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Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

How Important is Mental Health for People in Canada?

Highlights of a Nanos Research Survey for the
Mental Health Commission of Canada

Mental Health Commission of Canada
mentalhealthcommission.ca

Ce document est disponible en français.

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Methodology

The online Nanos Research survey of 1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older, was conducted September 15-17, 2019. The results are statistically checked and weighted by age using the latest census information, and the sample was geographically stratified to be representative of Canada. No margin of error applies. The research was commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Technical notes are available from [Nanos](#).

Summary of National Findings

Three in four people in Canada say mental health care is an important priority for them. More than six in 10 report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness. Among this group, more than one in two report that they or someone they know has experienced delays accessing services.

1. Value of mental health care versus physical health care

People in Canada say mental health care is a very important priority for them and rank mental and physical health care as equally important. More than three in four say mental health care is an important priority for them.

➤ **More than three in four people in Canada say mental health care is an important priority for them.**

Asked to rate the importance of mental health care as a priority on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important, over three in four (77%) say it is an important priority to them (scores of 8-10, with a mean score of 8.6). Two in 10 (20%) say mental health care is of average importance (scores of 4-7), while two per cent say it is not important (scores of 1-3). Another two per cent are unsure.

➤ **A majority of people in Canada say mental and physical health care are equally important.**

More than eight in 10 (85%) say mental and physical health care are equally important. Ten per cent say mental health care is more important than physical health care, while four per cent say it is less important. One per cent are unsure.

2. Funding priorities

A majority of people in Canada say increasing funding for various aspects of mental health care should be high or medium priorities.

➤ **Nearly six in 10 people in Canada say funding for mental and physical health care should be the same.**

A comfortable majority (58%) say funding for mental health care should be the same as it is for physical health care. More than one in four (27%) say mental health care funding should be higher, while eight per cent say it should be lower. Eight per cent are unsure. Women are more likely to say funding should be the same (64%) than men (51%), while men are more likely to say funding should be higher (32%) than women (23%).

➤ **Nearly nine in 10 people in Canada say increasing funding for mental health care should be a high or medium priority.**

A majority (89%) say increasing funding for mental health care should be a high (52%) or medium (37%) priority, while fewer than one in 10 (9%) say it should either be a low priority (7%) or not a priority (2%). Three per cent are unsure.

➤ **More than eight in 10 people in Canada say increasing funding for suicide prevention programs should be a high or medium priority.**

Over eight in 10 (86%) say increasing funding for suicide prevention programs should be a high (45%) or medium (41%) priority, while just over one in 10 (11%) say it should be a low priority (8%) or not a priority (3%). Four per cent are unsure. Women are more likely (51%) to say it should be a high priority than men (39%).

➤ **About nine in 10 people in Canada say increasing funding to improve access to mental health care professionals should be a high or medium priority.**

A majority (89%) say increasing funding to improve access to mental health care professionals (including psychologists and counsellors) should be a high (55%) or medium (34%) priority. Fewer than one in 10 (9%) say it should be a low priority (7%) or not a priority (2%). Three per cent are unsure.

➤ **A majority of people in Canada say increasing funding for prevention and wellness promotion should be a high or medium priority.**

A majority (84%) say increasing funding for prevention and wellness promotion should be a high (42%) or medium (42%) priority, while over one in 10 (13%) say it should be a low priority (11%) or not a priority (2%). Three per cent are unsure.

3. Experience with a mental health problem or illness

Over six in ten people in Canada report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness. More than one in three rank youth as the highest priority for mental health services.

- **More than six in 10 people in Canada report they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness.**

More than six in 10 (64%) report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness, while 28 per cent report that neither they nor someone they know has experienced this. Three per cent declined to respond, and five per cent are unsure.

- **Among people who report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness, two in three report that they are not living with or caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness.**

Among those who report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness, two in three (66%) report that they are not living with or caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness, while 20 per cent report that they are. Eight per cent report that they are living with and caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness, while six per cent report that they are caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness.

- **Among people who report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness, over half report that they or someone they know has experienced delays in accessing services for their mental health problem or illness.**

Among those who report that they or someone they know has experienced a mental health problem or illness, more than one in two (53%) report that they or someone they know has experienced delays in accessing services, while 30 per cent have not, and 17 per cent are unsure.

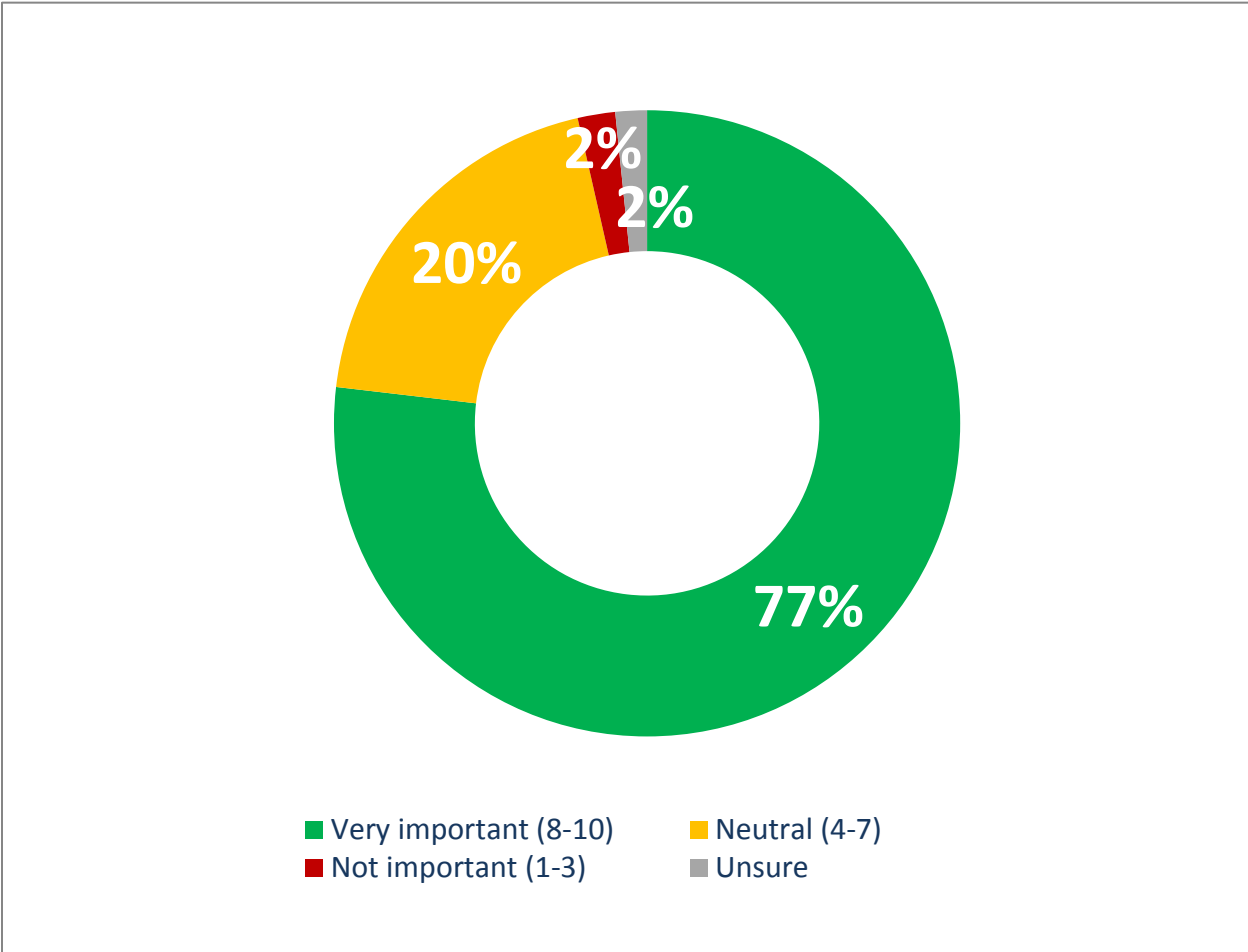
- **People in Canada most often rank youth first in terms of priorities for providing mental health services.**

Asked to rank which groups are the highest priorities for the provision of mental health services, People in Canada most often rank youth first (36%), followed by no difference (25%), seniors (16%), Indigenous peoples (9%), LGBTQ+ (6%), and immigrants and refugees (5%). Four per cent are unsure.

Details of National Findings

1. Importance of mental health

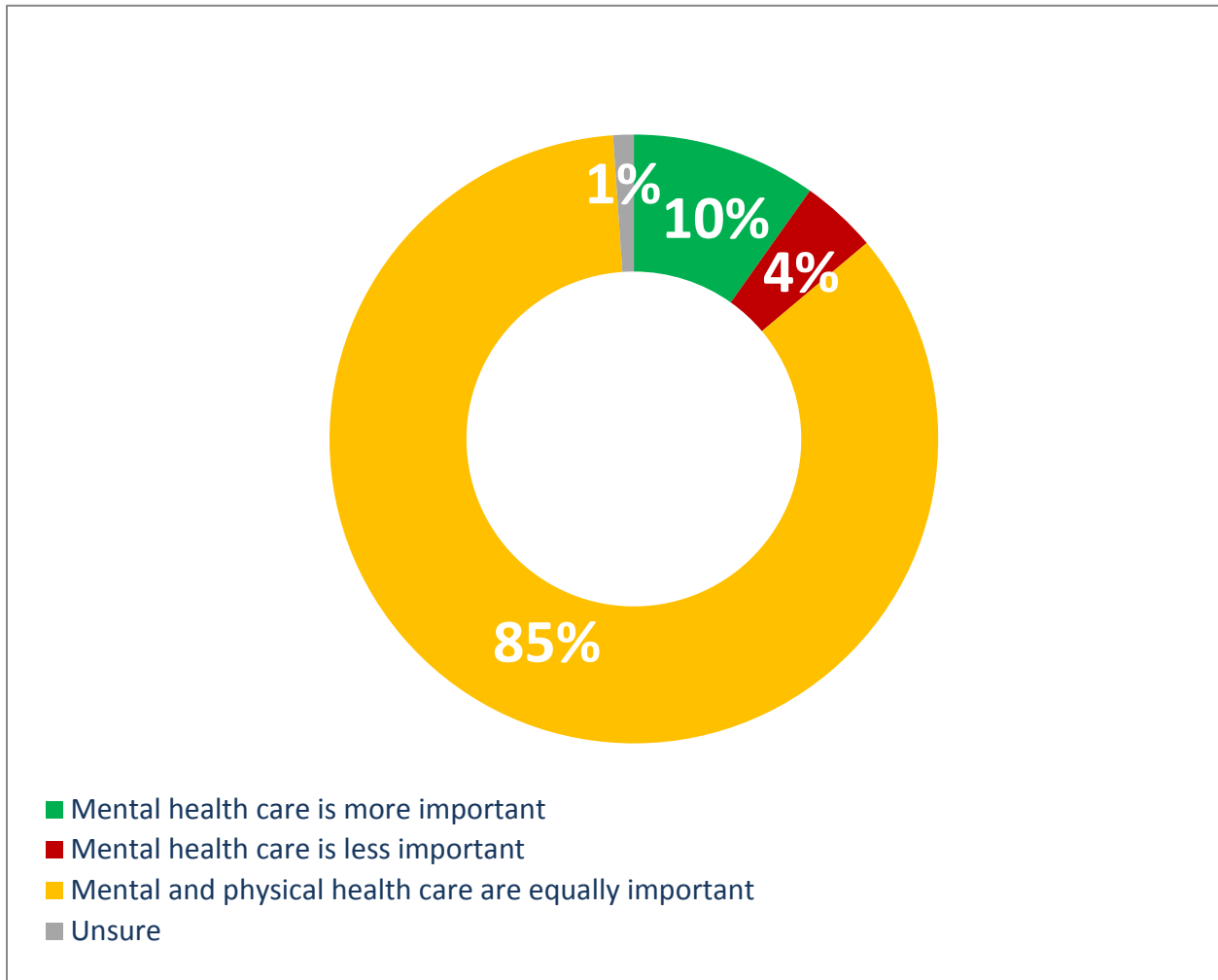
Question: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important, how would you rate mental health care as a priority for you?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

2. Importance of mental health care compared to physical health care

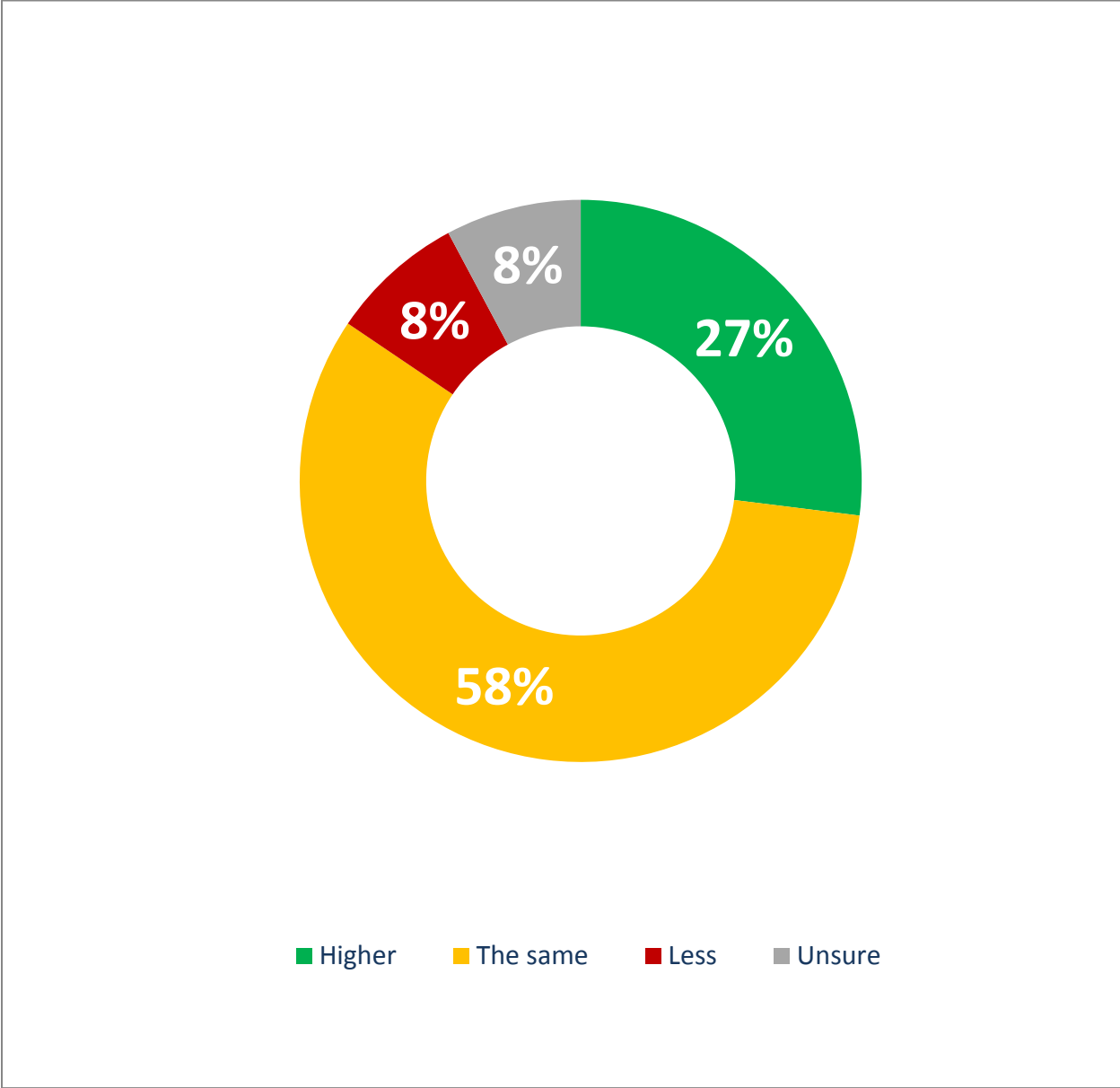
Question: Is mental health care more important, less important, or just as important as physical health care?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

3. Funding for mental health versus physical health

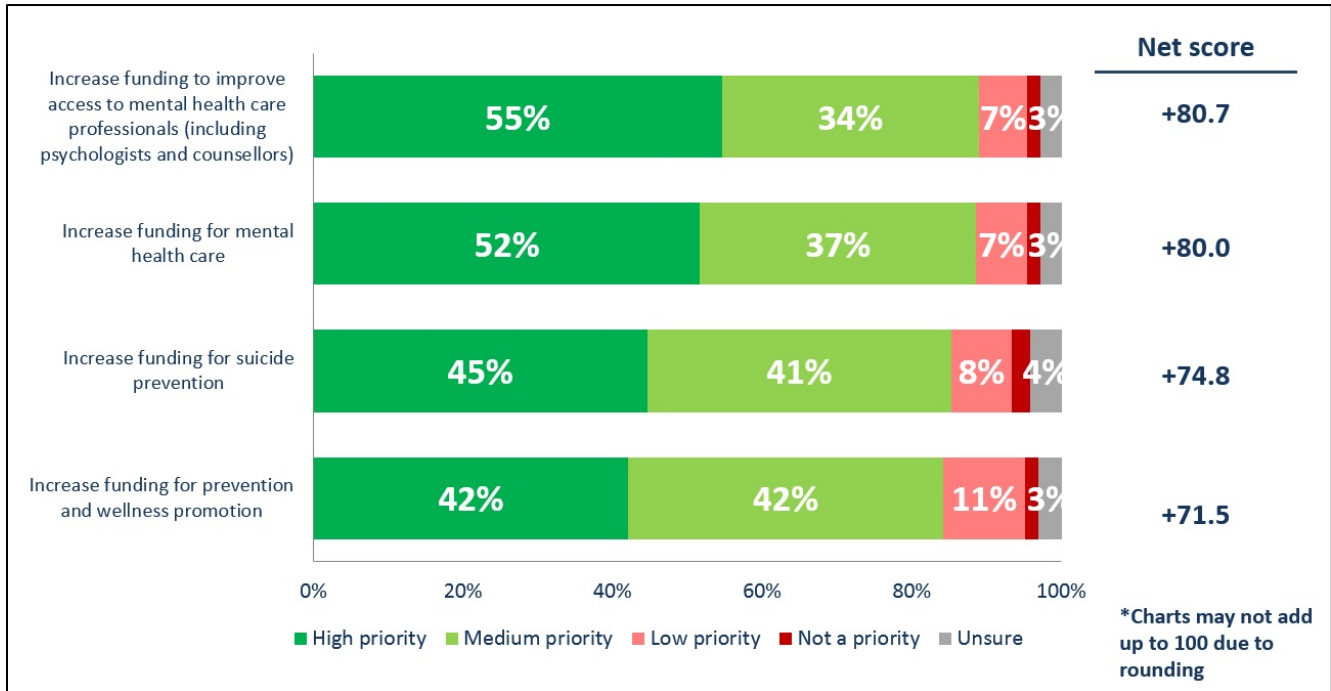
Question: Should funding for mental health care be higher, the same, or less than funding for physical health problems?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

4. Mental health funding priorities

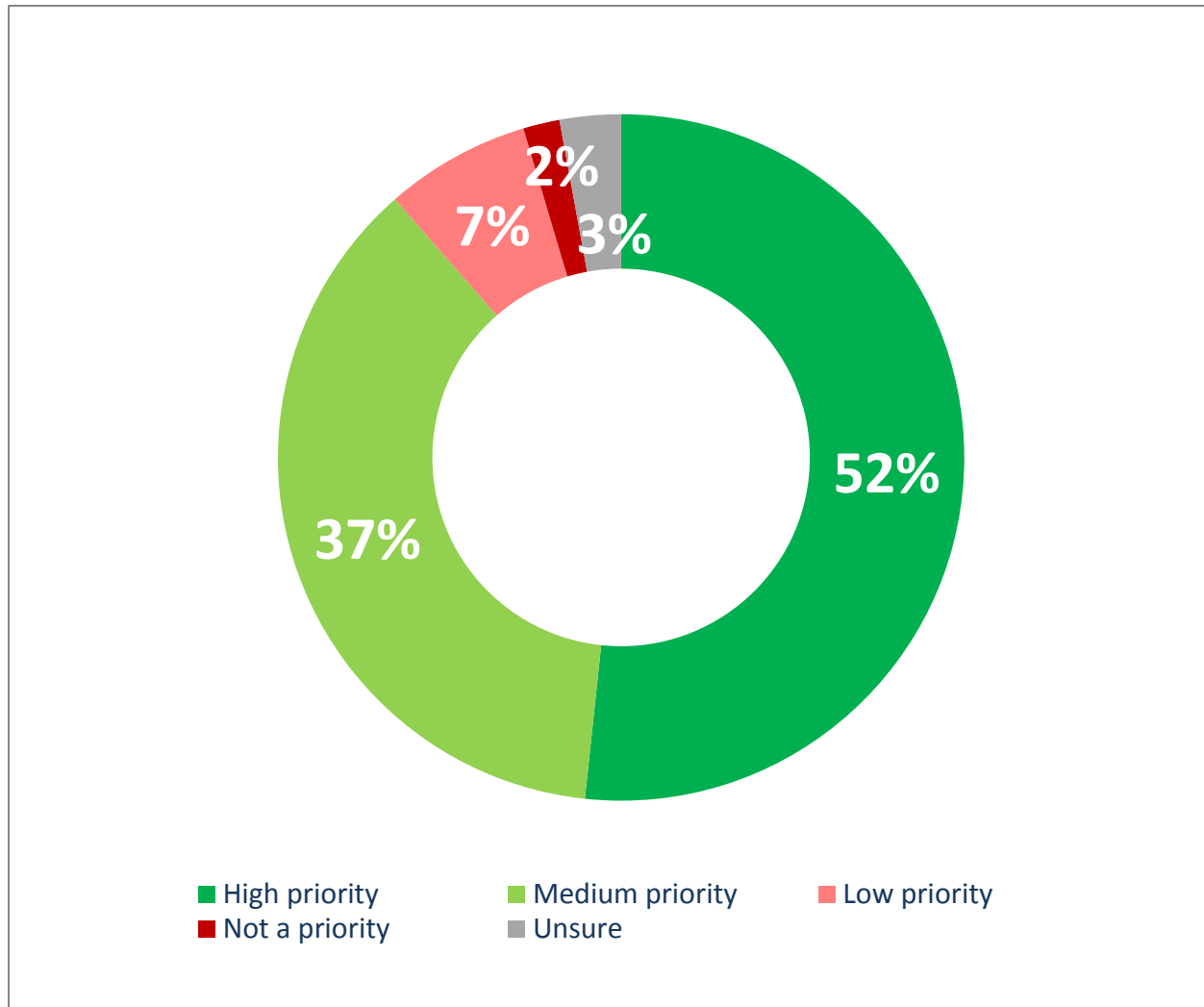
Question: Would you say that the following should be a high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

5. Increasing funding for mental health

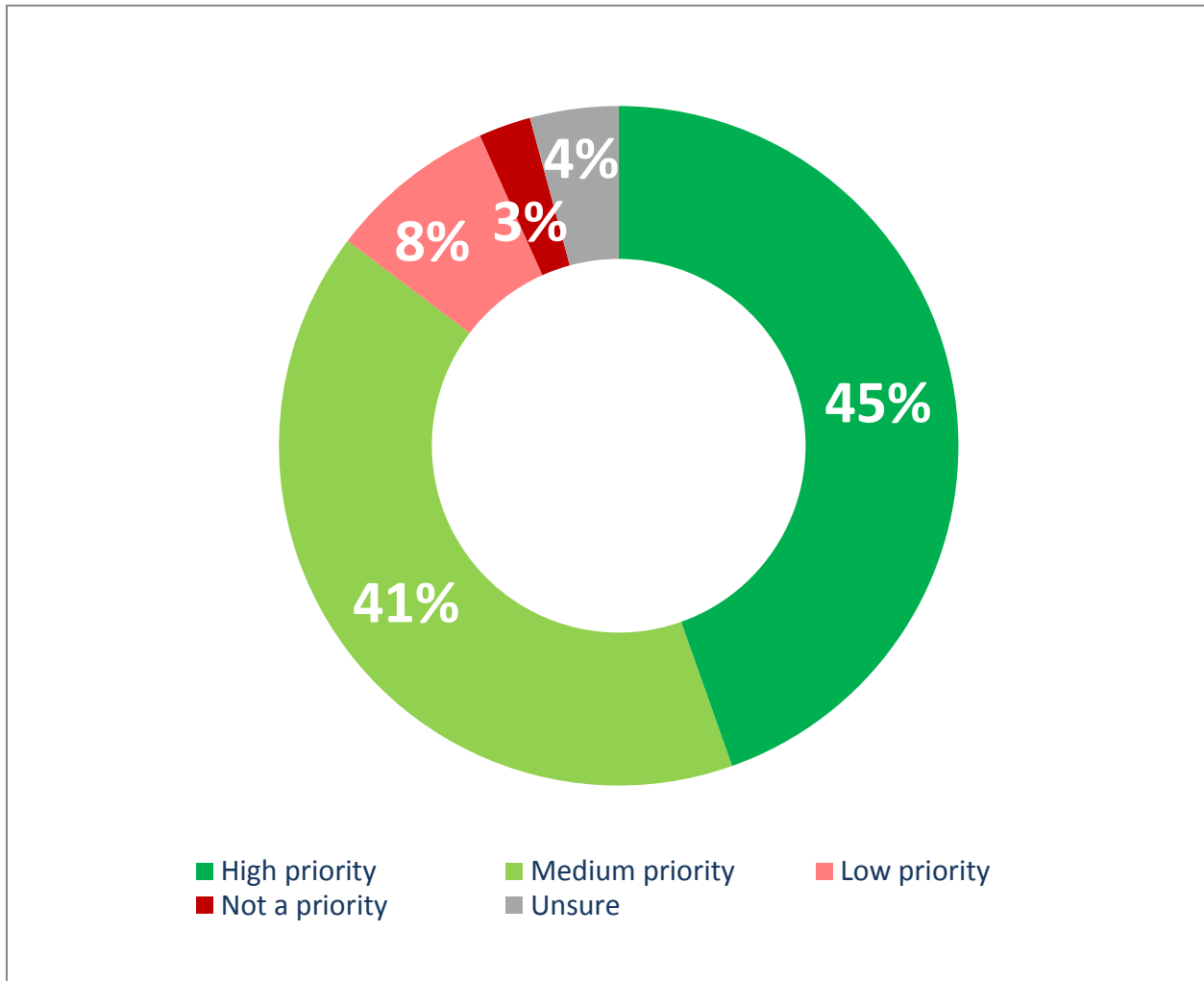
Question: Would you say that increasing funding for mental health should be a high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

6. Increase funding for suicide prevention programs

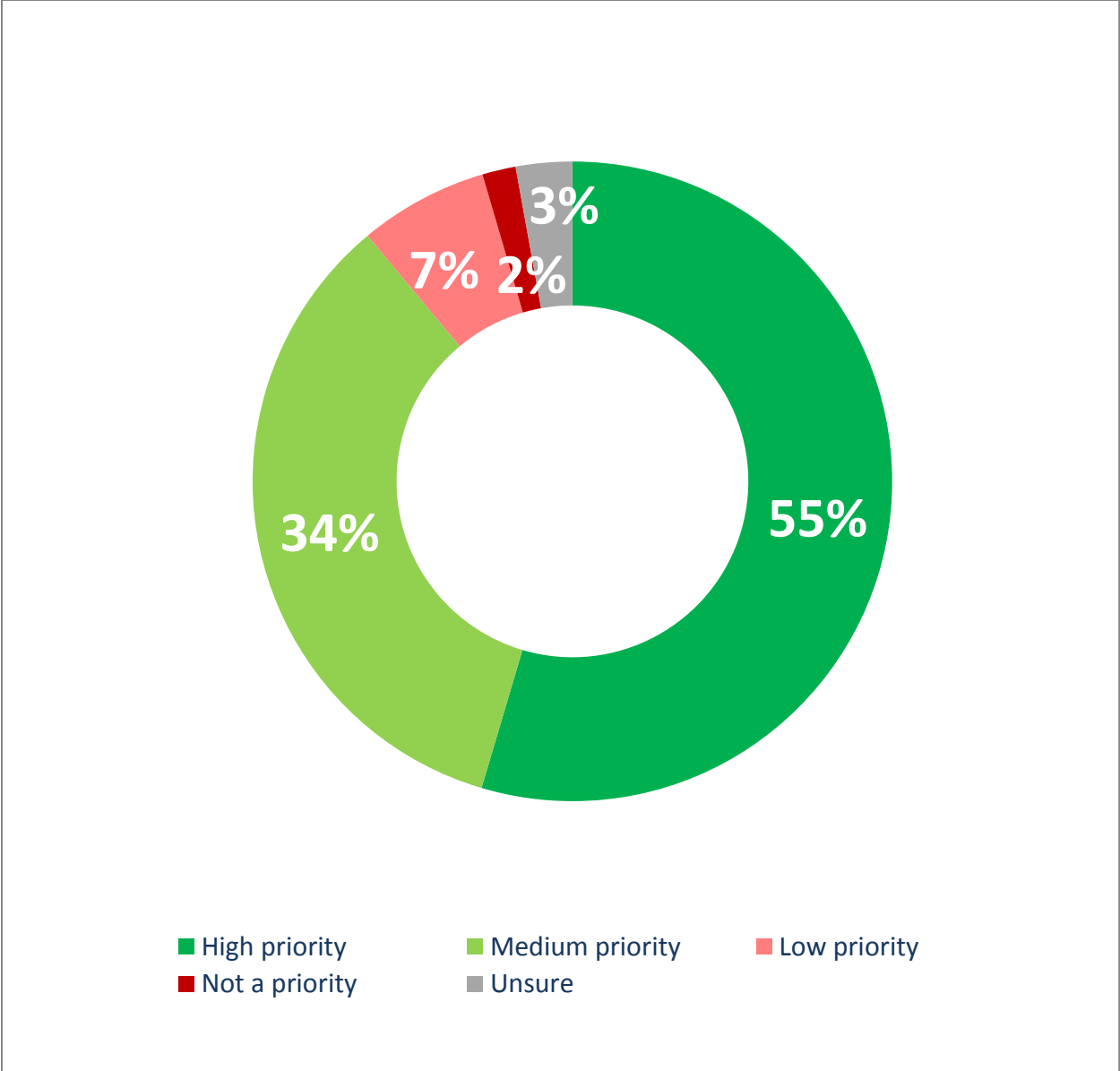
Question: Would you say funding for suicide prevention should be a high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

7. Increasing funding for access to mental health professionals

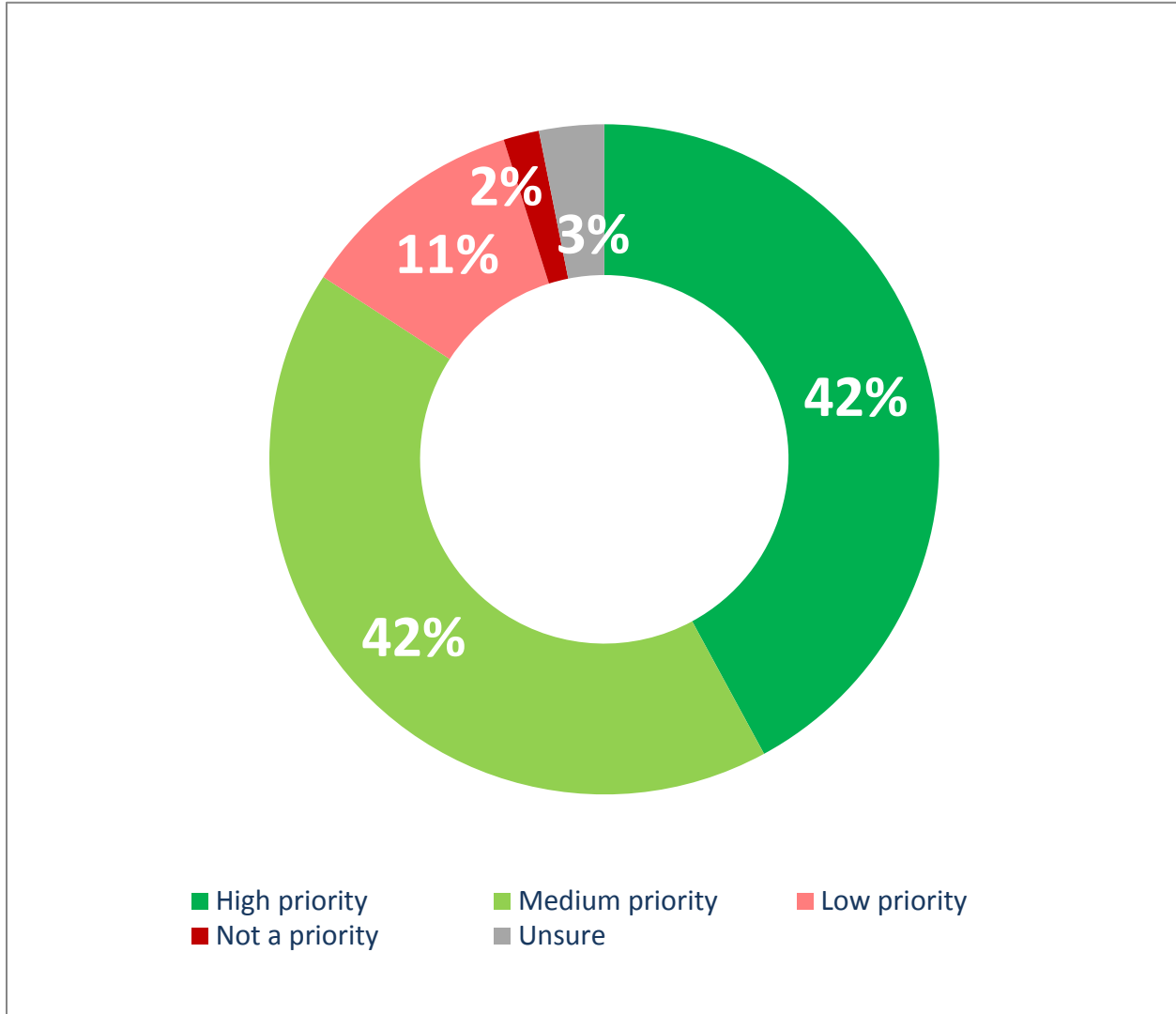
Question: Would you say funding for mental health professionals (including psychologists and counsellors) should be a high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

8. Increase funding for prevention and wellness programs

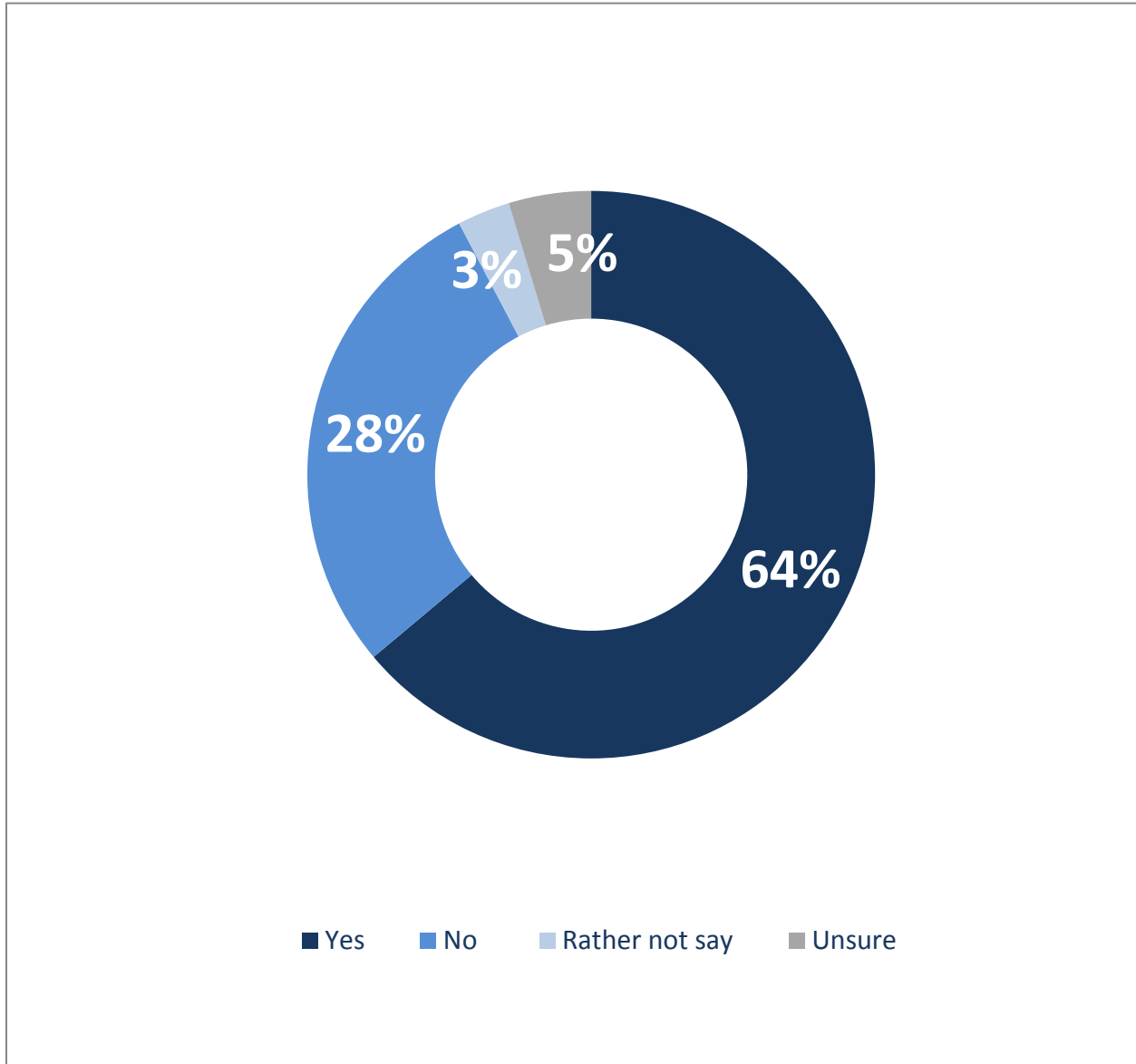
Question: Would you say funding for prevention and wellness programs should be a high, medium, or low priority or not a priority?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

9. Experiencing a mental health problem or illness

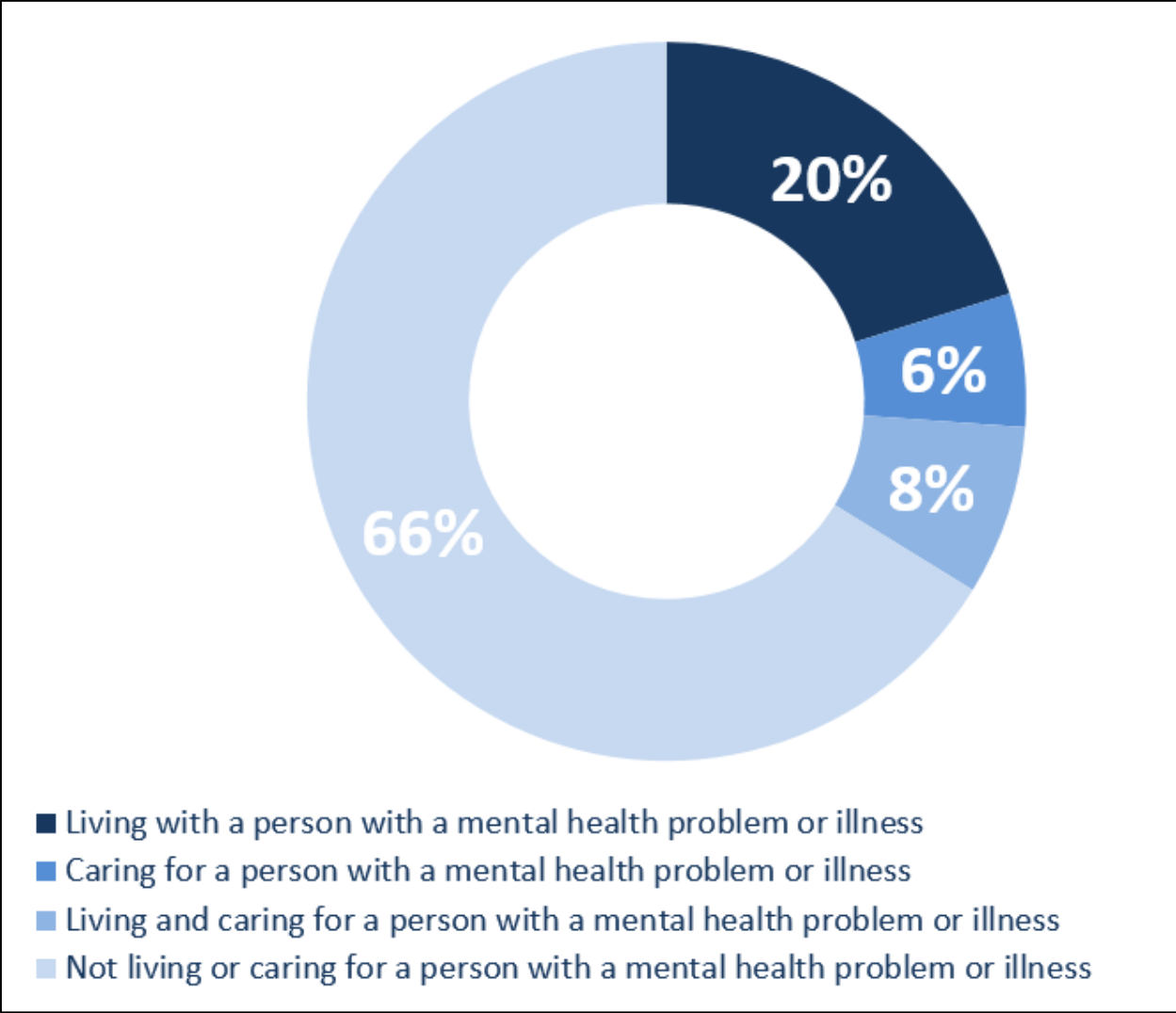
Question: Have you or someone you know ever experienced a mental health problem or illness?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

10. Living with or caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness

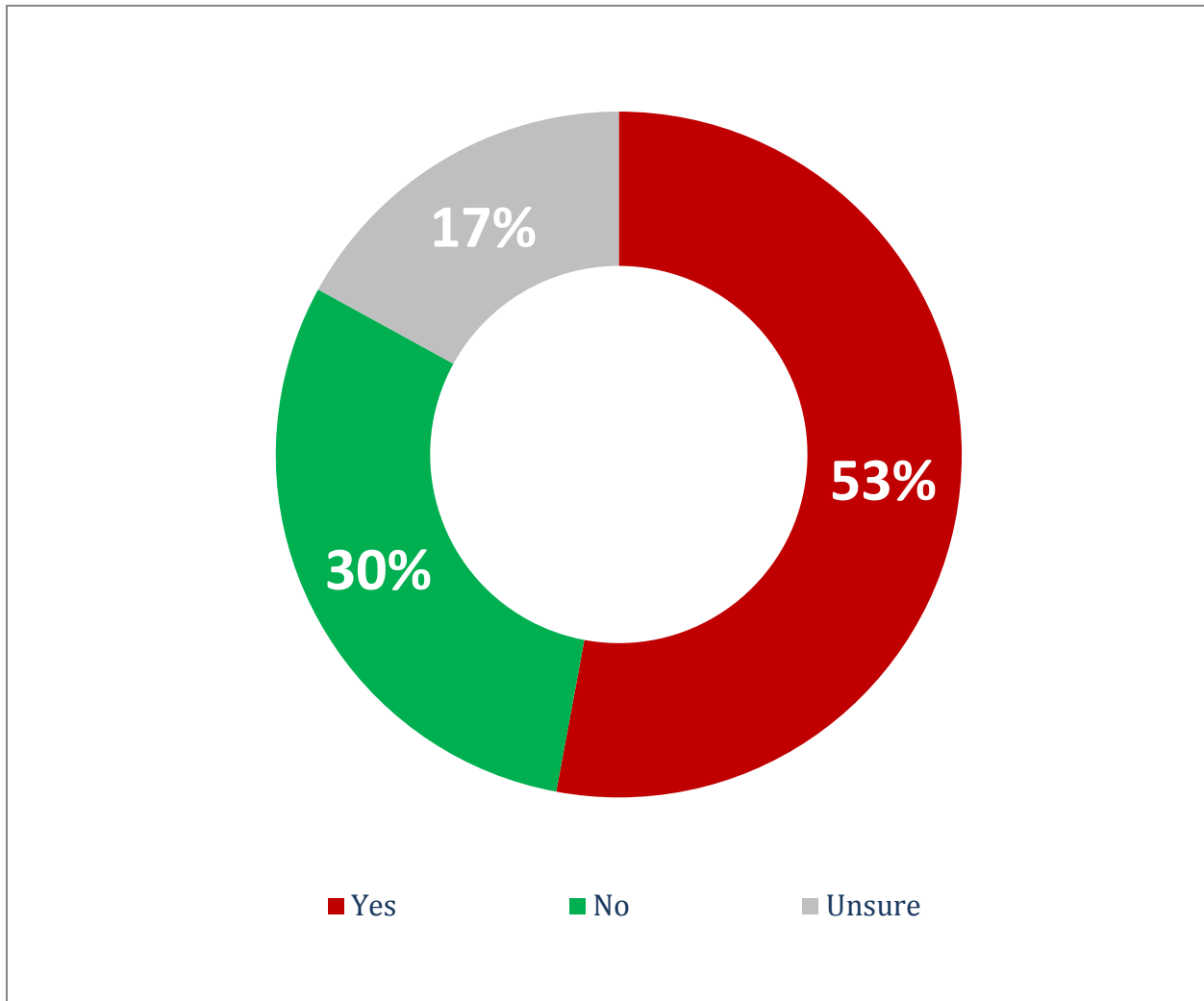
Question: Are you living with or caring for a person with a mental health problem or illness?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

11. Experiencing delays in accessing services for mental health

Question: Have you or someone you know ever experienced delays in accessing services for a mental health problem or illness?



Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.

12. Prioritizing groups for mental health services

Question: Please rank the following groups as priorities for providing mental health services.

	First Ranked (n=993)	Second Ranked (n=811)	Third Ranked (n=747)
Youth	35.7%	26.7%	16.7%
Seniors	15.9%	31.3%	18.7%
Indigenous peoples	8.5%	14.4%	28.7%
LGBTQ	5.7%	13.4%	16.4%
Immigrants and refugees	5.1%	6.4%	11.6%
No difference	25.4%	4.4%	5.4%
Unsure	3.7%	3.4%	2.4%

Source: Nanos Research online survey, September 15-17, 2019, n=1,004 people in Canada, 18 years of age and older. No margin of error applies.



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