

Strong majority want improved access to psychologists: Alberta

Provincial Survey | Summary

Conducted by Nanos for Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists, December 2020
Submission 2020-1710B



CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE



Council of Professional
Associations of Psychologists



Nanos Research was retained by the Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychology to conduct a study to gauge the impressions of Albertans on issues related to mental health and the profession. This is report two (2) of two (2).

Role of psychologists

Just under three in ten Albertans say they have the most confidence in psychologists when it comes to helping people with mental health problems

- **Respondents most frequently report having the most confidence in psychologists when it comes to helping people with mental health problems** – One in three Albertans (29%, 32% In 2011) say they have the most confidence in psychologists when it comes to helping people with mental health problems, followed by doctors (20%, 19% in 2011), psychiatrists (17%, down from 25% in 2011) and therapists (20%). Under one in ten (6%) are unsure about who they have the most confidence, and five per cent say counsellors.
- **Almost three quarters of Albertans think psychologists do something different than psychiatrists** – Almost three in four (73%) think a psychologist does something different than a psychiatrist, while under two in ten (18%) think they do the same thing. Eight per cent are unsure.
- **Three in four respondents think psychologists do something different than a counsellor** – Three in four respondents (74%) think a psychologist does something different than a counsellor, while two in ten (22%) think they do the same thing. Four per cent are unsure.
- **Almost two thirds of respondents think psychologists do something different than psychotherapists** – Almost two in three respondents (64%) think a psychologist does something different than a psychotherapist, while one in four (26%) think they do the same thing. Ten per cent are unsure.

Profession best able to care for mental health problems

- **Respondents are split between psychiatrists and psychologists when it comes to the profession best able to care for people with depression** – Asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with depression, over one third of Albertans say a psychiatrist (37%) or a psychologist (36%). Over one in ten (14%) say a counsellor followed by a psychotherapist (11%).

Almost four in ten Albertans are more likely to think a psychologist is best able to care for people with anxiety than other professionals

- **Respondents are more likely to think a psychologist is best able to care for people with anxiety than other professionals** – Asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with anxiety, under four in ten respondents (38%) say a psychologist, followed by one in four (26%) who say a psychiatrist, more than one in five (23%) who say a counsellor, and one in ten (10%) who say a psychotherapist.
- **Respondents more frequently say a counsellor is best able to care for people with addictions** – Asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with addictions, respondents most frequently say a counsellor (45%), followed by a psychologist (19%), a psychotherapist (17%) and a psychiatrist (14%).
- **Respondents are more likely to think a psychiatrist is best able to care for people living with dementia** – When asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with dementia, almost one in three respondents say a psychiatrist (27%), followed by a psychologist (24%), a psychotherapist (19%) and a doctor/nurse (12%).
- **Respondents are more likely to say a psychologist is best at taking care of people living with learning disabilities** – Asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with learning disabilities/ADHD, more than one in three in ten Albertans say a psychologist (35%), followed by just over one in five (21%) who say a counsellor or a psychotherapist (20%) and under two in ten who say a psychiatrist (16%).
- **A counsellor is most frequently said to be the professional best able to care for someone with stress of being diagnosed with a disease** – Asked which profession they think is best able to care for people living with the stress of being diagnosed with a disease like cancer, four in ten respondents say a counsellor (41%), followed by a psychologist (28%), a psychotherapist (13%), and a psychiatrist (12%).

Almost two-thirds of Albertans say psychologists are very effective (24%) or effective (39%) at helping people who are living with depression

Effectiveness of psychologists helping people who are living with mental health problems

- **Respondents most frequently say psychologists are effective at helping people who are living with depression** – Nearly four in ten Albertans (39%) say psychologists are effective at helping people with depression, while one in four say they are somewhat effective (26%) or very effective (24%). Seven per cent say they are not effective at all and four per cent don't know.
- **Four in ten say psychologists are effective at helping people who are living with anxiety** – Four in ten (39%) Albertans say psychologists are effective at helping people with anxiety, while under three in ten say they are somewhat effective (27%) or very effective (23%). Six per cent say they are not effective at all and four per cent don't know.
- **Opinions on the effectiveness of psychologists in helping people who are living with addictions remain consistent with 2011** – Over one in three respondents say psychologists are effective (36%) or somewhat effective (34%), respectively, in helping people who are living with addictions, while one in five (20%) say they are very effective and eight per cent say they are not effective at all. Three per cent don't know. These results are comparable with tracking from 2011.
- **Psychologists are most frequently seen as somewhat effective at helping people living with dementia** – One third Albertans (34%) say psychologists are somewhat effective in helping people living with dementia, while just over one in four (27%) say they are effective and under one in four say they are not effective (25%). Eight per cent say they are very effective and seven per cent don't know. These results are comparable with tracking from 2011.
- **Respondents most frequently say psychologists are effective in helping people who are living with learning disabilities** – Four in ten respondents say psychologists are effective (39%) or somewhat effective (35%), respectively, in helping people who are living with learning disabilities/ADHD, while more than one in ten (13%) say they are very effective and 8 per cent say they are not effective at all. Five per cent don't know. These results are comparable with tracking from 2011.

Almost seven in ten respondents say psychologists are very effective (24%) or effective (45%) at diagnosing people who are living with anxiety

- **Psychologists are most frequently seen as effective in helping people living with the stress of being diagnosed with a disease like cancer** – One in three Albertans (33%) say they think psychologists are effective in helping people living with the stress of being diagnosed with a disease like cancer, while one in four (26%) say they are somewhat effective and under one in four (24%) say they are very effective. Ten per cent say they are not effective at all. Eight per cent don't know. These results are comparable with tracking from 2011.

Effectiveness of psychologists diagnosing people who are living with mental health problems

- **Respondents most frequently say they think psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with depression** – Over four in ten respondents (43%) say they think psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with depression, while under one in four each say they are somewhat effective (25%) or very effective (24%). Four per cent say they are not effective at all and four per cent don't know.
- **Respondents most frequently say they think psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with anxiety** – Over four in ten respondents (45%) say they think psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with anxiety, while one in four say they are somewhat effective (25%) and one in four say they are very effective (24%). Four per cent say they are not effective at all and five per cent don't know.
- **Under four in ten say psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with addictions** – Under four in ten Albertans (38%) say they think psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with addictions, while over one in four say they are somewhat effective (28%) and under two in ten say they are very effective (17%). Seven per cent say they are not effective at all and ten per cent don't know.
- **Respondents most frequently say psychologists are somewhat effective or effective in diagnosing people living with dementia** – Just over one in three respondents (35%) say psychologists are somewhat effective in diagnosing people living with dementia, while one in three (33%) say they are effective. Fifteen per cent say they are very effective and fourteen per cent say they are not effective at all. Four per cent don't know.

SUMMARY

Almost nine in ten Albertans support (54%) or somewhat support (32%) improving access to psychologists through the publicly-funded health care system

- **Respondents most frequently say psychologists are effective or somewhat effective in diagnosing people living with learning disabilities/ADHD** – Over four in ten respondents (42%) say psychologists are effective in diagnosing people living with dementia, while just under three in ten (29%) say they are somewhat effective. Under two in ten say they are very effective (17%) and nine per cent say they are not effective at all. Three per cent don't know.
- **Respondents most frequently say they are confident in the care psychologists provide** – Four in ten Albertans (40%) say they are confident in psychologists and the care they provide when it comes to mental health, while under three in ten (28%) say they are somewhat confident and under two in ten (16%) say they are very confident. Eight per cent say they are not confident at all and seven per cent are unsure. These results are comparable with tracking from 2011.
- **Respondents are more likely to think that they can access the services of a psychologist in the publicly-funded health care system within a somewhat unreasonable or unreasonable period of time** – Just over four in ten respondents say to the best of their knowledge Canadians are able to access the services of a psychologist in the publicly-funded health care system within a somewhat unreasonable (26%) or unreasonable (16%) period of time. Over one in three say services are accessible within a reasonable (nine per cent) or somewhat reasonable (27%) period of time, and 22 per cent are unsure.
- **A strong majority of respondents support or somewhat support improving access to psychologists through the publicly-funded health care system** – Nearly nine in ten respondents support (54%) or somewhat support (32%) improving access to psychologists through the publicly-funded health care system, while under one in ten somewhat oppose (three per cent) or oppose this (five per cent). Six per cent are unsure.

SUMMARY

Just under four out of five Albertans say it is a very good (43%) or good (34%) idea to provide greater access to psychologists through employer health benefit plans

- **Respondents more often report they can definitely or think they can access a psychologist through their employer's health benefit plan within a reasonable period of time** – Asked if they are, to the best of their knowledge, able to access a psychologist through their employer's health benefit plan within a reasonable period of time, close to one in two Albertans say yes, definitely (22%) or yes, I think so (31%). Eleven per cent say no, while 24 per cent report they are not employed, and 12 per cent are unsure.
- **Over three in four respondents say providing greater access to psychologists through employer health benefit plans is a very good or good idea** – A majority of respondents say it is a very good idea (43%) or good idea (34%) to provide greater access to psychologists through employer health benefit plans (e.g. more sessions, higher financial caps), while nine per cent say it is an average idea. Under ten per cent say this is a poor idea (4%) or a very poor idea (3%), and seven per cent are unsure.

Barriers to access

- **A strong majority of respondents say psychological services costing too much to pay by themselves is a very significant or somewhat significant barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – Eight in ten respondents say psychological services costing too much for them to pay themselves is a very significant (56%) or somewhat significant (24%) barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist, which is consistent with the previous wave. Under two in ten say this is a somewhat not significant (seven per cent) or not significant (seven per cent) barrier, and six per cent are unsure.
- **Two thirds say psychologists not being covered by their provincial or territorial health plan is a very significant or somewhat significant barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – Consistent with the previous wave of research, a majority of Albertans say psychologists not being covered by their provincial/ territorial health plan is a very significant (45%) or somewhat significant (23%) barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist. Two in ten say this is a somewhat not significant (seven per cent) or not significant (fourteen per cent) barrier, and 11 per cent are unsure.

SUMMARY

Just over six in 10 Albertans say the length of wait times being too long to see a psychologist is a very significant (26%) or significant (36%) barrier to access care

- **Two in three say psychological services not being covered by their employer's health benefit plan is a very significant or somewhat significant barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – A majority of Albertans say psychological services not being covered by their employer's health benefit plan is a very significant (44%) or somewhat significant (22%) barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist, consistent with the previous wave. Just over one in five say this is a somewhat not significant (nine per cent) or not significant (18%) barrier, and 8 per cent are unsure.
- **A majority say the length of wait times to see a psychologist is a very significant or somewhat significant barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – Consistent with the previous wave of research, more than six in ten respondents say the wait times to see a psychologist being too long is a very significant (26%) or somewhat significant (36%) barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist. One in four say this is a somewhat not significant (11%) or not significant (fifteen per cent) barrier, and 12 per cent are unsure.
- **Albertans are divided on how significant preferring to deal with problems and disorders on their own is as a barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – One in two Albertans say preferring to deal with these problems/disorders on their own is a very significant (18%) or somewhat significant (32%) barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist, while close to the same proportion say this is a somewhat not significant (18%) or not significant (25%) barrier. Seven per cent are unsure. This is consistent with the previous wave of research.
- **Over half of respondents say not wanting others to know they are seeing a psychologist is not significant or somewhat not significant as a barrier when deciding whether to access a psychologist** – Respondents more often say not wanting others to know they are seeing a psychologist is not significant (37%) or somewhat not significant (21%) as a barrier to them deciding whether or not they should access a psychologist, consistent with the previous wave. Just under four in ten say this is a very significant (14%) or somewhat significant (23%) barrier, and five per cent are unsure.

Collaboration with health professionals

- **A strong majority of Albertans say psychologists working collaboratively with other health professionals in primary care teams is a very good or good idea** – Over eight in ten respondents say it is a very good idea (53%) or good idea (31%) for psychologists to work collaboratively with other health professionals, such as family physicians in primary care teams. Nine per cent say this is an average idea, while one per cent thinks this is a poor idea and 2% a very poor idea. Four per cent are unsure.

Nanos conducted an online survey of 206 residents of Alberta between September 25th, 2020 and October 2nd, 2020. This was part of a larger national study of 3,070 Canadians 18 years of age or older, between September 25th, 2020 and October 2nd, 2020. The results were statistically checked and weighted by age and gender using the latest Census information and the sample is geographically stratified to be representative of the population.

The research was commissioned by the Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists and was conducted by Nanos Research.

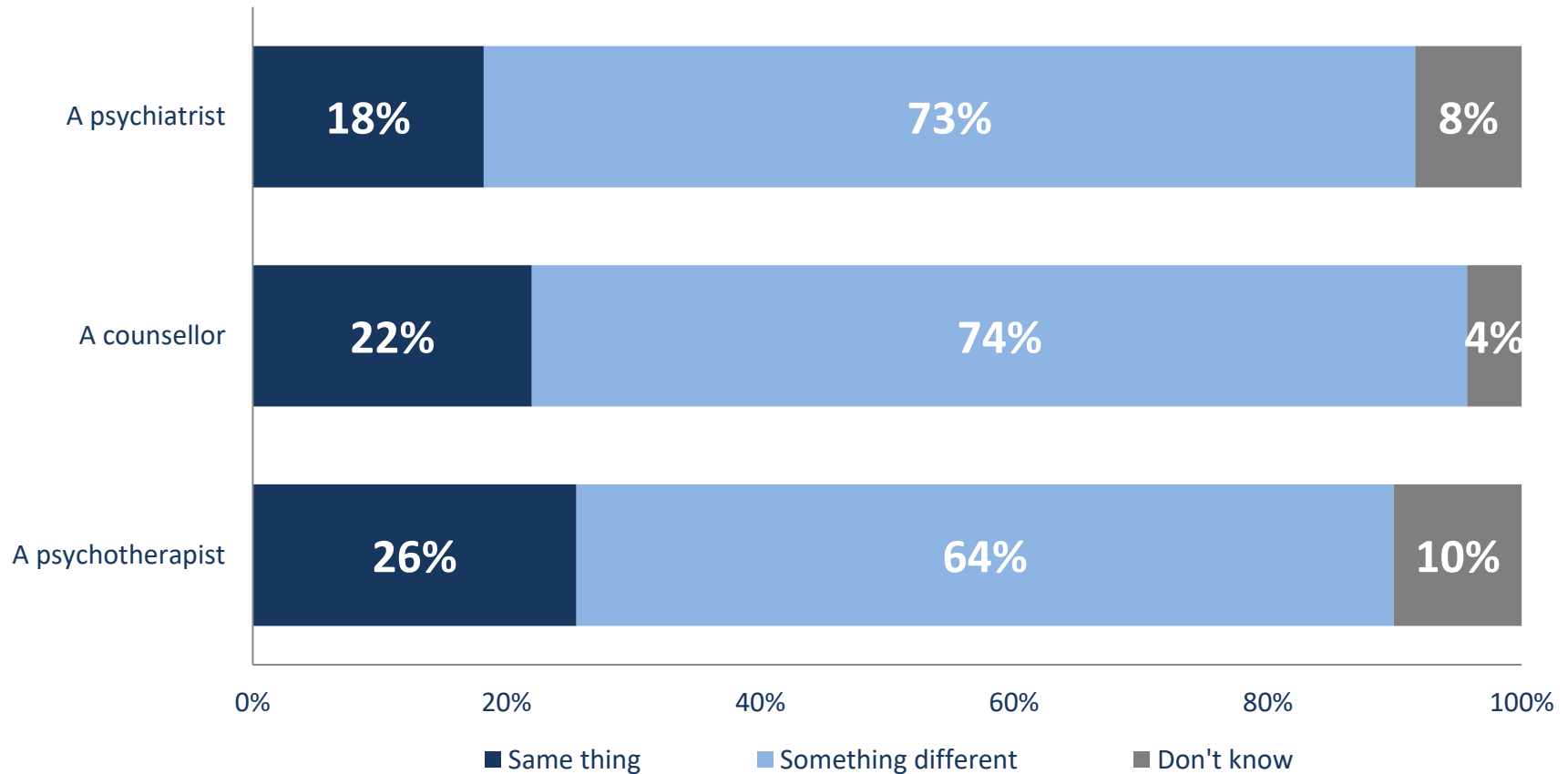
Over eight out of ten Albertans say psychologists working collaboratively with other health professionals in primary care teams in a very good (53%) or good (31%) idea

Confidence in health professionals

Top mentions	2020 (n=195)	2011 (n=307)
Psychologist	29%	32%
Doctor	20%	19%
Psychiatrist	17%	25%
Therapist	7%	NA
Unsure	6%	1%
Counsellor	5%	13%
Mental health professional/team of doctors	4%	NA

QUESTION – What health professional do you have the most confidence in, overall, when it comes to helping people with mental health problems? (open-ended)

Psychologists compared to other professionals



*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – Do you think a psychologist does the same thing or something different as each of the following?
[RANDOMIZE]

Professional best able to care for people living with depression

Top Mentions	Alberta (n=205)
Psychiatrist	37%
Psychologist	36%
Counsellor	14%
Psychotherapist	11%
Doctor/nurse	1%
Police/armed forces	0.6%

QUESTION – Which profession do you think is best able to care for people living with the following mental health problems? [RANDOMIZE]

Depression

Professional best able to care for people living with anxiety

Top Mentions	Saskatchewan (n=200)
Psychologist	38%
Psychiatrist	26%
Counsellor	23%
Psychotherapist	10%
Doctor/nurse	2%
Police/armed forces	0.6%

QUESTION – Which profession do you think is best able to care for people living with the following mental health problems? [RANDOMIZE]

Anxiety

Professional best able to care for people living with addictions

Top Mentions	Alberta (n=204)
Counsellor	45%
Psychologist	19%
Psychotherapist	17%
Psychiatrist	14%
Doctor/nurse	2%
Specialist	0.8%

QUESTION – Which profession do you think is best able to care for people living with the following mental health problems? [RANDOMIZE]

Addictions

Professional best able to care for people living with dementia

Top Mentions

Alberta
(n=205)

Psychiatrist	27%
Psychologist	24%
Psychotherapist	19%
Counsellor	12%
Doctor/nurse	12%
Specialists	4%
Alternative medicine/practitioners	0.5%

QUESTION – Which profession do you think is best able to care for people living with the following mental health problems? [RANDOMIZE]

Dementia

Professional best able to care for people living with learning disabilities



Top Mentions	Alberta (n=200)
Psychologist	35%
Counsellor	21%
Psychotherapist	20%
Psychiatrist	16%
Specialist	4%
Police/armed forces	0.6%

QUESTION – Do you think a psychologist does the same thing or something different as each of the following?
[RANDOMIZE]

Learning disabilities/ADHD

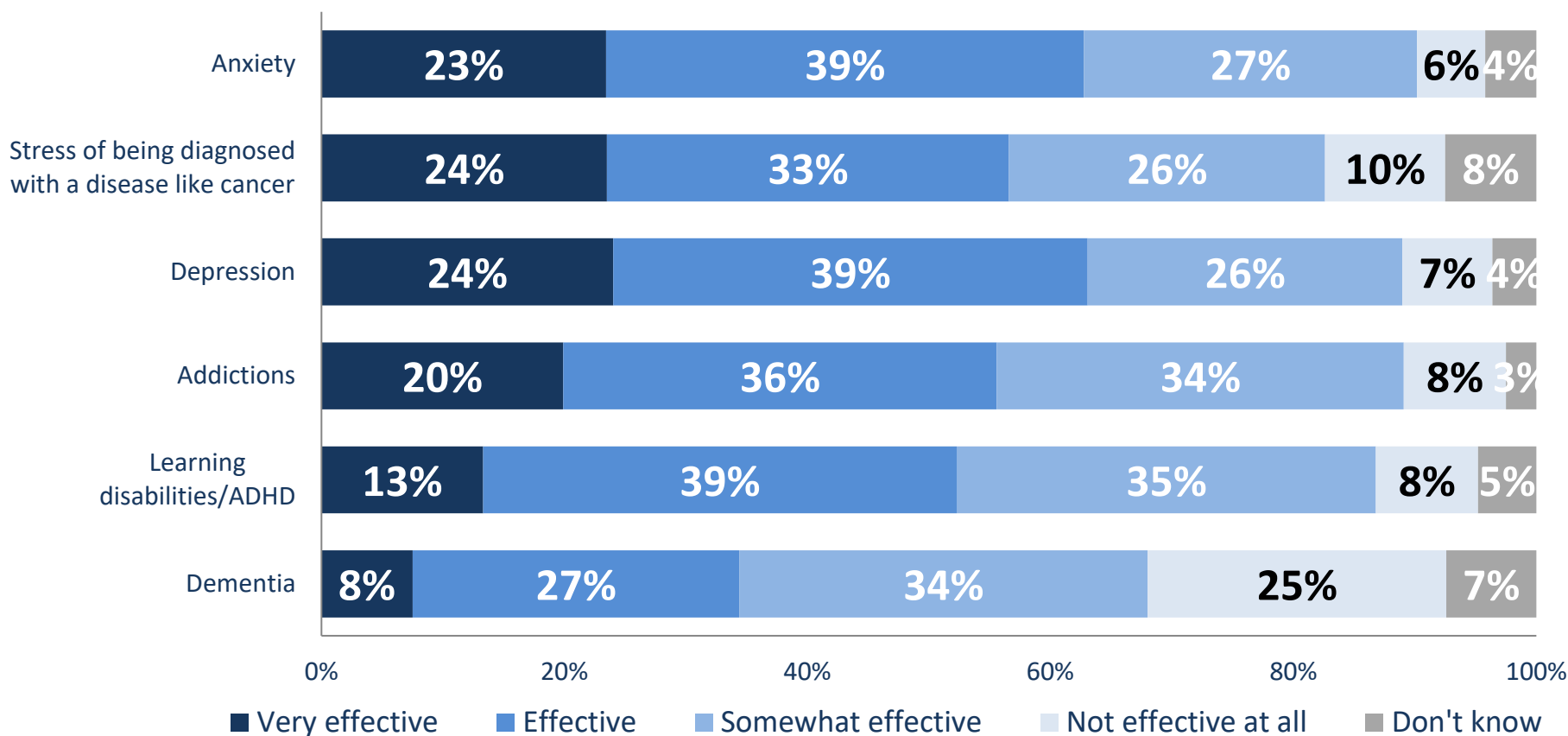
Professional best able to care for people living with stress of being diagnosed with a disease

Top Mentions	Alberta (n=205)
Counsellor	41%
Psychologist	28%
Psychotherapist	13%
Psychiatrist	12%
Doctor/nurse	3%
Specialist	2%

QUESTION – Do you think a psychologist does the same thing or something different as each of the following?
[RANDOMIZE]

Stress of being diagnosed with a disease like cancer

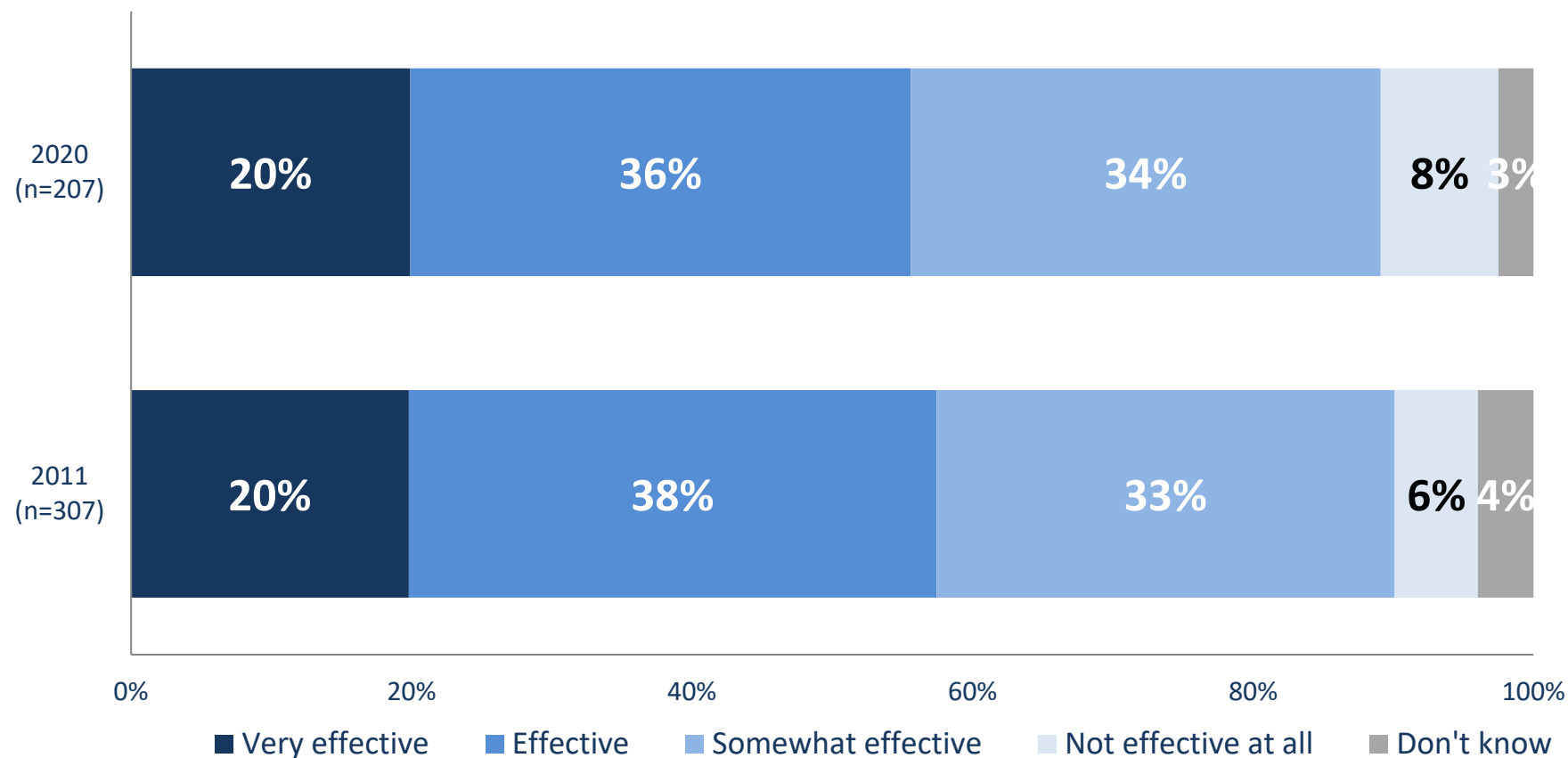
Effectiveness of psychologists in helping people



*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

Effectiveness of psychologists in helping people coping with addictions - Tracking

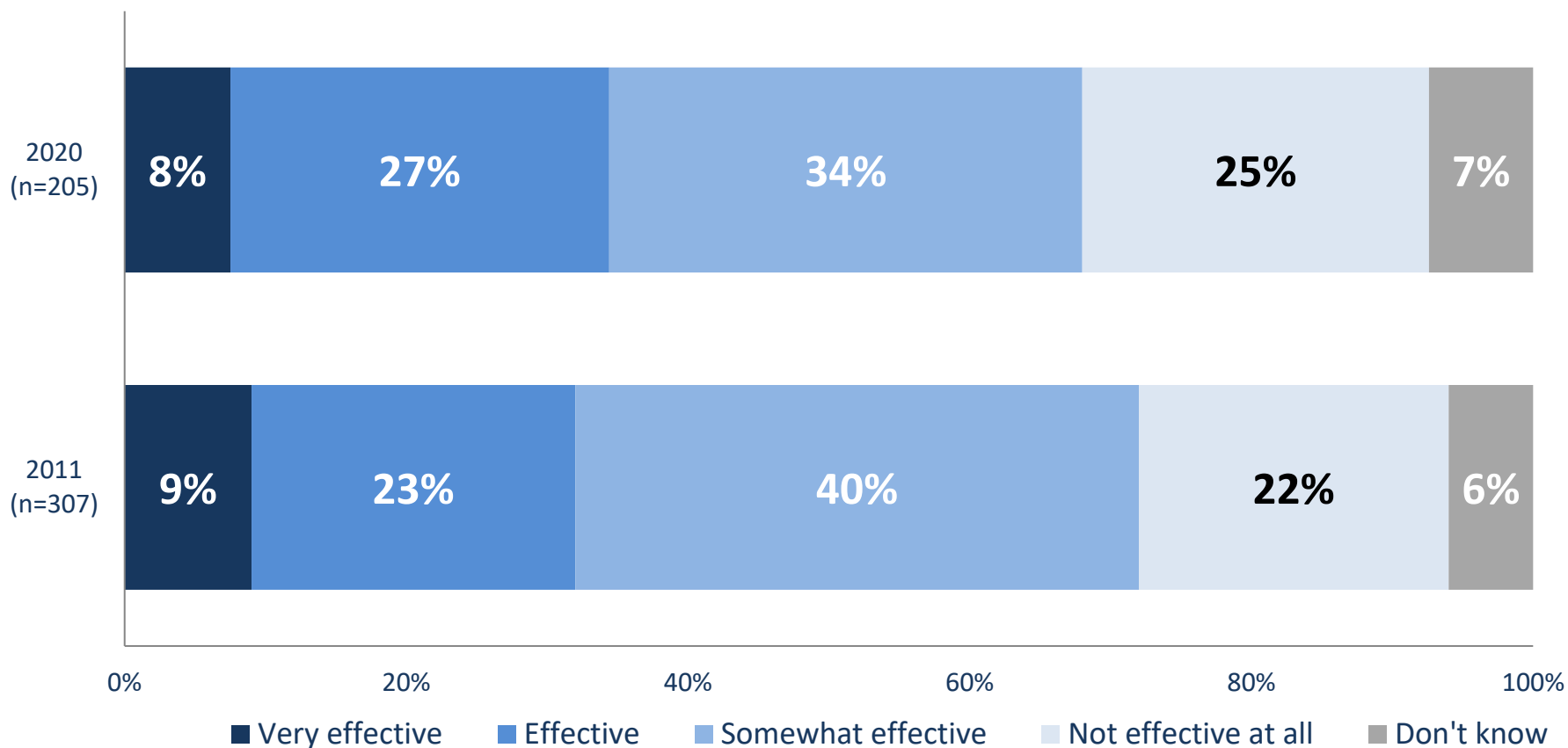


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QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

Addictions

Effectiveness of psychologists in helping people coping with dementia - Tracking

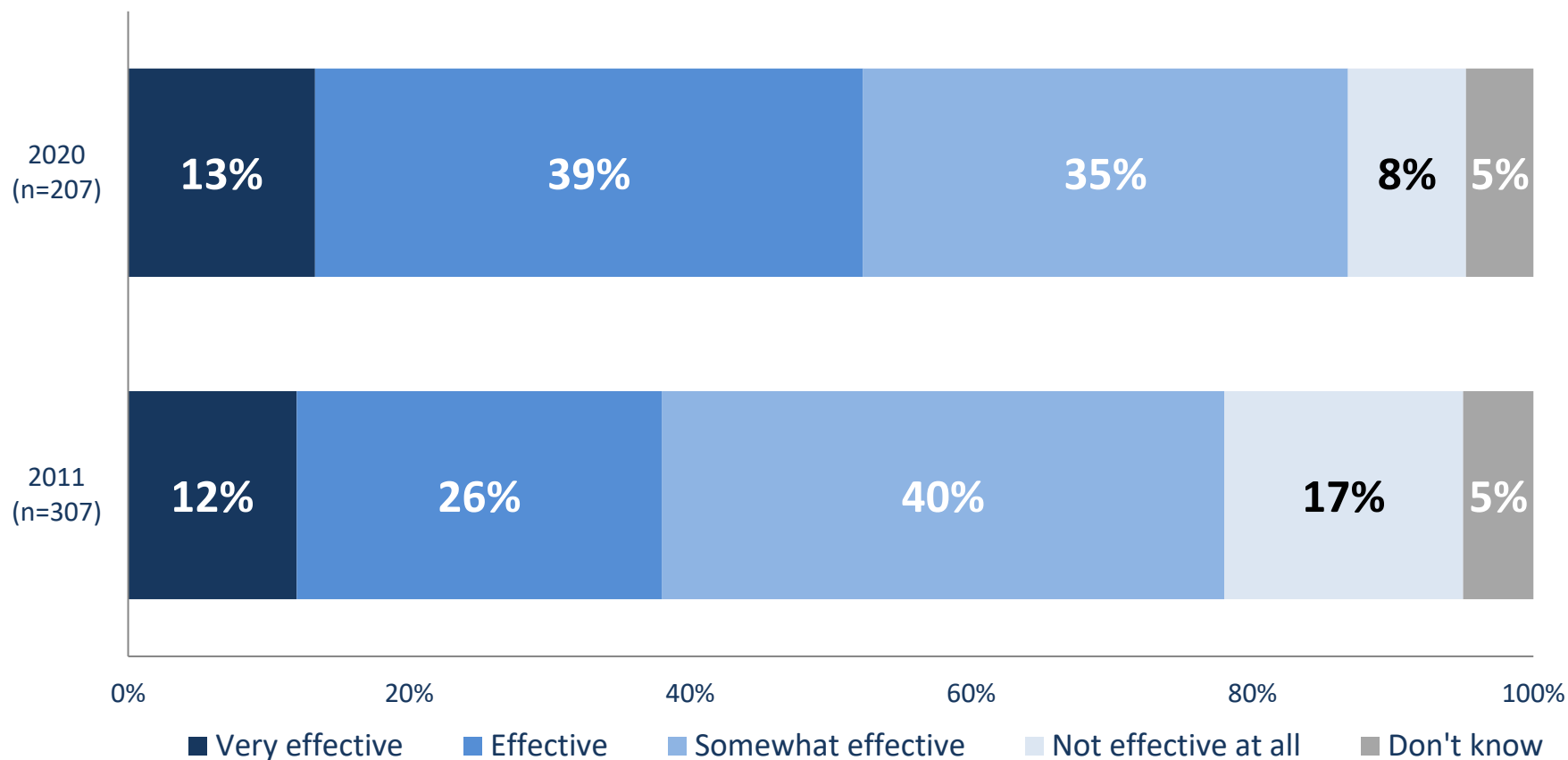


*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

Dementia

Effectiveness of psychologists in helping people coping with learning disabilities - Tracking

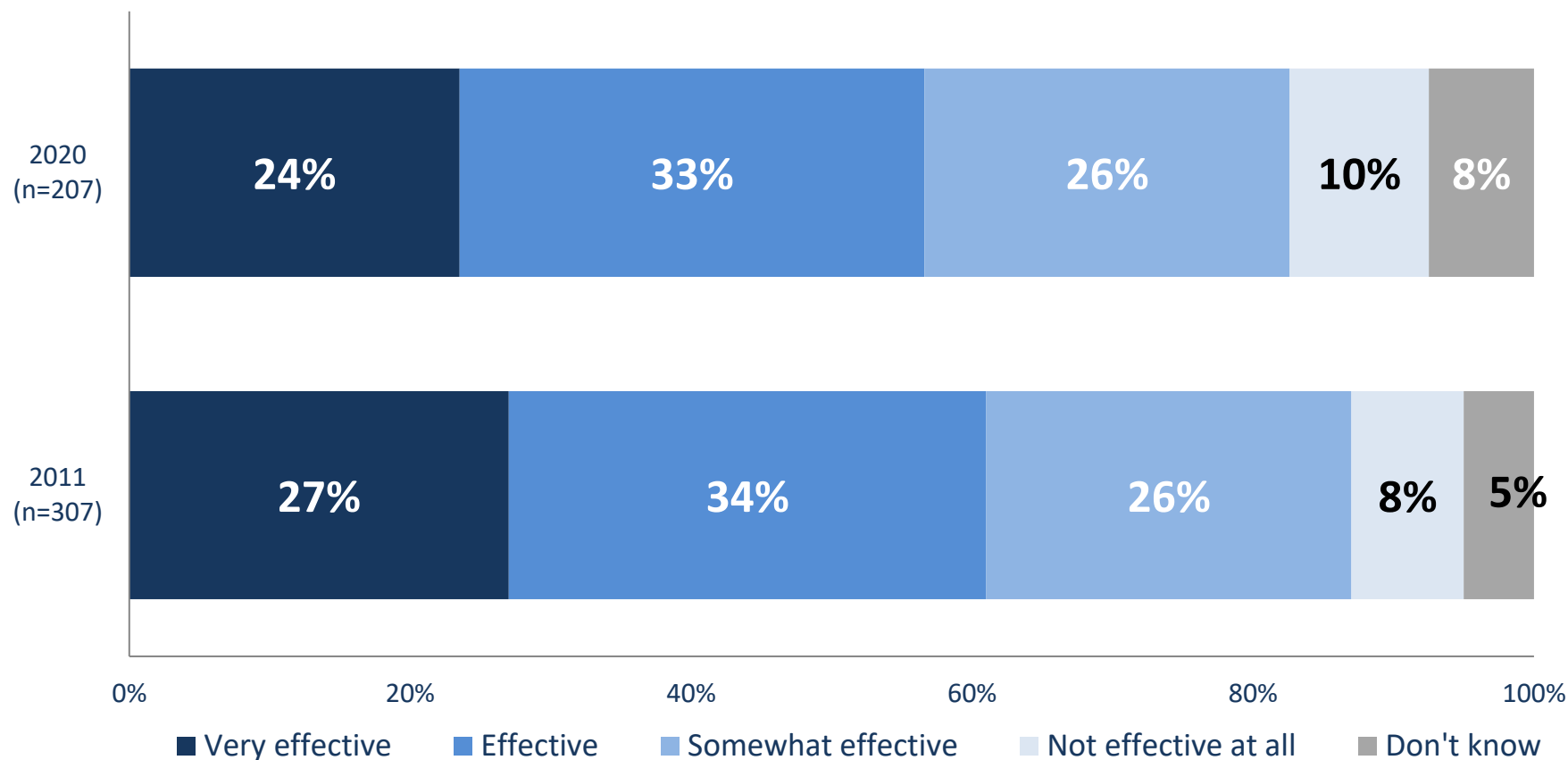


*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

Learning disabilities/ADHD

Effectiveness of psychologists in helping people coping with the stress of being diagnosed with a disease - Tracking

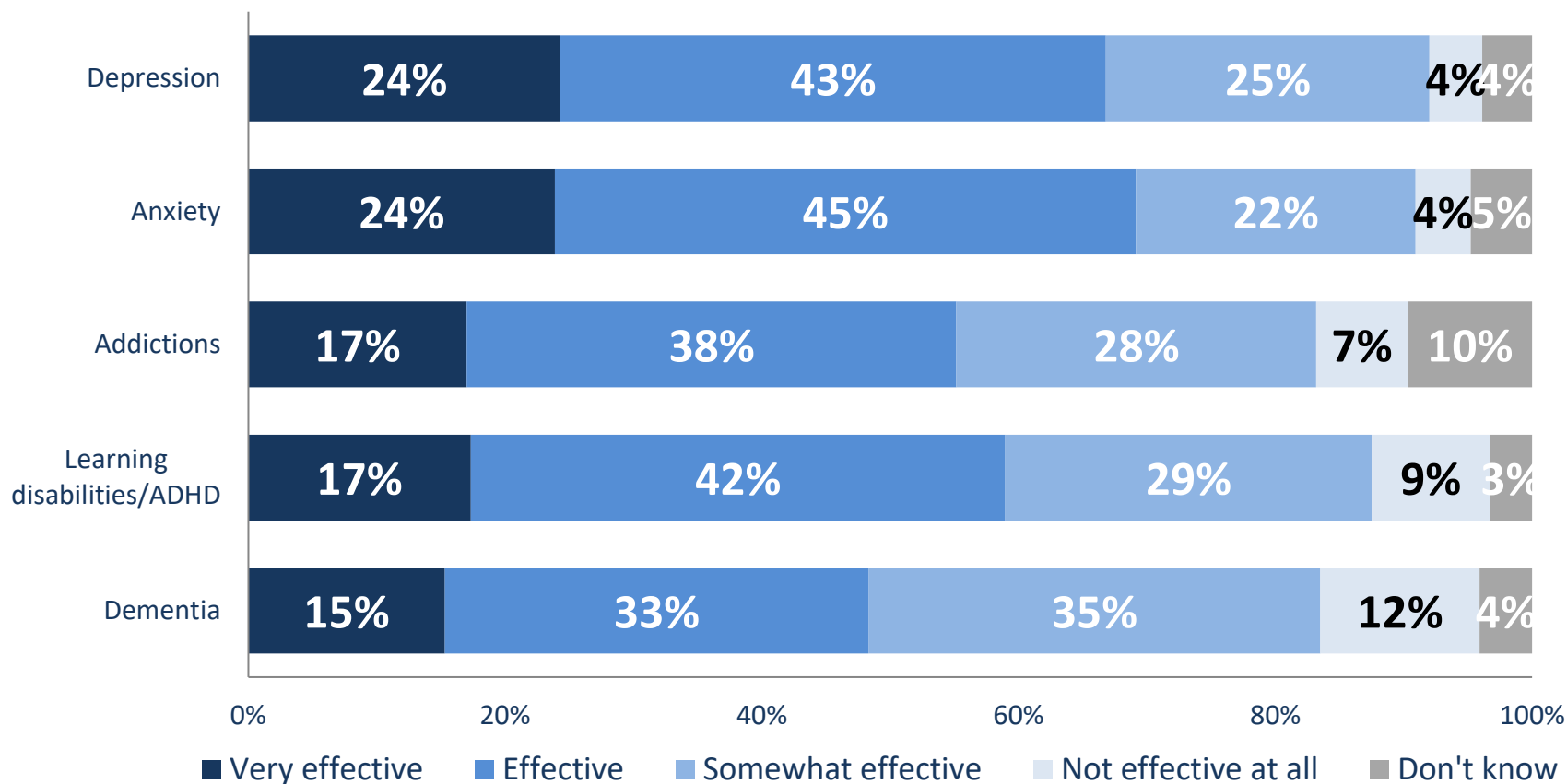


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QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in helping people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

Stress of being diagnosed with a disease like cancer

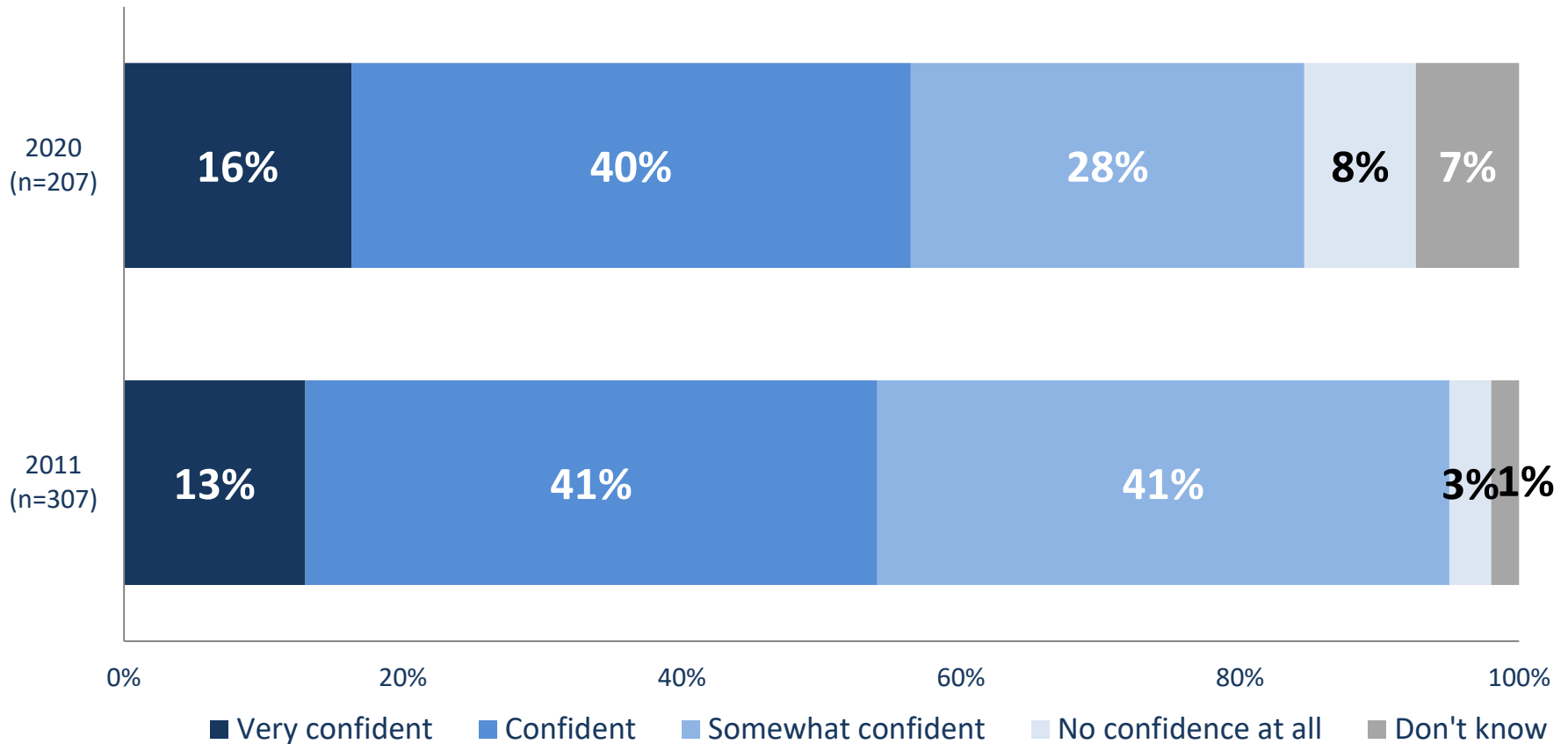
Effectiveness of psychologists in diagnosing people



*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – How effective do you feel psychologists are in diagnosing people who are living with the following mental health problems or disorders? [RANDOMIZE]

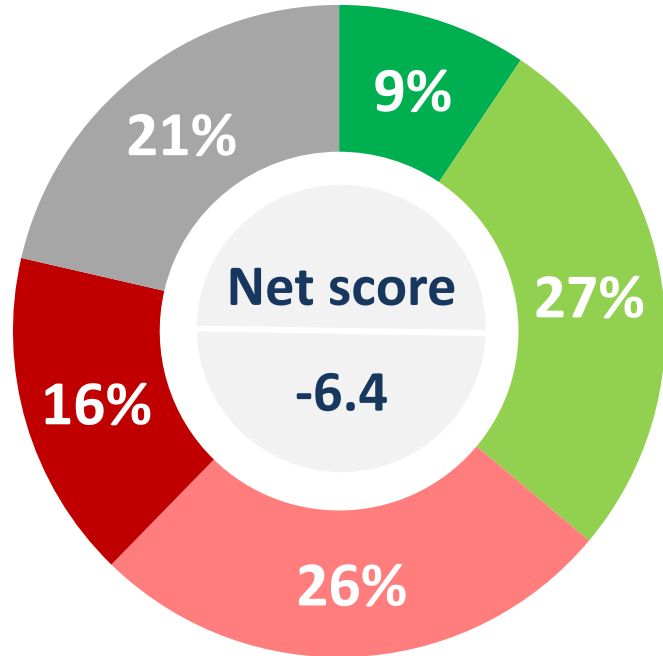
Confidence in psychologists and the care they provide



*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding

QUESTION – How much confidence do you have in psychologists and the care they provide when it comes to mental health?

Amount of time needed for Canadians to get access to psychological services in the publicly-funded health care system

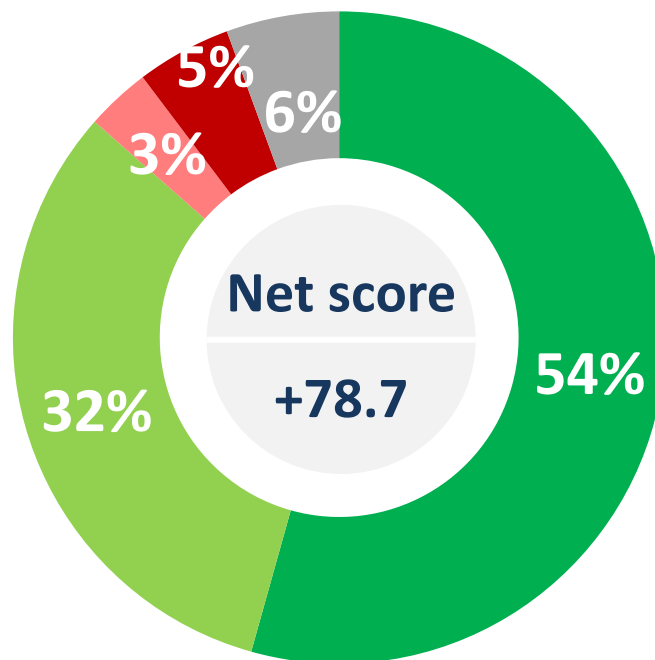


- Reasonable
- Somewhat reasonable
- Somewhat unreasonable
- Unreasonable
- Don't know

*Weighted to the true population proportion.
*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

QUESTION – To the best of your knowledge, are Canadians able to access the services of a psychologist in the publicly-funded health care system within a reasonable, somewhat reasonable, somewhat unreasonable, or unreasonable period of time?

Support for improving access to psychologists through the publicly-funded health care system

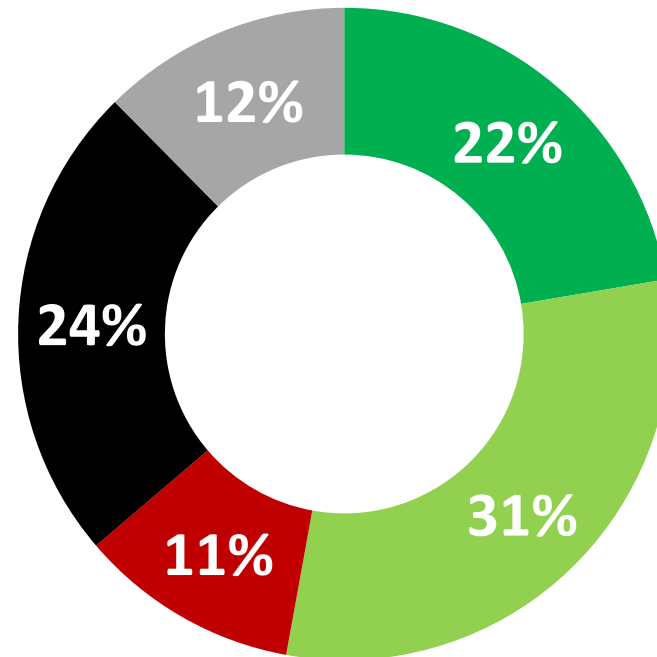


- Support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Oppose
- Unsure

QUESTION – Do you support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or oppose improving access to psychologists through the publicly-funded health care system?

*Weighted to the true population proportion.
*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Access to a psychologist through employer health benefit plan



■ Yes, definitely

■ No

■ Don't know

■ Yes, I think so

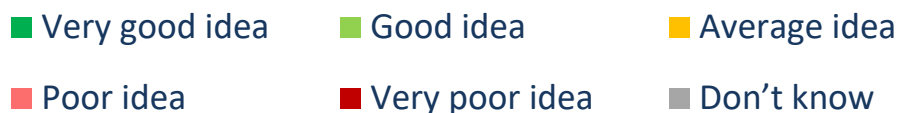
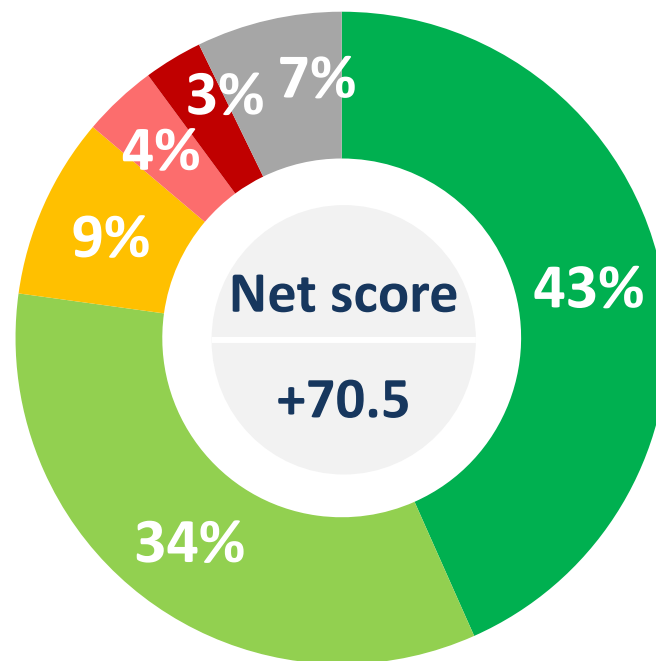
■ I am not employed

QUESTION – To the best of your knowledge, are you able to access a psychologist through your employer's health benefit plan within a reasonable period of time?

*Weighted to the true population proportion.

*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

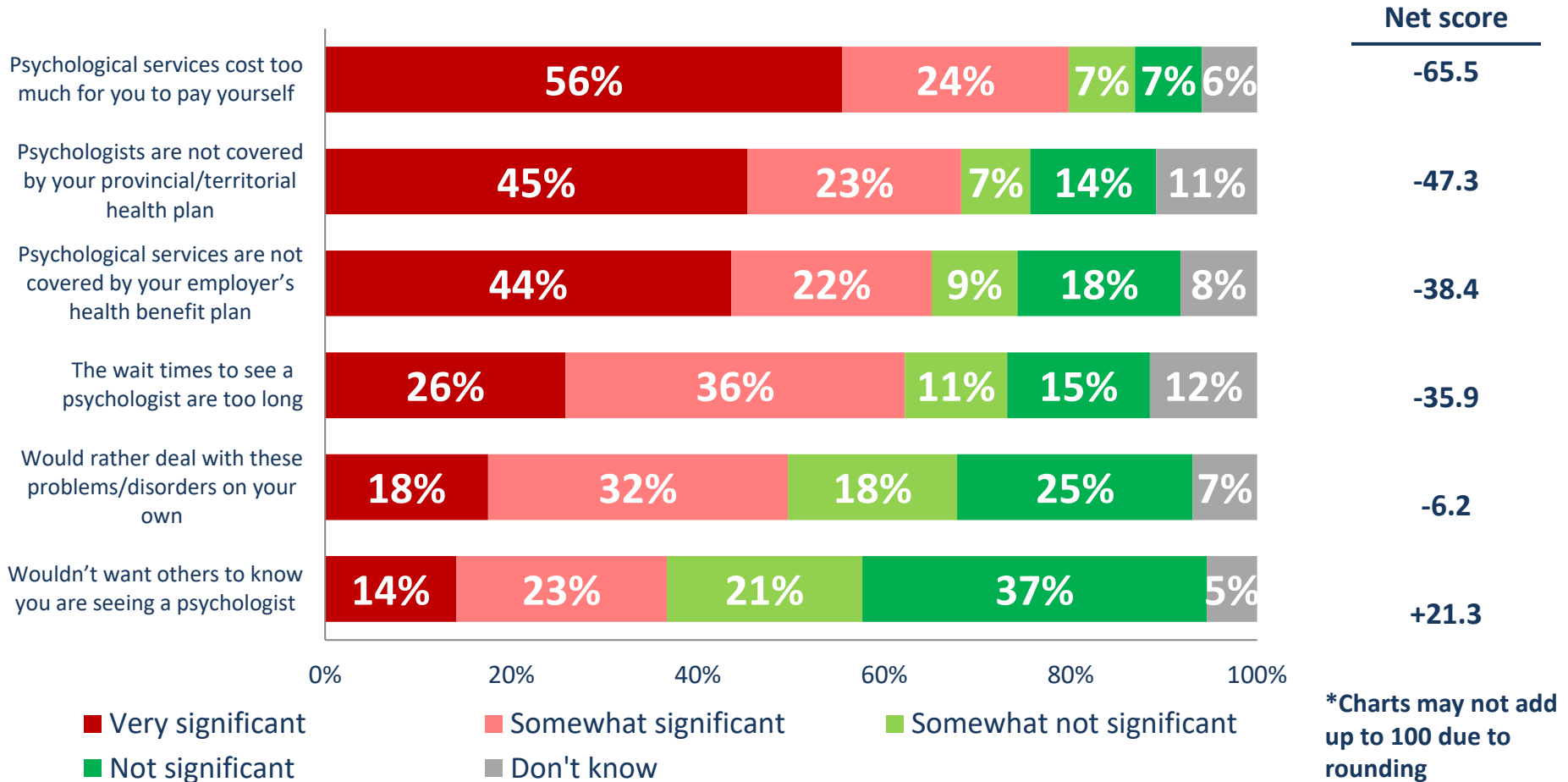
Providing greater access to psychologists through employer health benefit plans



QUESTION – Is providing greater access to psychologists through employer health benefit plans (e.g., more sessions, higher financial caps) a very good idea, good idea, average idea, poor idea or a very poor idea?

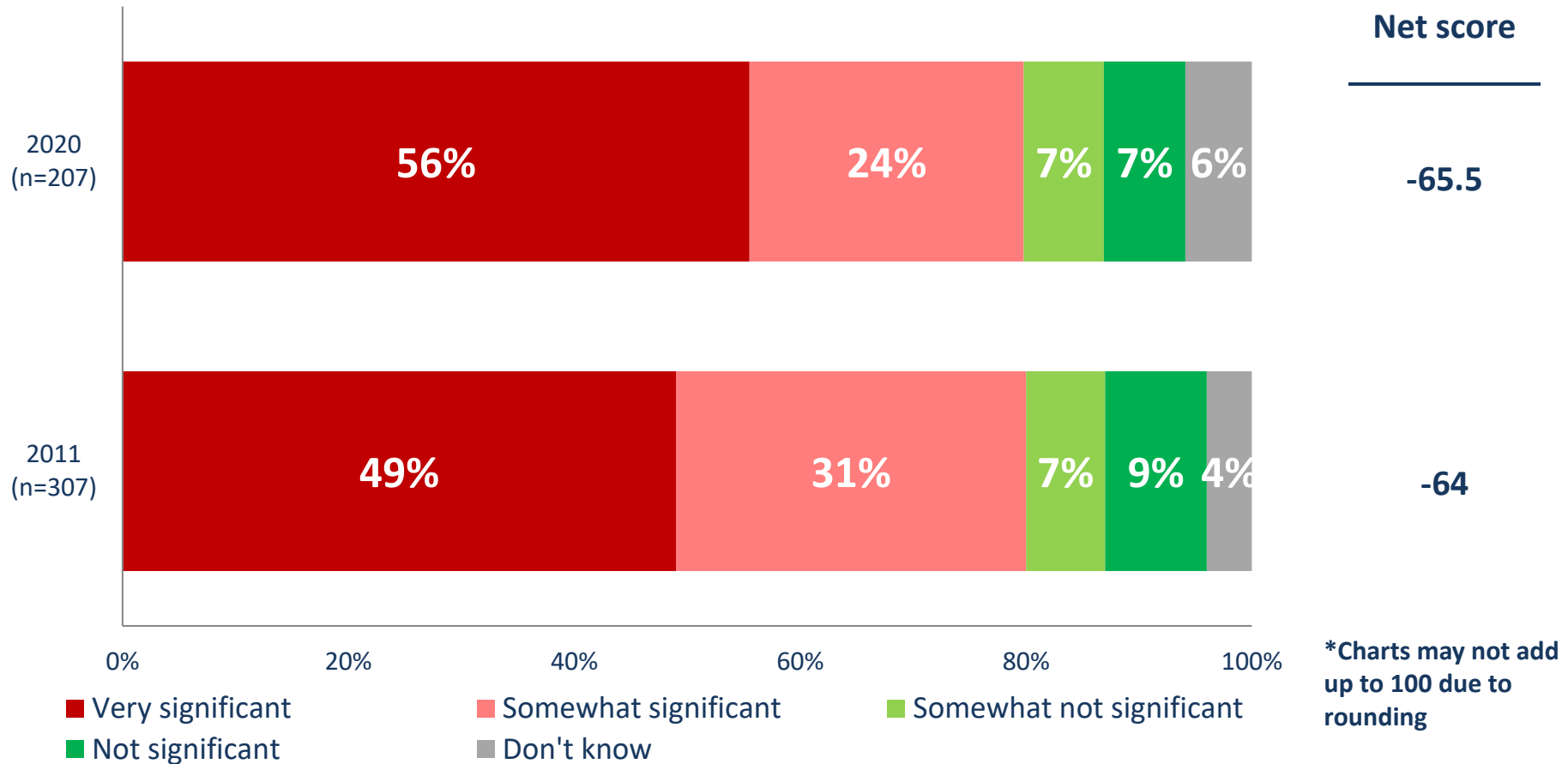
*Weighted to the true population proportion.
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Significance of barriers in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

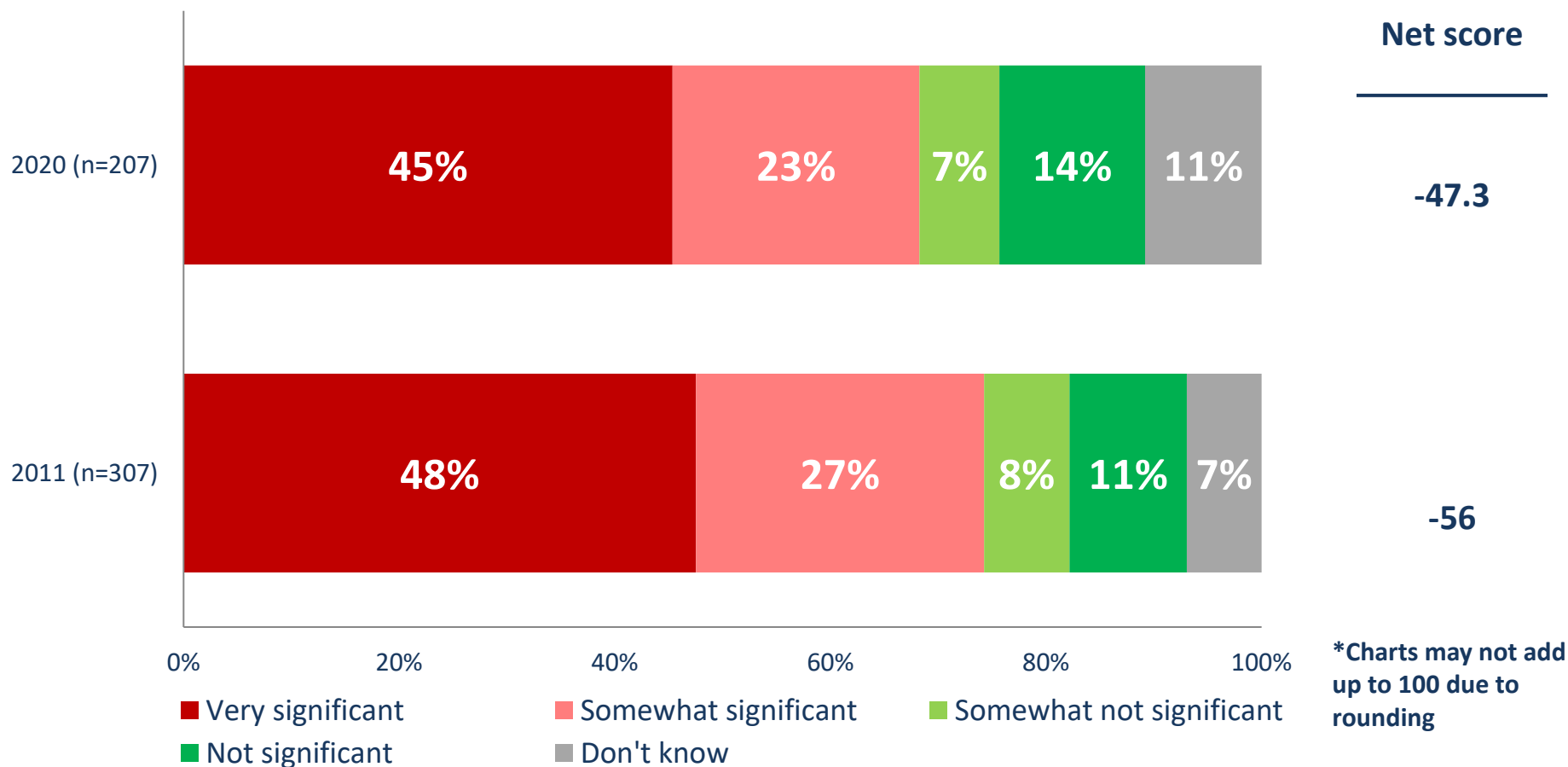
Significance of cost barriers in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

Psychological services cost too much for you to pay yourself

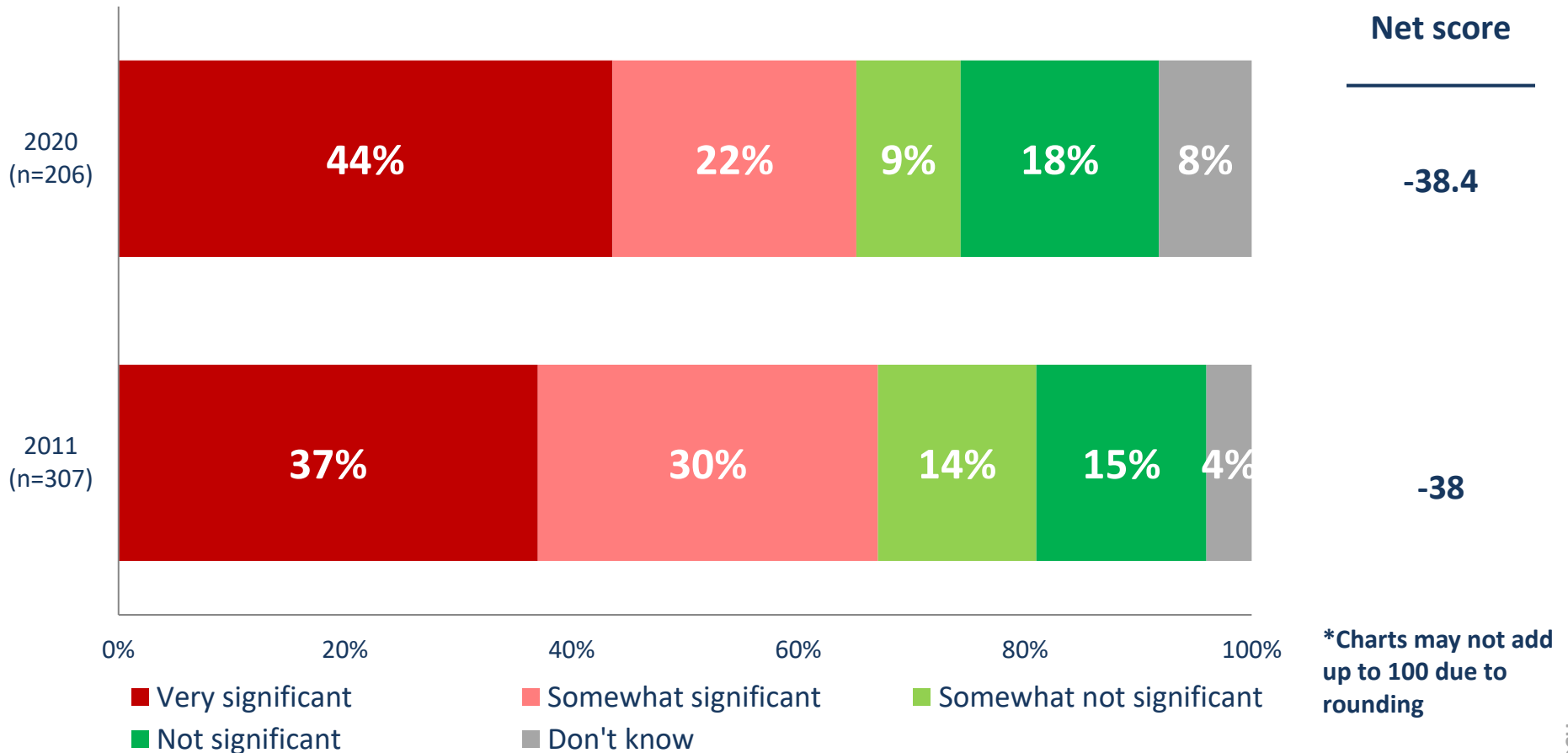
Significance of health plan coverage barriers in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

Psychologists are not covered by your provincial/territorial health plan

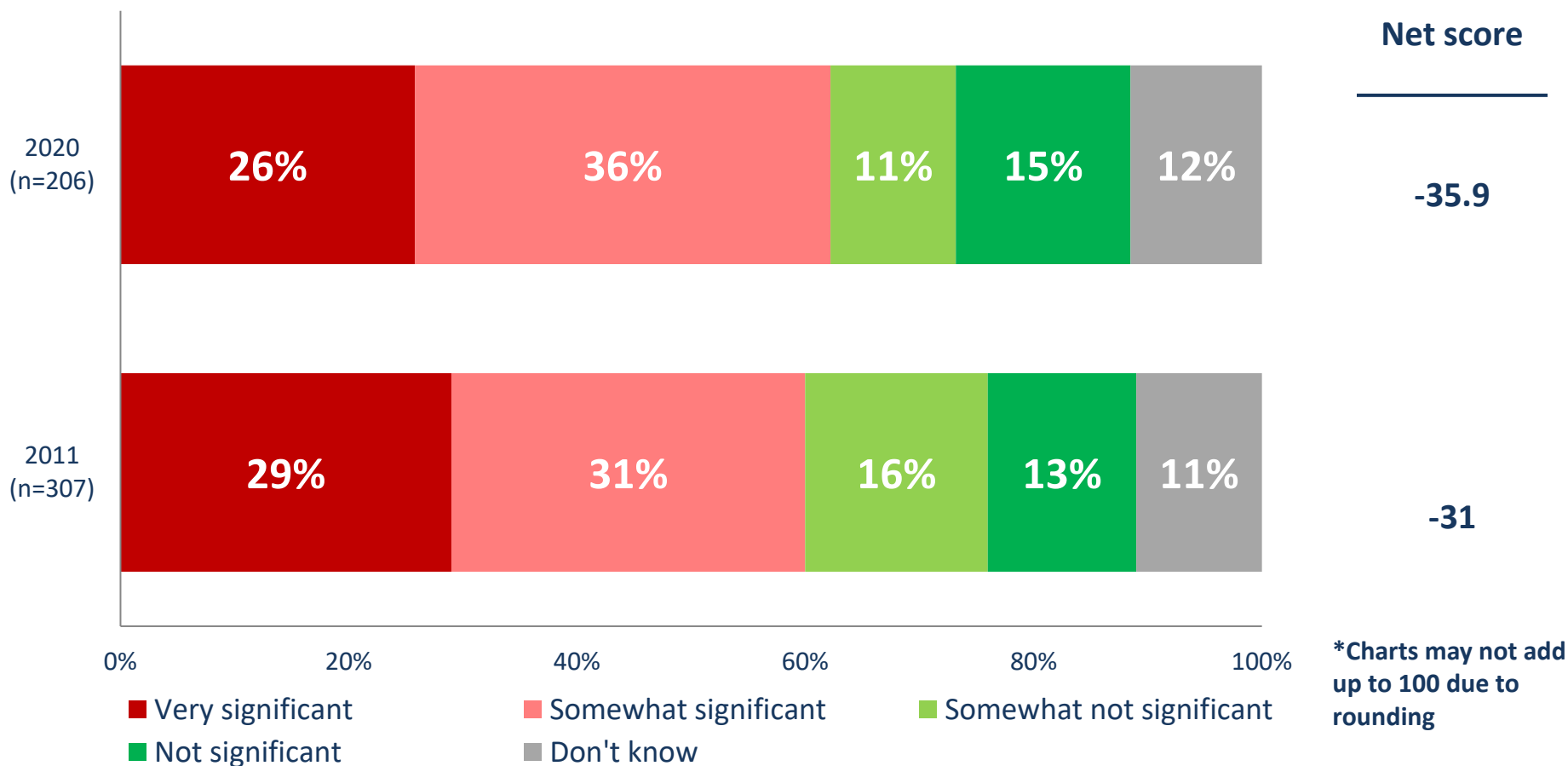
Significance of employer health benefit plan coverage barriers in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

Psychological services are not covered by your employer’s health benefit plan

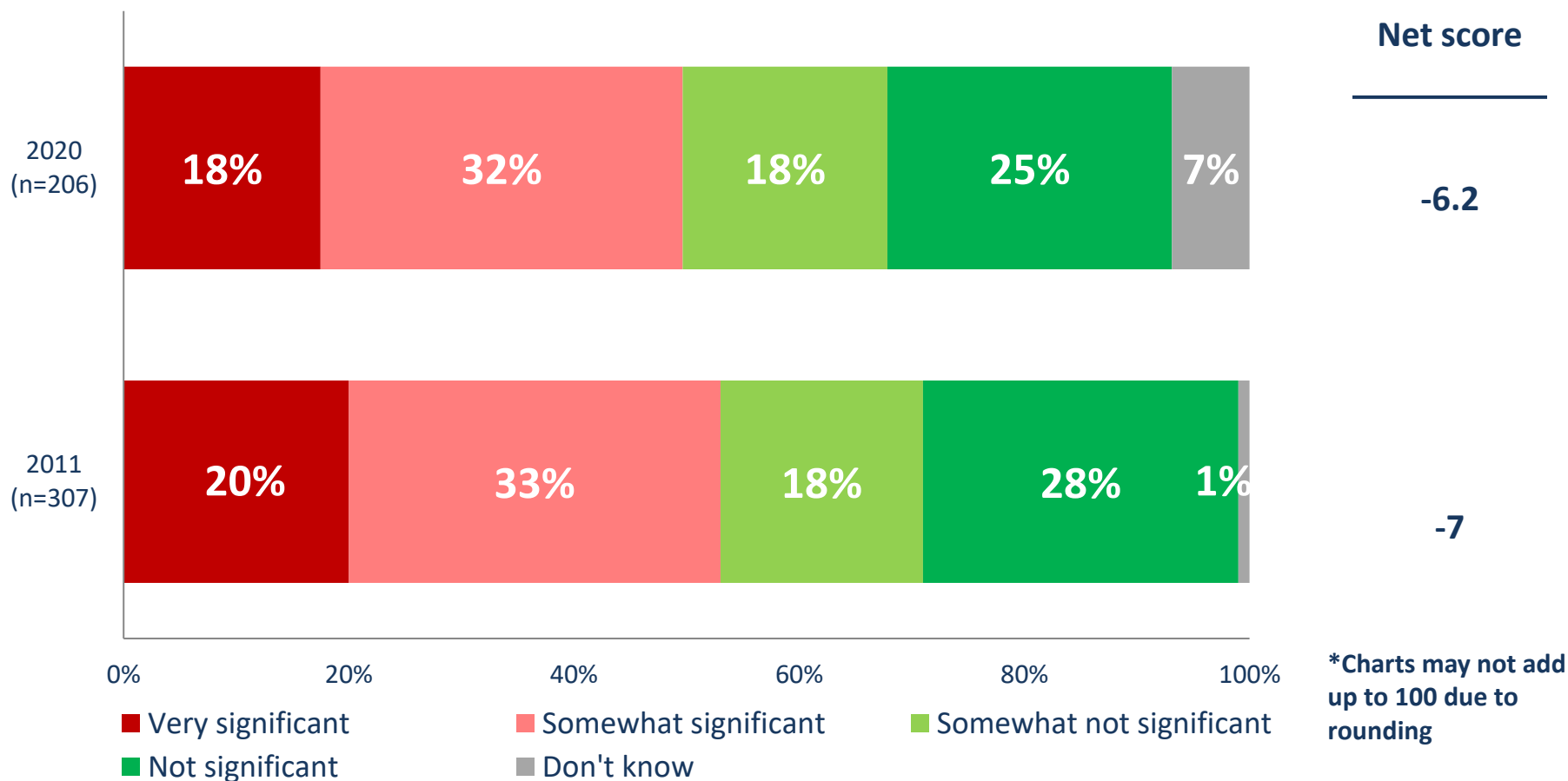
Significance of long wait times in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

The wait times to see a psychologist are too long

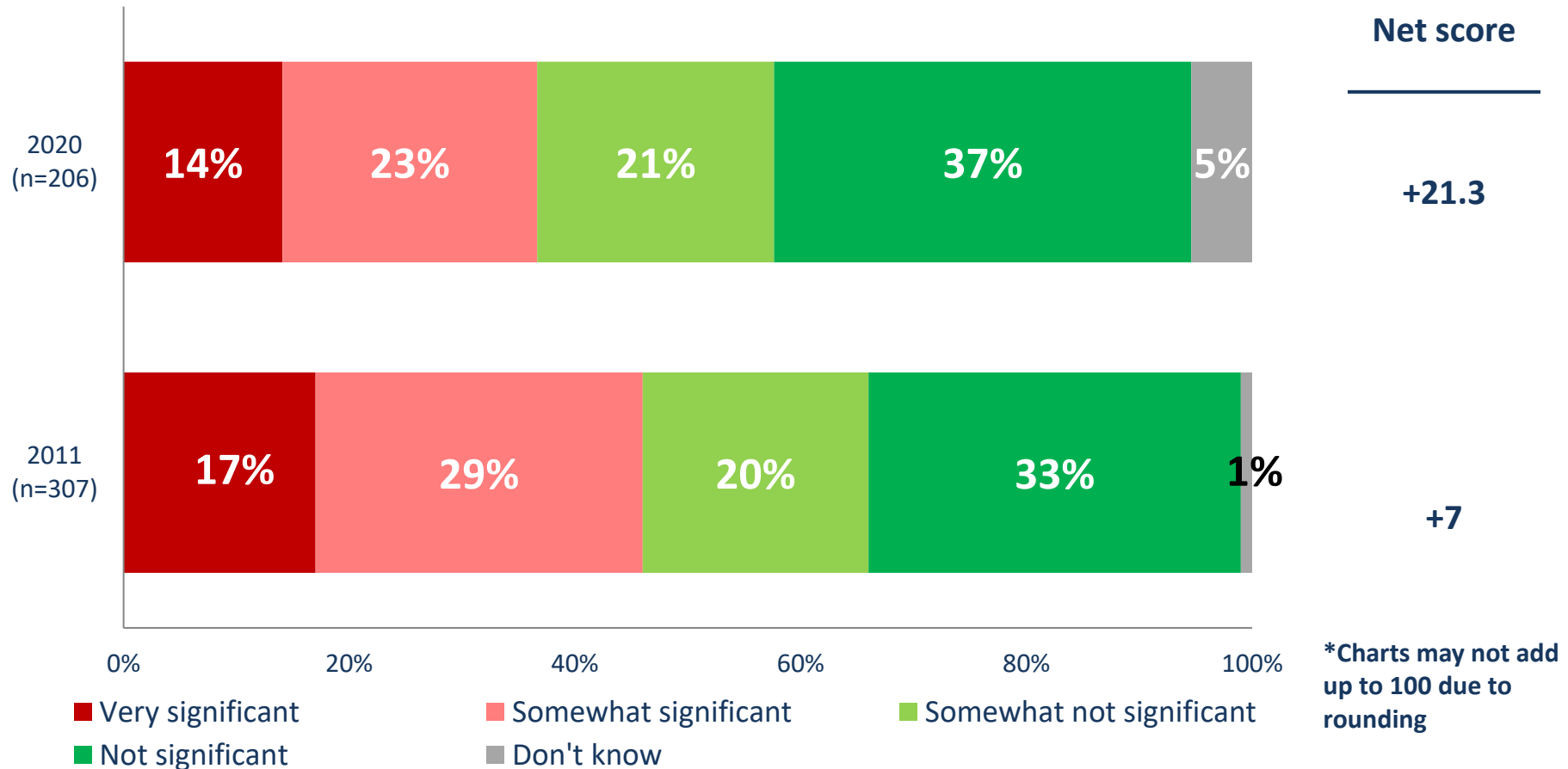
Significance of dealing with problems/disorders themselves in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

Would rather deal with these problems/disorders on your own

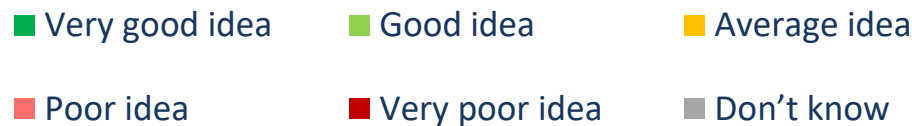
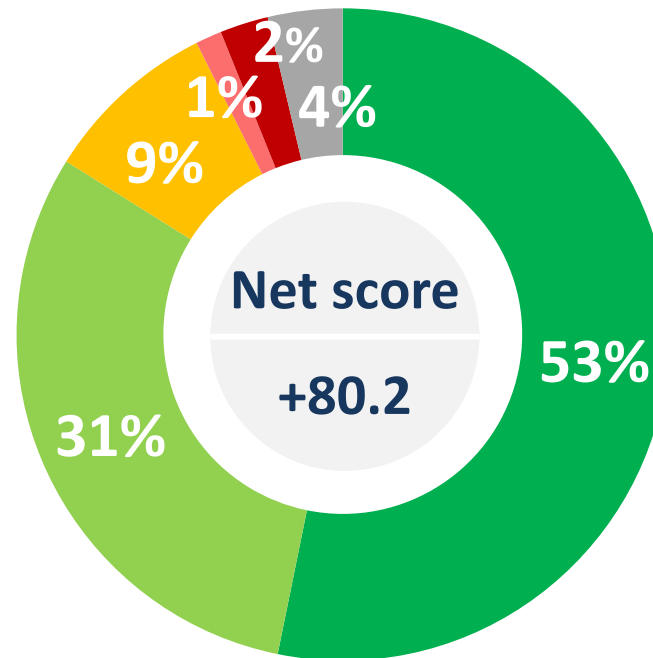
Significance of not wanting others to know they are seeing a psychologist in deciding to access a psychologist



QUESTION – For each of the following barriers, please tell me how significant this barrier is in deciding whether you would access a psychologist or not. [RANDOMIZE]

Wouldn't want others to know you are seeing a psychologist

Support for psychologists working collaboratively with health professionals



QUESTION – Are psychologists working collaboratively with other health professionals, such as family physicians in primary care teams a very good idea, good idea, average idea, poor idea or a very poor idea?

*Weighted to the true population proportion.
*Charts may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

METHODOLOGY



Nanos conducted an online survey of 206 residents of Alberta between September 25th, 2020 and October 2nd, 2020. This was part of a larger national study of 3,070 Canadians 18 years of age or older, between September 25th, 2020 and October 2nd, 2020. The results were statistically checked and weighted by age and gender using the latest Census information and the sample is geographically stratified to be representative of Canada. The sample is geographically stratified to be representative of the population.

The research was commissioned by the Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists and was conducted by Nanos Research.

This is report two (2) of two (2).

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The complete tabulations are appended to the national reports one and two. To view the national reports, please visit www.nanos.co.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Element	Description
Research sponsor	Canadian Psychological Association and the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists
Population and Final Sample Size	206 residents of Alberta as part of a larger national study of 3,070 Canadians drawn from a panel
Source of Sample	Asking Canadians
Type of Sample	Representative non-probability
Margin of Error	No margin of error applies to this research.
Mode of Survey	Online survey
Sampling Method Base	Non-probability.
Demographics (Captured)	Albertans; Men and Women; 18 years or older. Six digit postal code was used to validate geography.
Demographics (Other)	Age, gender, education, income
Field Dates	September 25 th to October 2 nd , 2020.
Language of Survey	The survey was conducted in both English and French.
Standards	Nanos Research is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC) and confirms that this research fully complies with all CRIC Standards including the CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards and Disclosure Requirements. https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/

Element	Description
Weighting of Data	The results were weighted by age and gender using the latest Census information (2016). See tables for full weighting disclosure.
Screening	Screening ensured potential respondents did not work in the market research industry, in the advertising industry, in the media or a political party prior to administering the survey to ensure the integrity of the data.
Excluded Demographics	Individuals younger than 18 years old; individuals without internet access could not participate.
Stratification	By age and gender using the latest Census information (2016) and the sample is geographically stratified to be representative of the population.
Estimated Response Rate	Not applicable
Question Order	Question order in the preceding report reflects the order in which they appeared in the original questionnaire.
Question Content	This is report two (2) of (2). This report contains questions 1 to 34 and report 1 contains questions 35 to 54 in the questionnaire.
Question Wording	The questions in the preceding report are written exactly as they were asked to individuals.
Research/Data Collection Supplier	Nanos Research
Contact	Contact Nanos Research for more information or with any concerns or questions. http://www.nanos.co Telephone:(613) 234-4666 ext. 237 Email: info@nanosresearch.com.

METHODOLOGY - Previous wave



Survey of 307 residents of Alberta as part of a larger national survey of 2,832 Canadians conducted by EKOS in 2011 for the Canadian Psychological Association.



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