

## Mental Health and Post-Pandemic Well-Being of Canadian Entrepreneurs: Stressors and Mitigation Strategies

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply disrupted the Canadian entrepreneurial landscape, triggering unprecedented psychosocial pressures. Faced with financial uncertainty, isolation, work overload, and the urgent need to adapt their business models, many entrepreneurs experienced deteriorating mental health, marked by stress, anxiety, and burnout (BDC, 2021; Gish et al., 2022; Nisa et al., 2023). Despite governmental interventions, such as wage subsidies and emergency loans, 83% of SMEs ceased operations (SMEs Canada, 2022), revealing systemic inadequacies and inequities in access to support (ul Haq et al., 2024).

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature: the underexplored mental health experiences of Canadian entrepreneurs during crises (Torrès & Thurik, 2019; Wach et al., 2016). Grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress and coping, it examines the stressors encountered and coping strategies mobilized by entrepreneurs during and after the pandemic. A mixed-methods design was used: a quantitative survey of 200 entrepreneurs, using validated tools (Perceived Stress Scale, Brief COPE), and 30 in-depth interviews capturing lived experiences and perceptions of support mechanisms.

Findings aim to inform evidence-based recommendations for public policy and organizational practice by highlighting effective forms of psychological, financial, and social support. This research contributes to both entrepreneurship and occupational health literatures, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions to enhance psychological resilience in the face of systemic crises.

**Keywords:** Coping strategies; Mental health; Policy recommendations; post-pandemic context; Resilience.