lowest scores on the stress scale, compared to younger and middle-aged British Columbians.

What are the key drivers of rising stress levels??

Simply put, work and children! People in households with children and those who are employed tend to be the most stressed out. With longer hours spent at the workplace, longer commutes to work (one-third report that their commute times have increased in just this past year alone), and the pervasiveness of technology keeping us connected 24/7, "having it all" has become more challenging and work/life balance more illusive.

Other contributors to stress include problems with family and relationships, health and financial woes. But interestingly enough, the very things that contribute to and/or cause the most stress—work, family and friends—are the top three things in life that make people happy.

Popular coping mechanisms for stress as reported by our respondents include listening to music, exercising, watching TV or a movie, reading a book, or crying on someone's shoulder, talking to a special friend.

However, according to a poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Mental Health Association, one-in-four also admit to turning to alcohol. The same poll also showed that less than half (46%) would seek professional help if their stress started to impact their everyday life, men and younger adults being less inclined than others to do so.

In addition to the impact on their mental health, people are concerned about the consequences on their physical health with 40 per cent concerned that excess stress could lead to major illnesses such as cancer or heart disease, ailments like colds and flu, or more generally, a shortening of life.

As life continues to get more and more hectic especially around the Christmas Holidays, instead of reaching for that hot toddy or rum and eggnog, try one of the many stress relievers suggested by you. And remember, there is hope, once the kids have flown the nest and the mortgage is paid off, maybe then we can finally start to relax.