



Artists INMind

A REPORT ON ARTISTS' MENTAL
HEALTH & WELLBEING IN NOVA SCOTIA

SURVEY FINDINGS

Total Number of Respondents who participated in the Artist in Mind survey: **313**

Who participated in our survey?

The following data represents the percentage of participants from various disciplines:

Visual Artist	53.35%
Craft	9.9%
Theatre	4.79%
Interdisciplinary	4.79%
Dance	4.47%
Writing	4.47%
Media Art	3.83%
Other	3.83%
Digital Art	3.19%
Music	3.19%
Circus Arts	2.24%
Sound Art	0.96%
Comics	0.96%

We asked respondents, have you ever needed mental health supports or services while living as an artist in Nova Scotia?

74% of those who have worked as artists in Nova Scotia said that they have at some point in time needed mental health supports or services.

For those who did need mental health supports or services while living as an artist in Nova Scotia, we wanted to know if they knew what supports or services they needed:

32.7% knew what supports or services they needed

52.5% had somewhat of an idea of what supports they needed

14.8% did not have an idea of what supports or services they needed

Of these respondents, we also asked if they were able to find the mental health resources they needed:

24.4% said NO they could not find the resources they needed

32.1% said YES they could find the resources they needed

43% said SOMEWHAT they could find the resources they needed

And we asked respondents if they were able to access the mental health resources they needed:

24.34% said NO they were not able to access the resources they needed

26.95% said YES they were able to access the resources they needed

48.69% said SOMEWHAT they could find the resources they needed

To better understand the barriers that prevent artists in Nova Scotia from accessing mental health supports and services, we wanted to know what obstacles were most significant.

(Note: Respondents checked answers that applied to them).

61.02% of respondents said that COST was an obstacle for them

32.9% of respondents said that the wait time was an obstacle for them

29.39% of respondents said that not knowing where to look for supports or services was an obstacle for them

28.12% of respondents said that the supports and services available to them did not meet their needs and this was an obstacle for them

26.84% of respondents said that a lack of motivation and energy to search for help was an obstacle for them

24.28% of respondents said they were overwhelmed by the mental health system and this was an obstacle for them

15.34% of respondents said that they worried about stigma and how others might see them, and this was an obstacle for them

9.27% said other issues were an obstacle for them

2.88% said that the people in their life did not support them accessing mental health support and this was an obstacle for them

With regards to artists and their relationship to employment, we wanted to know if their work had ever been negatively impacted by mental health issues or challenges:

57.8% said YES their employment had been impacted by their mental health issues or challenges

27.2% said SOMEWHAT their employment had been impacted by their mental health issues or challenges

15% said NO their employment had not been impacted by their mental health issues or challenges

With regards to artists and their relationship to their creative practice, we asked if their mental health issues or challenges had ever negatively impacted their work as an artist:

70.3% said YES their mental health issues or challenges negatively impacted their work as an artist

23% said SOMEWHAT their mental health issues or challenges negatively impacted their work as an artist

6% said NO they did not have any mental health issues or challenges that negatively impacted their work as an artist

We also wanted to know more specifically, in what ways did artists mental issues and challenges negatively impact their creative work Respondents checked all answers that applied to them:

70.83% said they prevented them from being able to focus on their work

72.76% said they negatively affected their motivation to do their work

61.22% said they caused them to retreat from social interactions connected to their work

22.44% said they created relationship difficulties with the people they work with

57.69% said that have negatively affected their ability to reach their potential as artists

63.78% said that they have negatively affected their ability to feel creative

51.92% said that they have negatively affected their ability to complete projects

56.73% said that they have negatively affected their ability to apply for opportunities

67.95% said that they have negatively affected their self-confidence as artists

62.50% said that they have negatively affected their ability to feel productive

44.86% said they have negatively affected their ability to prioritize work related activities

32.37% said that they have prevented them from asking colleagues for help when they needed it

29.81% said they negatively affected their ability to collaborate with the colleagues they work with

In contrast to the above mentioned negative impacts, we also wanted to know if artists mental health issues or challenges had any positive impacts. Respondents checked all answers that applied to them:

8.65% said they positively affected their ability to collaborate with colleagues

8.01% said that they positively affected their ability to reach their potential as artists

26.92% said that they provided them with unique ideas and creative insights

14.74% said they are a significant source of their creative inspiration

16.03% said they provide them with bursts of energy and motivation

We asked Nova Scotia artists, what challenges most affected their wellbeing and mental health? Respondents checked all answers that applied to them:

72.90% Financial insecurity (i.e. money related stress)	where your work as an artist is not valued	addiction
60.32% Burnout	26.77% Not being able to find or access appropriate mental health resources	10.65 % Experiences of ableism
58.71% Feeling like you are not living up to your potential as an artist	24.84% Experiences of sexism	9.35% Experiences of homophobia
53.23% Lack of self-confidence	24.84% Housing insecurity (housing related stress)	8.39% Other
52.26% Lack of opportunity in your professional field	23.55% Lack of access to production equipment or materials (i.e. your tools of the trade)	6.45% Experiences of racism
50.65% A mixed bag of life stress	22.9% Other coexisting mental health conditions	4.52% Attempts of suicide
48.39% Lack of community or sense of belonging	20% Not being able to get a proper mental health diagnosis	8.39% Other
47.1% Feelings of loneliness and/or social isolation	20% Lack of family or support circle	
42.58% Inability to work in your field due to issues outside of your control (i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic)	19.68% Thoughts of suicide	
36.77% Lack of peer or professional recognition in your field as an artist	18.06% Loss of a loved one or loved ones	
36.77% Lack of access to work spaces (i.e. studios, offices, rehearsal spaces etc)	14.84% Experiences of gender related issues	
34.52% Experiences of trauma	12.26% Not being able to get proper medication for my mental health issues	
29.03% Living in a place	11.94% Experiences with	

Looking into the future, we wanted to know what mental health supports or services NS artists would prefer to access. Respondents selected their top three and the data below represents these choices:

- 66.45% Individual counselling with a therapist
- 51.61% Individual counselling with a psychologist
- 30% Group therapy sessions with other artists and creative professionals
- 29.03% Peer led support group with other artists and creative professionals
- 23.55% Individual appointments with a psychiatrist
- 16.45% Individual appointments with a family doctor
- 12.90% I'm not sure
- 9.35% Family or couples counselling
- 9.35% Online Help Services
- 8.39% Group therapy sessions
- 7.42% Peer led support group
- 7.10% Texting Help Services
- 6.13% Telephone Help Line
- 3.23% Residential treatment program
- 1.94% Hospitalized treatment

We asked: In the Future, if you could access the supports and services you needed, how beneficial an impact would this have on your overall well-being and mental health:

On a sliding scale of 1-10, the average rating from respondents was 7.7%

We asked: In the Future, if you could access the supports and services you needed, how beneficial an impact would this have on your career as an artist?:

On a sliding scale of 1-10, the average rating from respondents was 7.3%

We asked: In the Future, would you be more likely to access mental health services or supports if they were subsidized?

On a sliding scale of 1-10, the average rating from respondents was 8.4%

Statistical Information about respondents who participate in the Artist in Mind survey:

We asked, what size of a community do you live in?

55% said a city
12.62% said a small or medium sized town
32.04% said a rural area or village

We asked, what NS municipality do you live in?

66.45% Halifax Regional Municipality
5.81% Lunenburg County
4.19% Cape Breton (CBRM)
3.23% Annapolis County
2.90% Colchester County
2.90% Kings County
2.58% Cumberland County
2.26% Digby County
2.26% Hants County
1.94% Inverness County
1.61% Pictou County
0.65% Antigonish County
0.65% Queens County
0.65% Richmond County
0.65% Shelburne County
0.65% Yarmouth County
0.32% Victoria County
0.32% Guysborough County

We asked, what is your gender?

68.81% of respondents identified as a woman
17.68% of respondents identified as a man
9% of respondents identified as non-binary
3.22% of respondents identified as genderqueer
2.89% of respondents identified as "I'd rather not say"
2.57% of respondents identified as other
1.29% of respondents identified as Trans
0.96% of respondents identified as two-spirited

We asked, do you identify as a person who is deaf or who has a disability?

7.45% of respondents identified as deaf (may include deaf, partially deaf, hard of hearing)
92.55% of respondents identified as having a disability (includes, blind, visually impaired, physically impaired, mobility issues, learning disability, intellectual impairment, living with mental or chronic illness)

We asked, what is your race/ethnicity?

52.67% identified as White
25.62% self identified with another race/ethnicity
11.03% identified as Mixed Heritage
8.19% said they "would rather not say"
3.2% identified as Indigenous
2.49% identified as Asian
1.78% identified as Black
0.71% identified as Latin
0.36% identified as Middle Eastern

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