

# Improving Access to Psychologists Across Canadian Jurisdictions

Dr. Andrea Piotrowski, CPsych  
Chair, Practice Directorate  
Canadian Psychological Association

# Practice Directorate

- Council comprised of representatives from the provincial/territorial associations and CPA
- Sharing of advocacy information and resources
- Coordinating advocacy initiatives and strategies
- Organizing advocacy and leadership training

# Past Initiatives of the PD

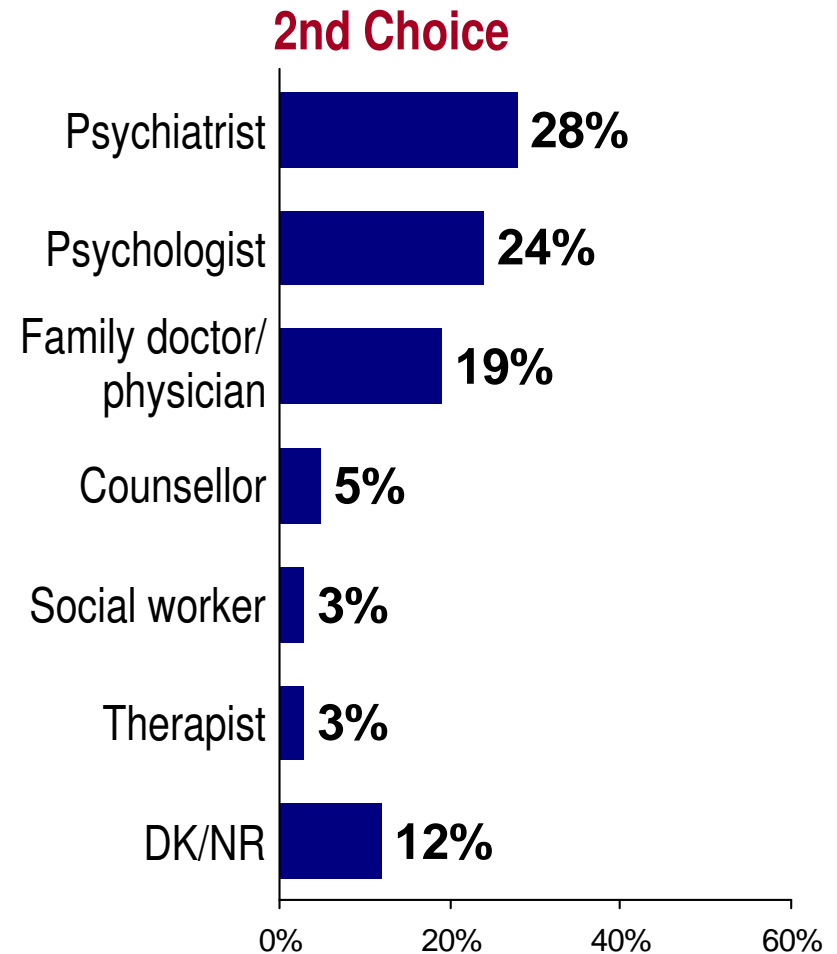
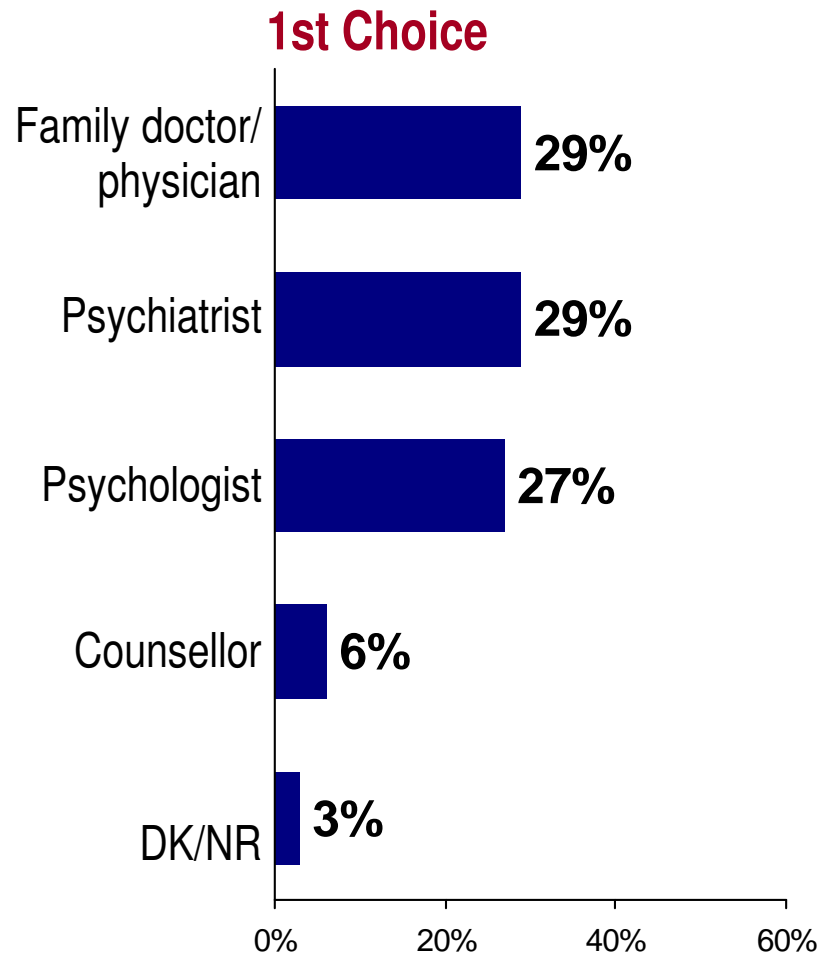
- Preparing advocacy materials to integrate psychologists within Primary Care
- Mind Your Mental Health Campaign
- Survey of Canadian Attitudes Toward Psychologists and Accessing Psychological Services

# Survey of Canadian Attitudes Toward Psychologists and Accessing Psychological Services

- EKOS Research
- Telephone survey of 2832 Canadians
- Range of income and education levels
- National and provincial/territorial data

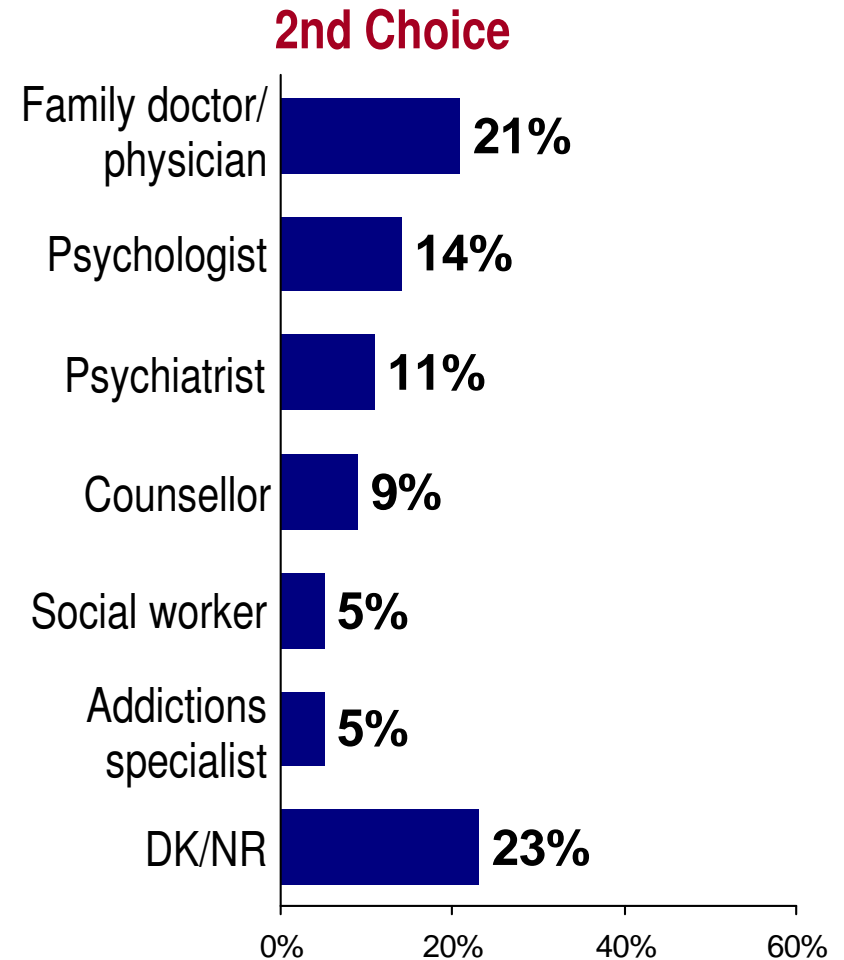
# Perceptions of Health Professionals Best Able to Help with Mental Health Problems (1)

“Can you tell me what health professionals you think are best able to care for people living with DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DISORDERS?” [Open]



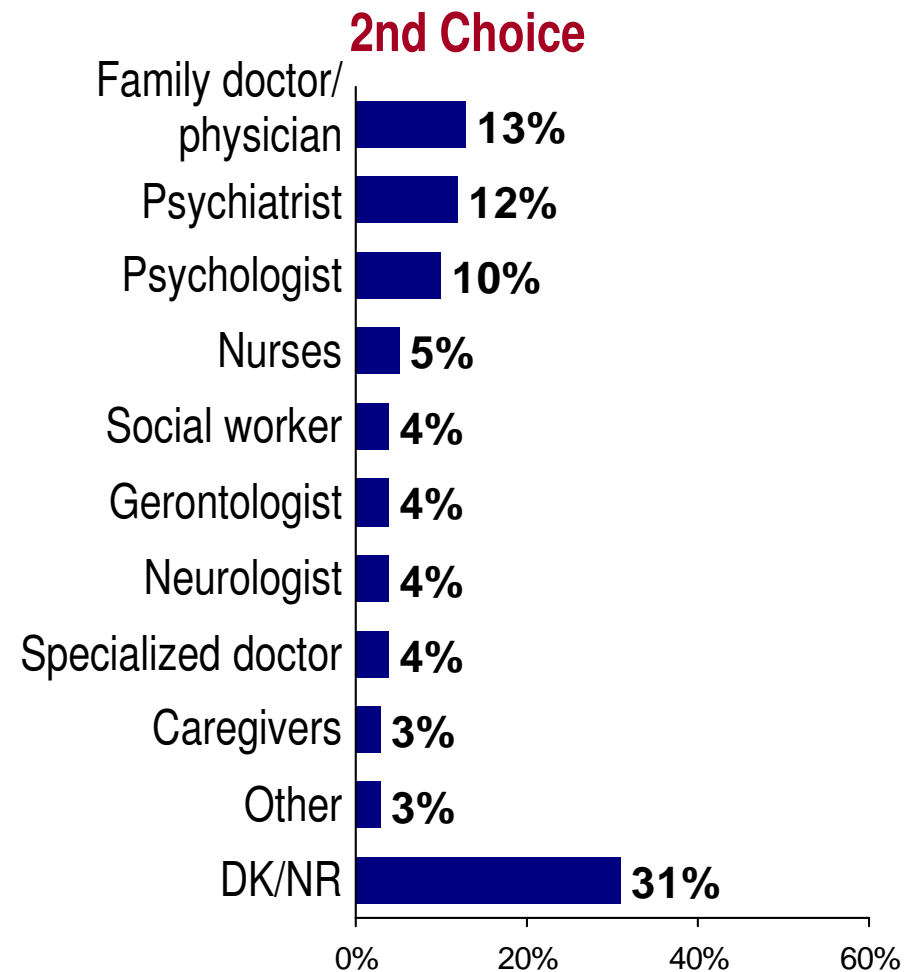
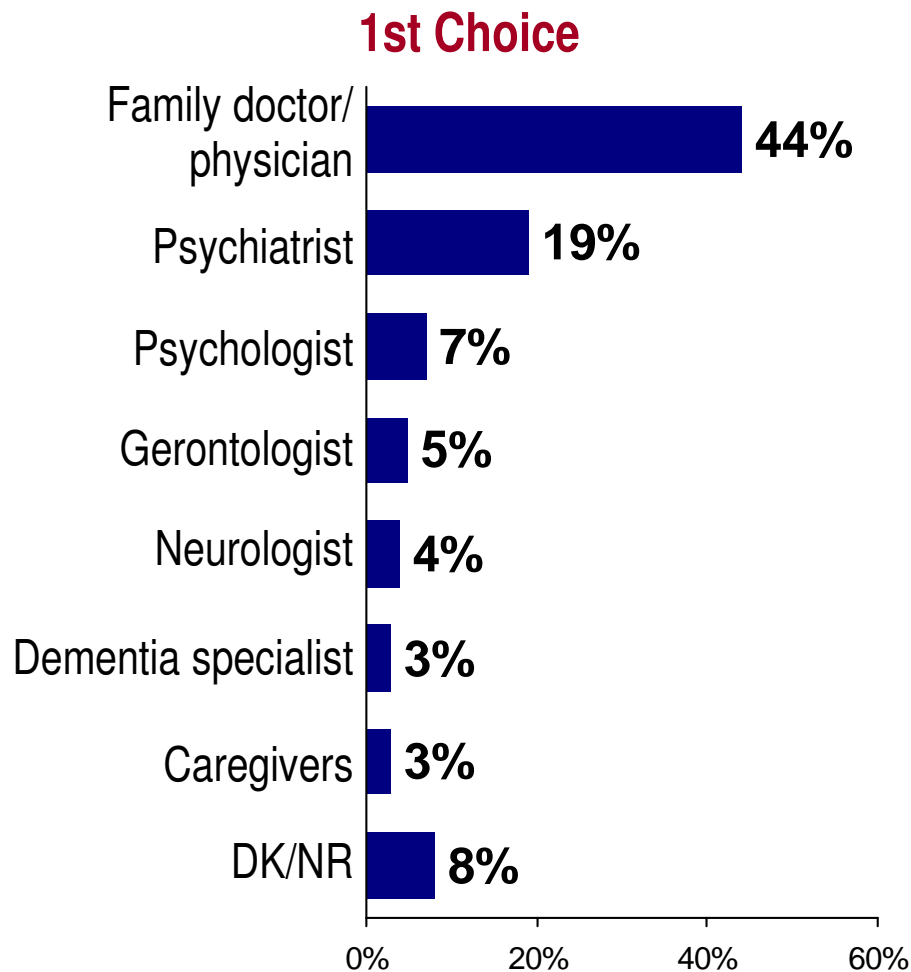
# Perceptions of Health Professionals Best Able to Help with Mental Health Problems (2)

“Can you tell me what health professionals you think are best able to care for people living with ADDICTIONS?” [Open]



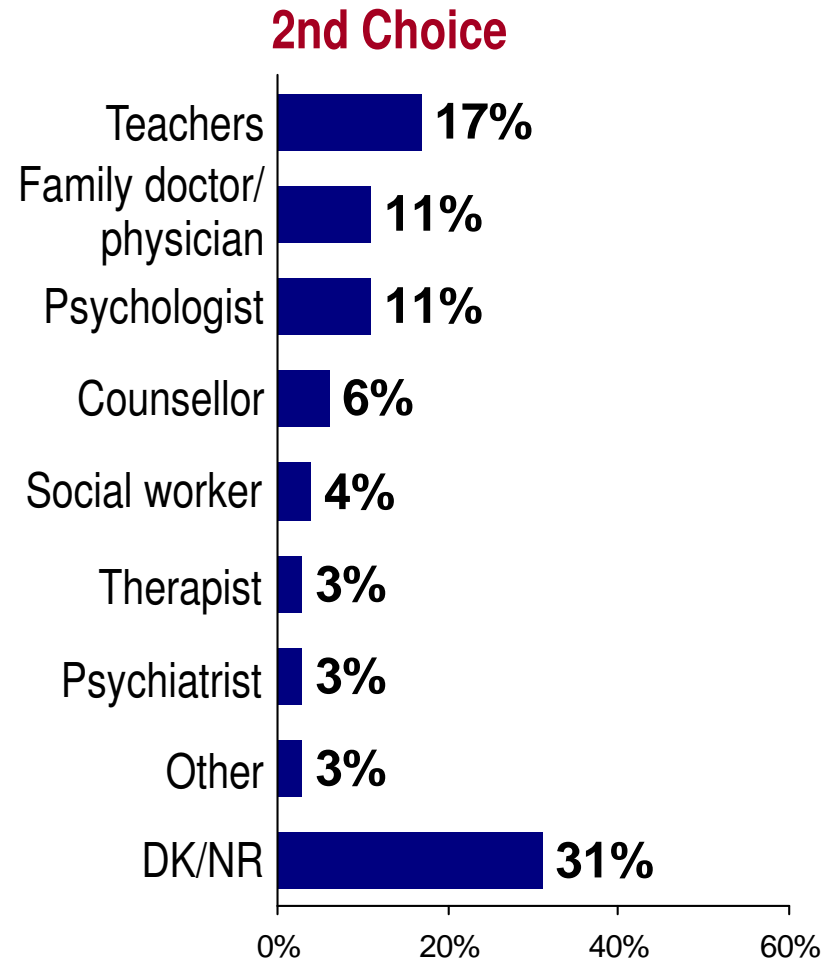
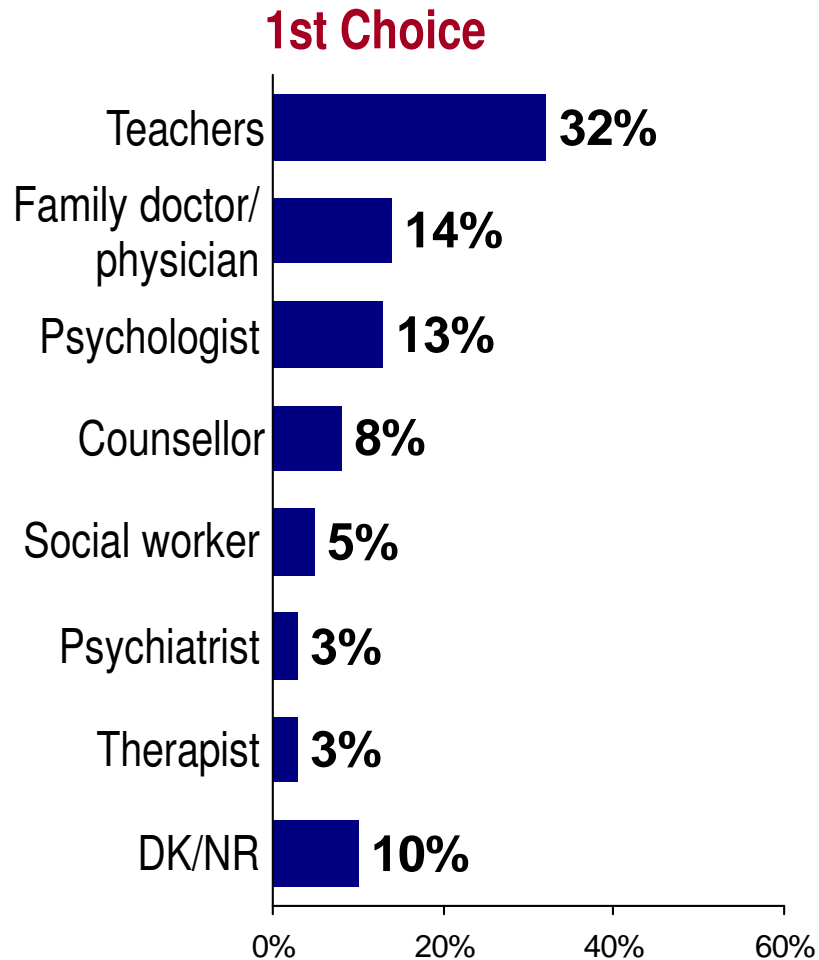
# Perceptions of Health Professionals Best Able to Help with Mental Health Problems (3)

“Can you tell me what health professionals you think are best able to care for people living with DEMENTIA?” [Open]



# Perceptions of Health Professionals Best Able to Help with Mental Health Problems (4)

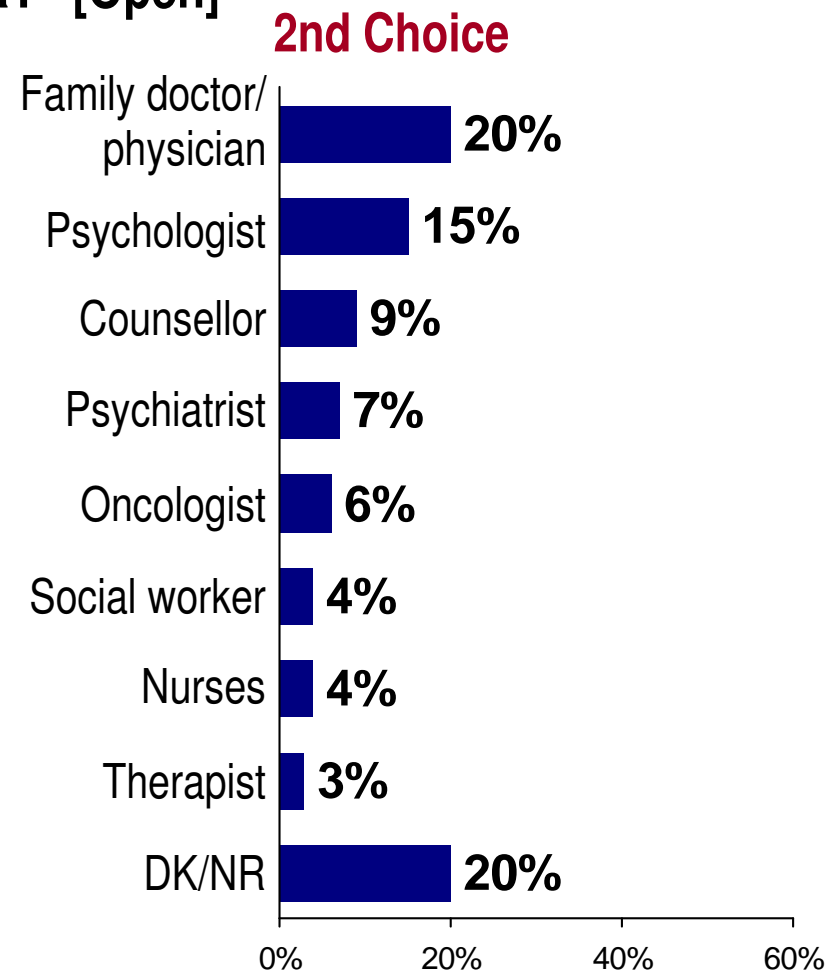
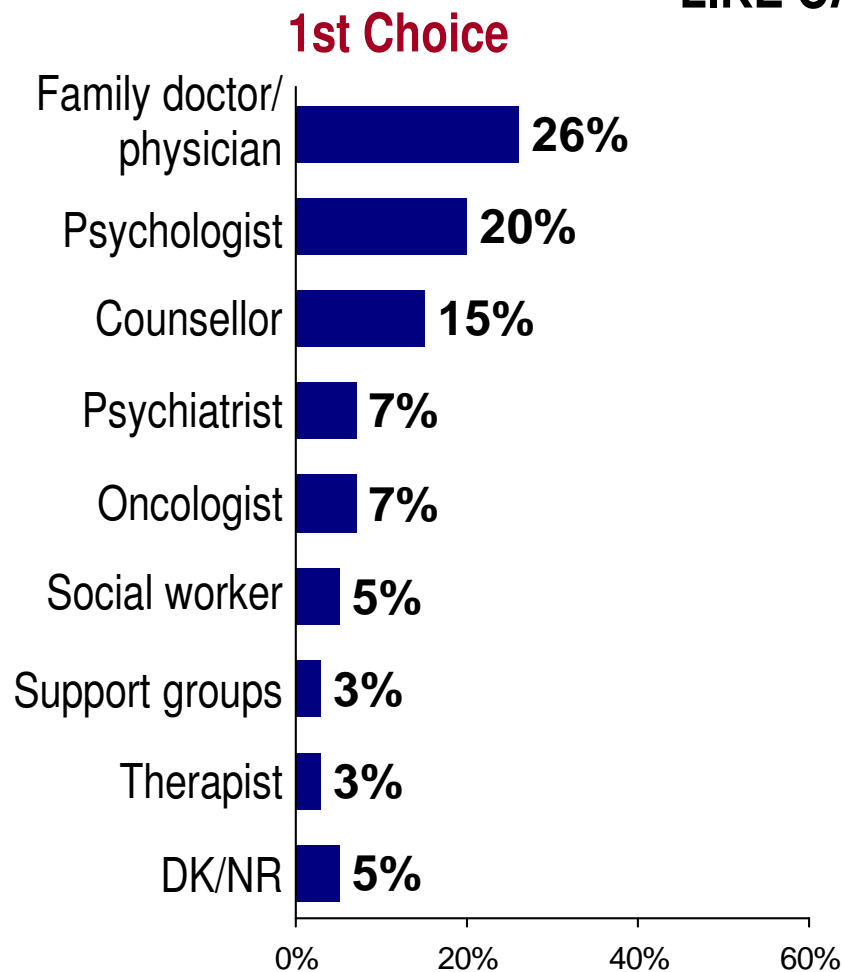
“Can you tell me what health professionals you think are best able to care for people living with LEARNING DISABILITIES?” [Open]





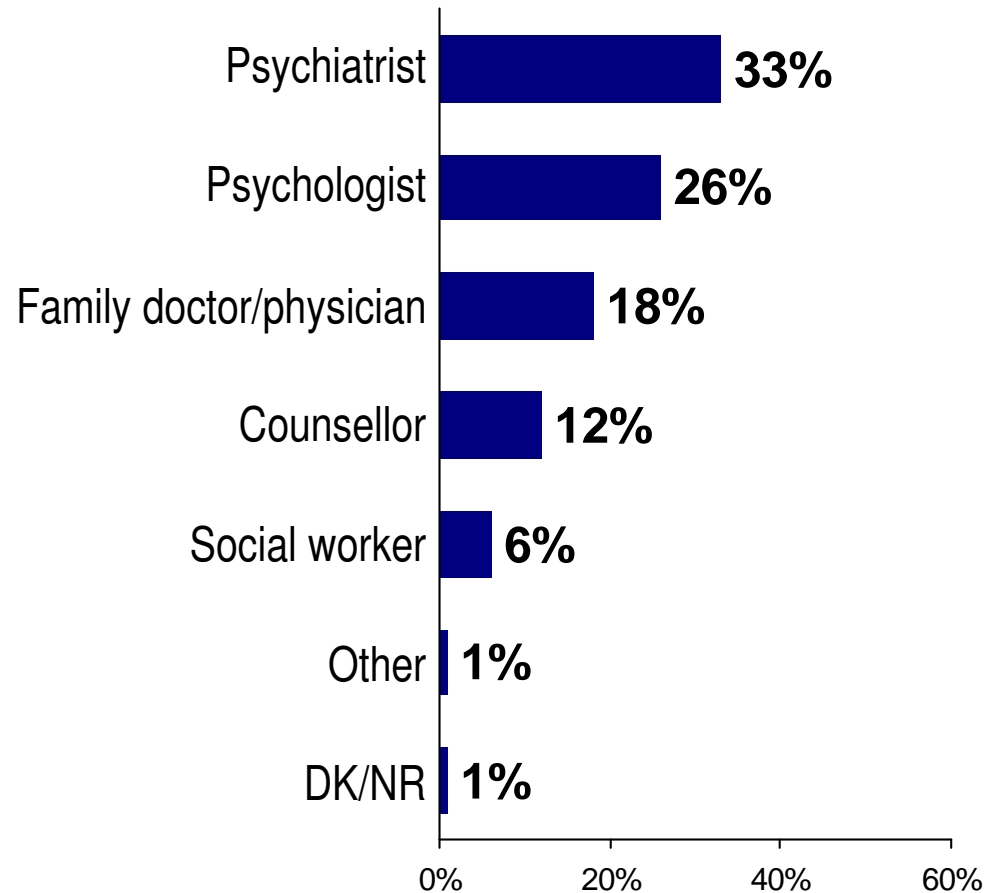
# Perceptions of Health Professionals Best Able to Help with Mental Health Problems (5)

“Can you tell me what health professionals you think are best able to care for people **COPING WITH THE STRESS OF BEING DIAGNOSED WITH A DISEASE LIKE CANCER?**” [Open]



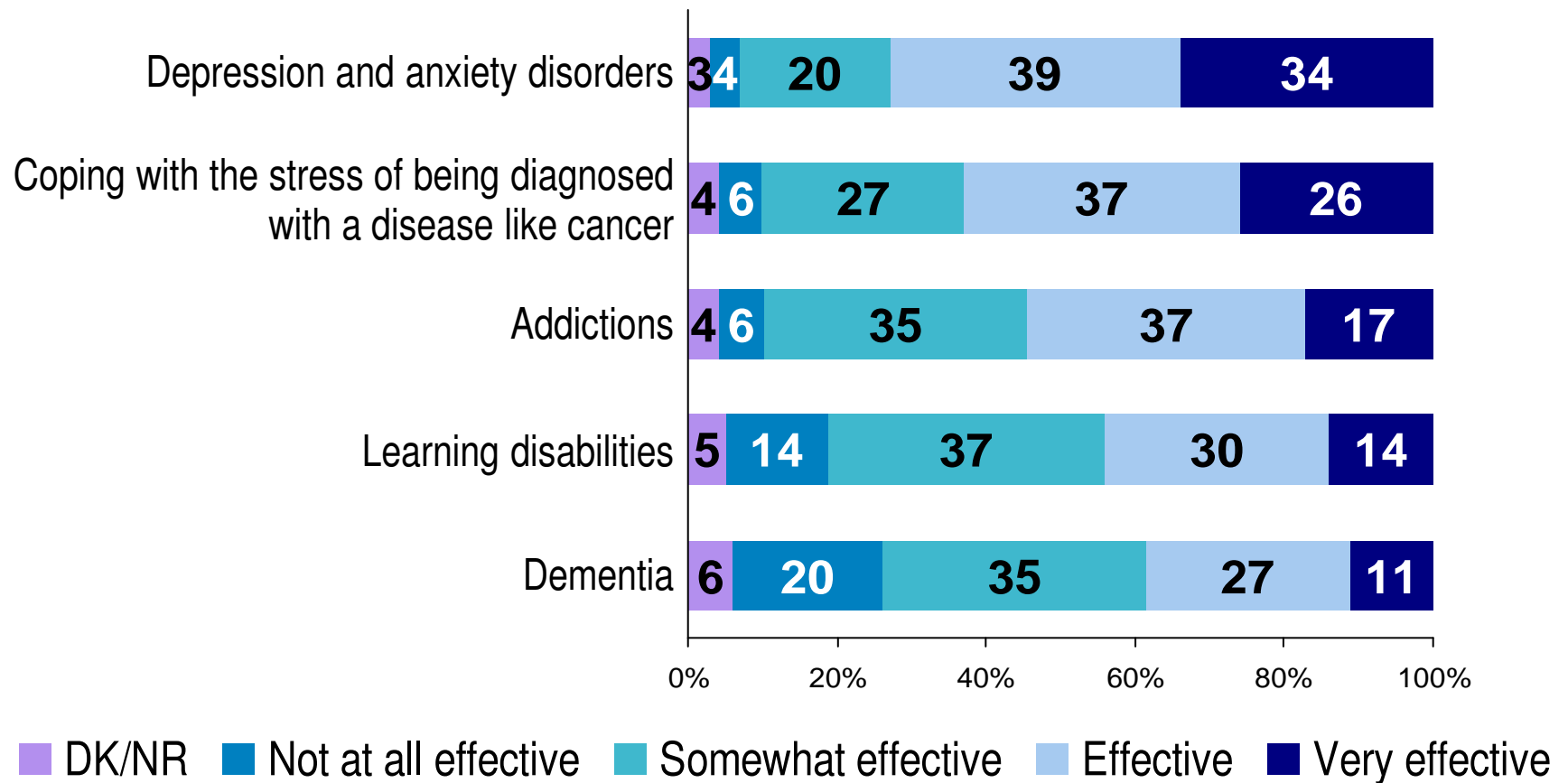
# Confidence in Various Health Professionals

“What health professional would you say you have the most confidence in, overall when it comes to helping people with mental health problems?”



# Perceptions of Psychologists in Helping People with Mental Health Problems

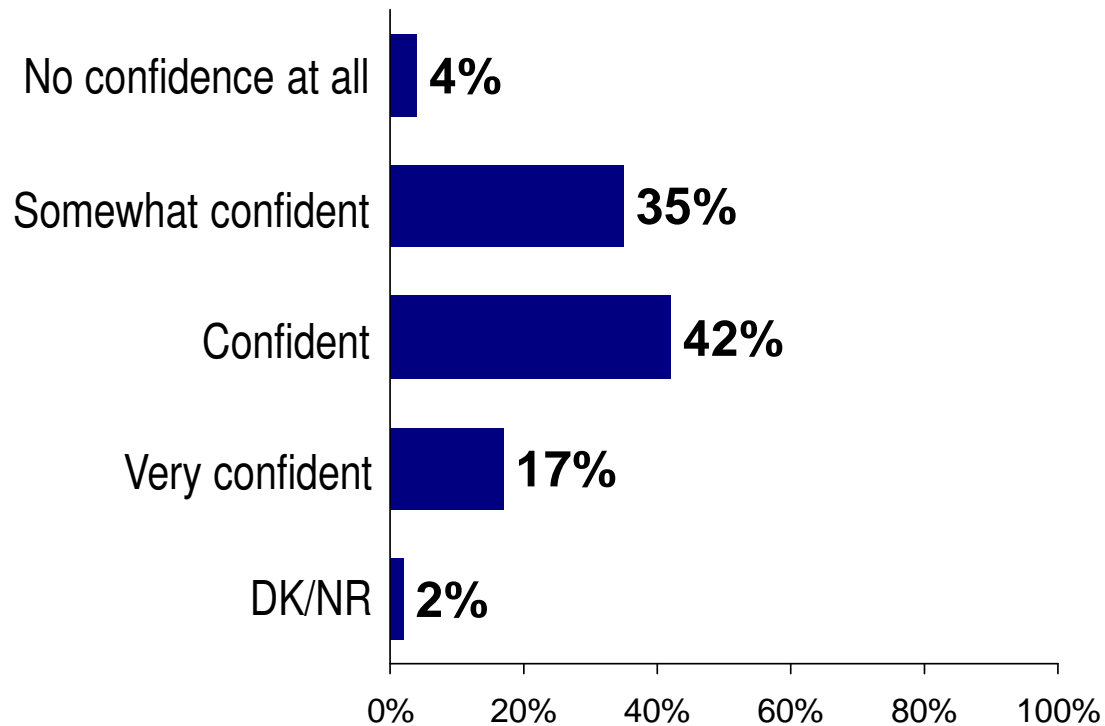
“I would now like to ask you some questions about psychologists in particular. How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with these five mental health problems or disorders?”



# Confidence in Psychologists

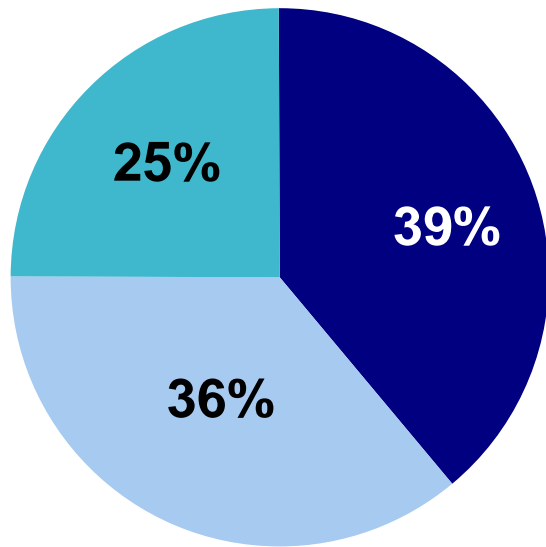
---

“Overall, how much confidence do you have in psychologists and the care they provide when it comes to mental health?”



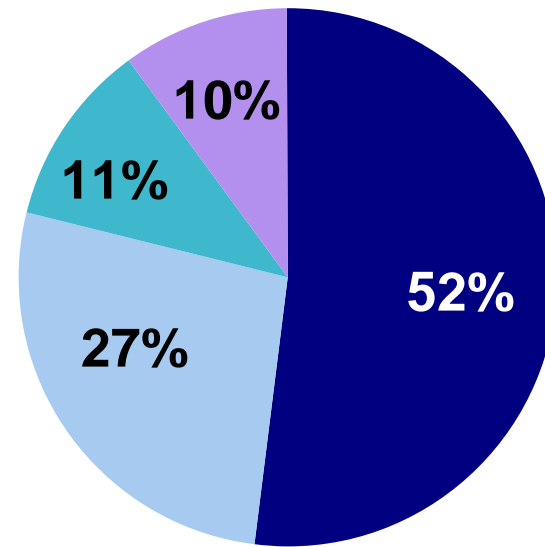
# Views on Access to Psychologists

**“To the best of your knowledge, are you able to access the services of a psychologist through publicly funded health care services?”**



■ Yes  
■ No  
■ DK/NR

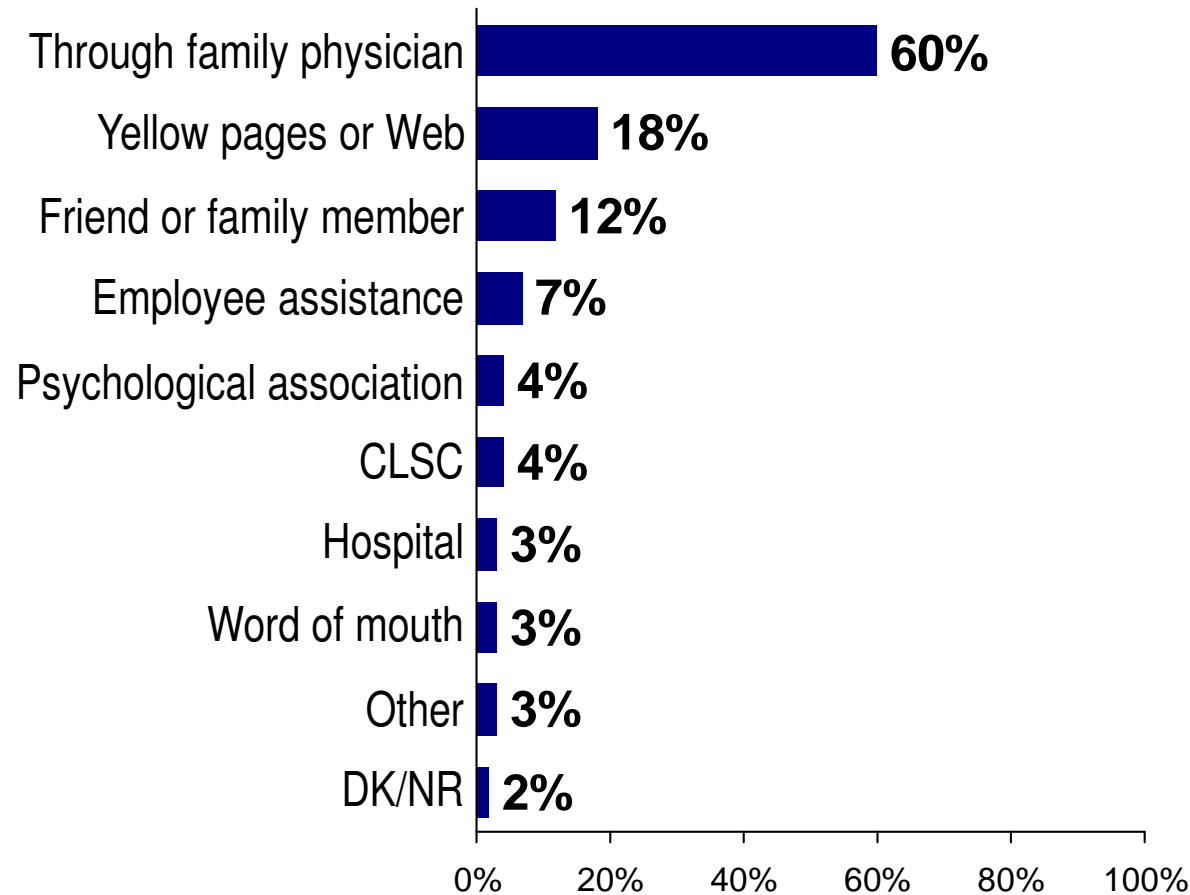
**“To the best of your knowledge, are you able to access the services of a psychologist through your employer’s extended health care benefits plan?”**



■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Unemployed  
■ DK/NR

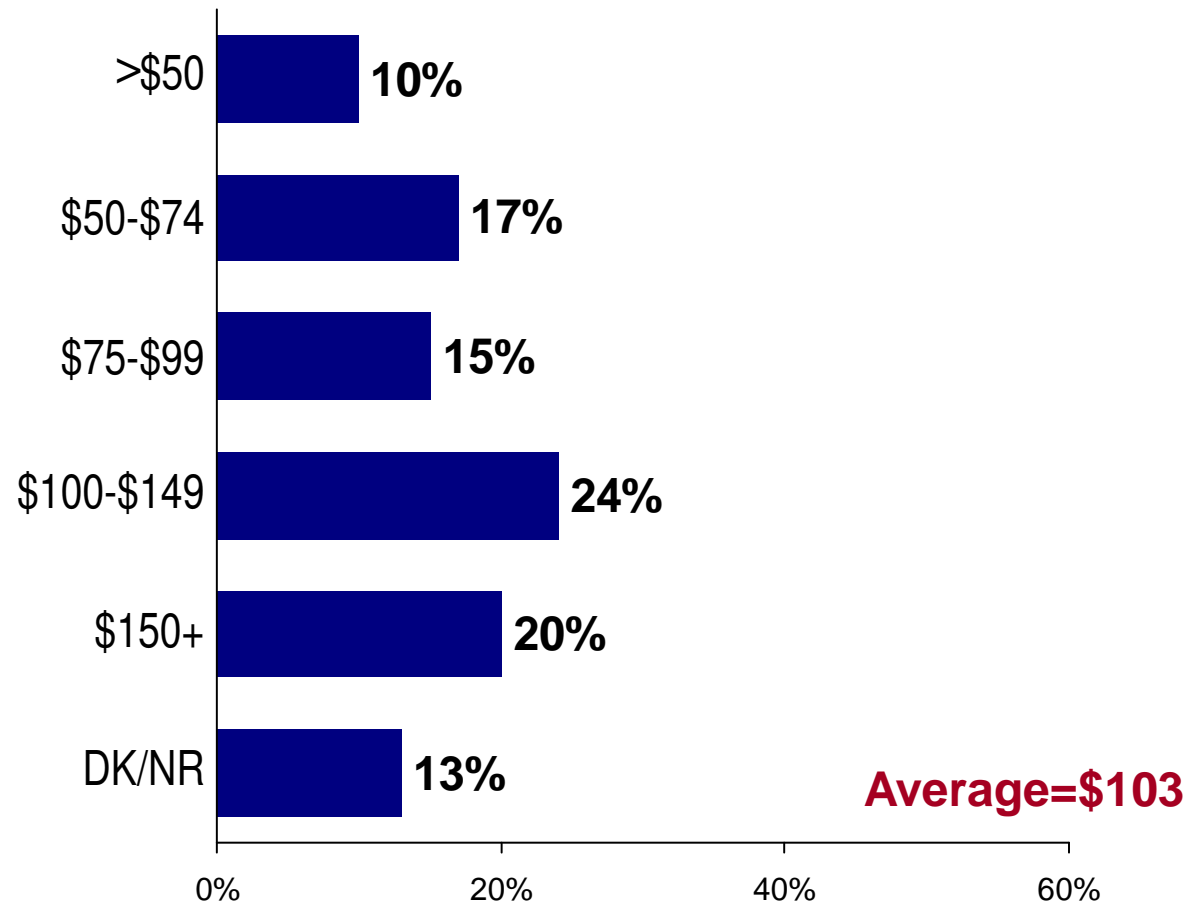
# Source of Information About Psychologists

**“Generally speaking, if you decided to access the services of a psychologist for yourself or a loved one, how would you go about finding a psychologist and securing an appointment?” [Open]**



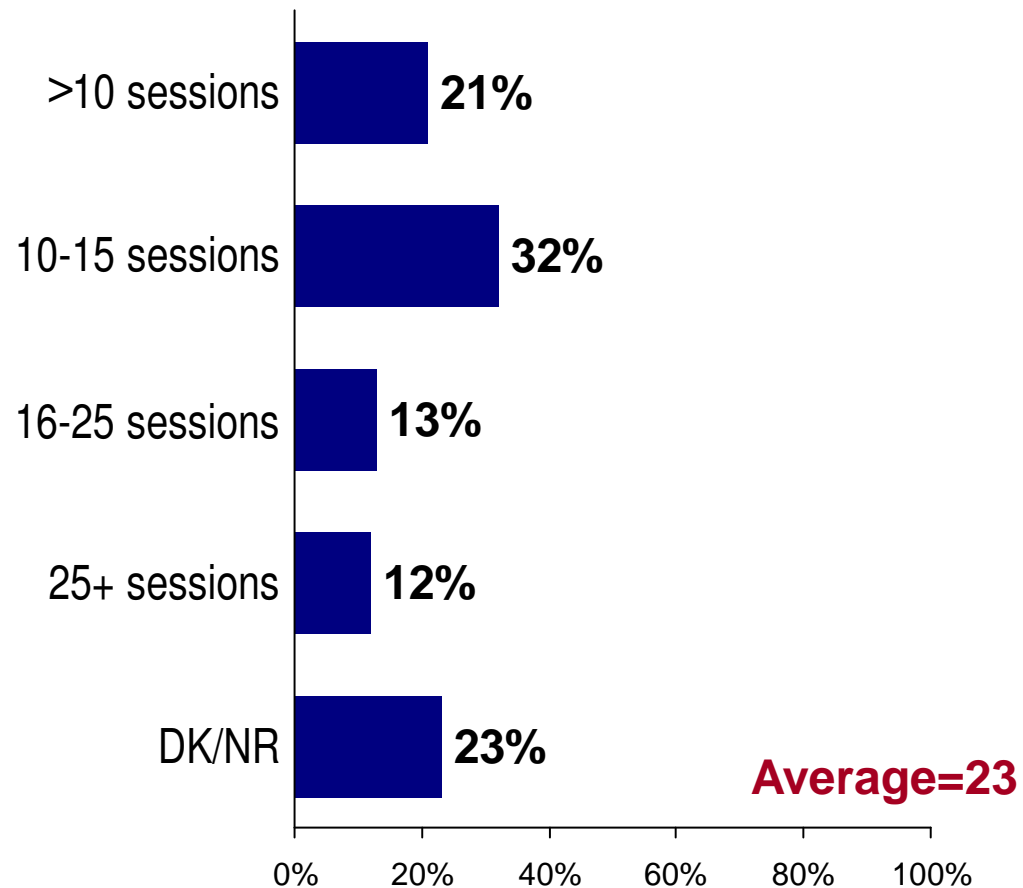
# Perceived Hourly Rate of Psychological Services

“Thinking of psychologists in particular, what do you imagine the hourly rate would be for psychological services if you were paying yourself?” [Open]



# Perceived Number of Sessions with Psychologists to Deal with Problems

“To the best of your knowledge, how many sessions with a psychologist would be required by the average patient to deal with mental health problems or disorders like depression or anxiety?” [Open]





# Barriers to Accessing a Psychologist

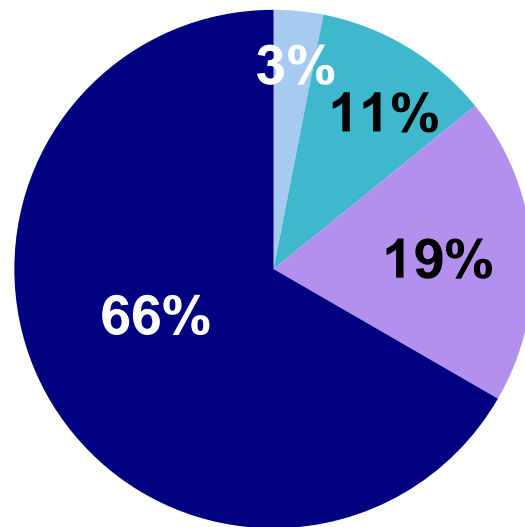
“For each of these possible barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not.”



# Importance of Covering Psychological Services by Public Health Plans

---

“The kinds of problems that Canadians typically bring to psychologists include such things as depression, anxiety, stress, learning disorders, autism, and marital and family problems. Given this, would you say that ensuring psychological services are covered by public health plans is...?”



- Not at all important
- Only somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

# Current Initiatives of the PD

- Collecting data about the coverage of psychologists under extended healthcare plans of insurance companies
- Compiling a comparison chart between psychologists, psychiatrists, family physicians, nurse therapists, social workers, counselors
- Considering discussions with regulatory bodies
- Mind Your Mental Health campaign
- Planning a leadership conference for January 2016

# Initiatives in Jurisdictions

- Meeting with government and key stakeholders (e.g., hospital administration)
- Collaborating and meeting with professional associations (e.g., College of Family Physicians) and peer-support organizations (e.g., Canadian Mental Health Association)
- Participating in mental health alliances
- Raising the profile of psychologists via Psychology Month activities, media interviews, press conferences, campaigns
- Innovative programs within hospitals and communities (e.g., stepped care sleep clinic in Manitoba)

# Ontario Psychological Association

- Proposals to the Ministries of Health, Education, Community Safety and Corrections, Labour, etc., as well as organizations like WSIB and Health Quality Ontario:
  - Certain psychological services should be covered by OHIP
  - Providers of mental health care should work collaboratively within the system according to scopes of practice (e.g., psychologists assess/diagnose/develop treatment plan/triage patient to most appropriate treatment provider)
  - Psychologists should be employed in every hospital and Family Health Team in the province
  - Psychologists should be granted prescriptive authority

# Ontario Psychological Association

- Proposing demonstration projects to collect data to show the cost-effectiveness of psychology
- Partnering with other healthcare associations in preparing joint submissions to government

# Alberta

- Focus on Primary Care Networks and Family Care Clinics
  - Participating in the Primary Health Care Strategy Working Group whose mandate was to develop a strategy for primary health care in Alberta
  - Meeting directly with Clinics to advocate for more psychologists
- Advocating for PsyD training programs to increase the number of doctoral-trained psychologists
- Organizing a display booth at various occasions throughout the year such as the annual teacher's conventions, career fairs, Family Physicians' annual conference and other events

# Integration within Government

- Psychologists participating in government task forces
- Psychologists working within national and provincial government agencies
  - Dr. Rhonda Matters: Chief Mental Health and Addictions Officer, PEI
  - Dr. Fern Stockdale-Winder: Commissioner of the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, SK



Questions?