



2020 Rapid Survey on Rural Community Challenges and Technology Use during COVID-19

Insights from rural living British Columbians on the challenges related to technology use during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic (May 29-July 8, 2020)

Sample characteristics	N (%)
Gender	
Female	197 (71%)
Male	72 (26%)
Non-binary	<5 (<1.8%)
Missing/prefer not to answer	9 (3%)
Age	
19-35	57 (20%)
36-54	95 (34%)
55+	103 (37%)
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	210 (75%)
First Nation/Metis	24 (9%)
Other	45 (16%)
Education	
High school or less	53 (19%)
Trades certification/diploma	124 (44%)
University degree	101 (36%)

For more information about the RHE-SETS team visit:
www.ruralhealthequity.com

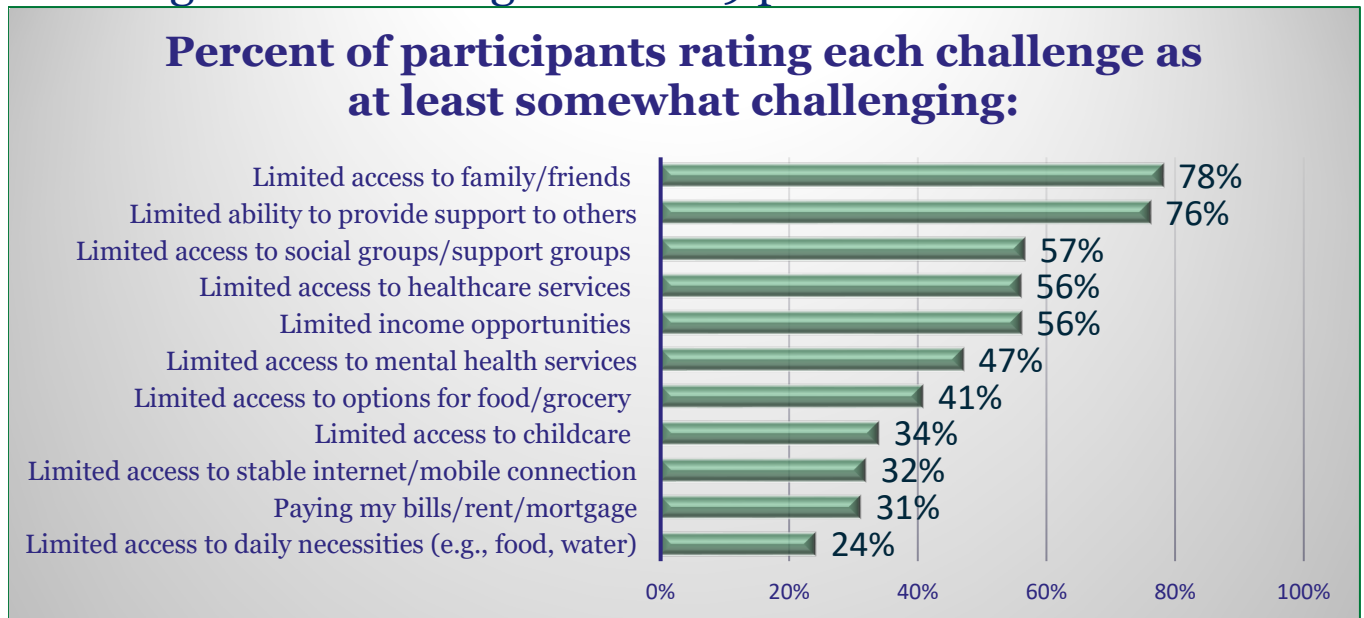


THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Findings

Challenges faced during COVID-19 pandemic



Note: Response options ranged from Not at all to Extremely.

Many rural participants were experiencing challenges as the pandemic pushed activities of daily life online.

Although internet was available to the majority, nearly 1/3rd reported quality issues posed significant challenges to using technology during the pandemic (n = 87, 31%)

“At this point the internet and access to it should be considered a utility, not a luxury”

– 55-year-old female rural community member

As the pandemic continues, the lack of reliable internet access in rural communities will further enlarge the digital divide between the rural and urban citizens, further challenging in Canada’s universal healthcare system.

Reliable internet access in rural and remote communities is an essential service requiring attention and investment.