



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CANADIAN MEN PRIORTIZING MENTAL HEALTH ABOVE CAREER AND ROMANCE, NEW MOVEMBER STUDY SHOWS**

- 66% of Canadian men\* believe men's mental health is worse today than it's ever been
- 55% of Canadian men\* fear they've missed out on life chances they'll never get back due to COVID-19, while 50% believe living through the pandemic may have changed their mental health forever
- Encouragingly, 82% of all Canadian men^ surveyed considered mental health a priority
- *Mental Health Awareness Week* is May 3<sup>d</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Toronto, Canada | Thursday April 29 2021** – Canadian men now view their mental health as a major priority after living through the COVID-19 crisis, according to new research released today in the lead up to Mental Health Awareness Week by men's health charity, Movember. The research found that four out of five Canadian men (82%) \*\* reported they will now be prioritizing their mental health, which is higher than the number who said they were prioritizing their career and romance, and close behind those men prioritizing finances.

As the world takes steps to recover from COVID-19 and the global rhetoric turns to vaccine rollouts, the lasting impacts the pandemic has had on men's mental health, relationships and outlook for the future have been highlighted through a unique qualitative and quantitative research project conducted over six months among men in Canada, the UK and Australia. While it's encouraging to see mental health growing as a priority for many men across the country, the Movember-funded research also revealed the continued toll the COVID-19 pandemic is having on Canadian men. The research showed over half (55%) of Canadian men\*\* are experiencing poor wellbeing^ because of the pandemic, while 67 per cent said they were concerned about the future\*\*.

Pressures from perceived societal expectations and media portrayals of men were evident in the findings, with two out of three (68%) of Canadian men\*\* surveyed believing the media does not accurately represent the reality of men's lives and attitudes in 2020, and 63 per cent believing society expects them to look a specific way to be considered 'manly'.

Todd Minerson, Movember Canada's Country Director said the charity commissioned the research to get a deeper understanding of what was happening with men, their mental health during COVID-19 and their

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outlook for the future. He noted that the insights shone a spotlight particularly on how men were affected during the pandemic and how much it had dampened their outlook for the future.

*“Our research shows the enduring concerns men have about their mental health, and how they will recover from this once-in-a-lifetime crisis. It highlights the need to support men, encourage them to talk about their concerns and equip them with practical tools to help improve their mental wellbeing,”* said Todd.

Using insights from the research and identifying sports and mass media as platforms to effect positive behaviour change for better mental health, Movember has collaborated with Sportsnet to produce *The Mental Game*, a campaign featuring top athletes sharing deeply personal and emotionally charged stories about significant setbacks and mental health challenges they’ve faced in life.

Consisting of a five-part digital series and 30-minute TV special, hockey and baseball sports stars including Tyler Motte, Rick Ankiel, Tyler O’Neill, Ryan O’Reilly, Ricky Romero and Derrell Levy talk about how they deal with issues men can relate to in their daily lives, such as failure, adversity, change, negativity and pressure. Their stories are complemented by reflections from partners, friends, and psychology experts, and along the way, they share simple self-care habits that anyone can practice at home, including reading, journaling, going for a walk, or doing yoga, in turn preventing unhealthy coping mechanisms such as drinking too much alcohol, sleeping too much, excessive gaming or lack of exercise.

*“Evidence shows these types of simple self-care activities can significantly improve men’s mental health, but are often considered feminine, and traditional masculine norms hold men back from taking action for their own wellbeing. Using mass media and the influence it can have on our audience, we want to change this,”* said Todd.

Watch *the Mental Game* [here](#).

\*Sample of 500 men representative the national population in Canada

\*\*Sample of 1000 men representative the national population in Canada

^The World Health Organization Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) is a self-reported measure of current mental wellbeing and depression screening in the last two weeks.

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### **About Movember:**

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programmes that enable men to live happier, healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world. In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives. The charity's vision is to have an everlasting impact on the face of men's health. To donate or learn more, please visit [Movember.com](https://www.movember.com).

### **About the research:**

The research was commissioned by Movember and conducted by The Good Side, a UK-based insights and social change agency. The quantitative survey was conducted over two waves in November 2020 and January 2021, with a total of 3,000 men surveyed representative of the national population in the UK (1,000 men), Canada (1,000 men) and Australia (1,000 men). In addition, 800 men identified as representing target audiences for Movember's media intervention work were included in the survey. This comprised 200 men aged 16-19 years in the UK living in households with an income of less than £40,000, 400 men aged 18-34 years in Canada living in households with an income of less than \$70,000 and 200 men aged 16-24 years in Australia living in households with an income of less than \$50,000. The 20-minute survey asked men about their mental health during COVID-19, and explored themes around relationships, social connection, loneliness, dealing with pressures during COVID-19, masculinity in today's world and outlook for the future. The project also involved an innovative qualitative study known as The Field, a specially designed online community for men to openly share their views and experiences relating to mental health. Involving 30 men from the UK and 30 men from Canada, the Field was developed to reflect the real-life places men go to talk, hang out with peers, and feel supported. Questions, activities, and polls were posted on The Field to explore themes around mental health, relationships and how men are coping with the challenges presented by COVID-19. Through the Field, which was live from July 2020 to January 2021, Movember gathered insights to help shape its approach to media interventions targeting these groups of men in each country.