



IMPACT OF COVID-19:

**REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH WITH
YOUTH AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Key findings



Key finding – Government biggest influencer on behaviours

Most participants say that the biggest influencer on their behaviours related to COVID-19 is the government. Many admit that they do not change their behaviours until the government makes them mandatory; for example, wearing a mask in public. Parents have some influence on behaviours, but parents are primarily just reiterating guidelines set out by the province.

Key finding – Participants are taking a passive approach to keeping updated about COVID-19

Many participants cite being “burned out” by the amount of information available about COVID-19 and, therefore, have significantly reduced actively looking for information about it (or looking at all). They primarily get information passively through social media (shared by friends or local businesses/media), but also through work or word of mouth.



Key finding – High school students feel safe at school, but have concerns about remote learning



Generally students feel safe from being exposed to or catching COVID-19 at school, and cite only mild concerns mostly related to students not properly socially distancing outside of class. Remote learning has presented many challenges for students, primarily because most require a significant amount of self-teaching and very few have live lectures (that they have in class). Because of this, they would have serious concerns about the quality of their education if their school had to return to entirely remote learning.

Key finding – Participants like ads with clear call to action

When testing two concepts, participants related to aspects of the visual components of the ads, but very strongly liked messaging with clear calls to action. This likely reflects the first key finding, as they tend to change their behaviours based on restrictions set out by the government.



1.0 Introduction

Communications Services Manitoba hired PRA Inc. to undertake focus group research to understand young Manitobans' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the groups were used to assess potential advertising and understand the mediums youth use.

1.1 Methodology

PRA conducted four focus groups, two with people 18 to 24 (referred to as “youth” in this report) on October 14, 2020, and two with high school students (referred to as “students” in this report) on October 20, 2020. The groups were segmented by gender. To qualify, participants had to have gone out for non-essential activities at least a few times a week between July and September 2020, or have a job that requires them to work with the public (18 to 24 year old groups only). Participants were disqualified if they, or anyone in their household, worked in market research, the media, or advertising. In total, 37 people participated in the focus groups.

Please see Appendix A for the moderator's guide for the 18 to 24 year-old focus groups and Appendix B for the moderator's guide for groups with high school students.

1.2 Caution

As with all qualitative research, results cannot be extrapolated to the general population. Any numbers or estimates included in this report are simply used to illustrate participants' opinions and are not indicative of the behaviour or attitudes of the larger population. Thus, these results must be used with caution.

2.0 Experiences with COVID-19

2.1 Concern about COVID-10

Generally male participants were less concerned about COVID-19 than female participants, and student participants were less concerned than youth participants. With that being said, most participants were concerned, saying their concern was a 6 to 8 out of 10; however, their concern was primarily about getting it and passing it on to others, rather than contracting it themselves, as this comment emphasizes: *“I’m not that worried about getting it myself because I’m young and I don’t have any medical conditions, so even if I got it, I’d recover quickly. I’m more concerned about the older people. I want them to stay safe.”*

It also appears that participants’ current level of concern is related to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in Manitoba, as the youth groups were conducted just as Manitoba was reaching record highs in daily new cases.

Although concern is higher now, participants spoke to the cycle in their levels of concern over time, from being quite high in the beginning (i.e., March and April) to dropping considerably in the early summer, with almost no change in concern until the past few weeks when cases in Winnipeg began to climb. Some comments below speak to this change over time:

- *“In March when school shut down, I was definitely very concerned because it happened so suddenly. By the time July and summer came, I definitely personally slacked off and went out to some parties thinking it’s getting better.”*
- *“At the beginning it was very scary. What’s going on? What are the real effects of this? Lockdown. Staying at home. All really new. Then over summer I was thinking, great, maybe I’ll see my friends again – and I did. But same as the others said, I started to hear about COVID cases rising everywhere so by mid-August I thought I can’t play around with this anymore.”*
- *“I’d say when the pandemic started for us in March/April, I was pretty concerned because it had a lot of effect on my schooling and stuff like that. And then as time went on I started just thinking it wasn’t really affecting me. Through the early part of the summer I started going out and hanging with a small group of friends, but hung out with them and didn’t really worry about it. But in the last couple of weeks, my concerns have picked up as Manitoba is getting worse and I hear about other stuff.”*
- *“As summer came, I definitely started to hang out a lot more with my friends. There was a specific group of people I hung out with most to try and reduce the chances of others getting it but yes, I did find myself not paying attention to the social distancing rules when I was with that group.”*

2.2 Changes in behaviors related to COVID-19

As may be expected, participants' behaviours related to COVID-19 have changed over time, in part, correlated with their perceptions about the concern about contracting COVID-19. For example, in March and April when most things were shut down, they engaged in almost no risky behaviours; however, as the months progressed and cases in Manitoba decreased (with no new cases for a few weeks), participants became less concerned and started engaging in other behaviours. As this participant's comment shows, *"There was definitely a transition stage. It went from lockdown. I got to see my sister and her fiancé a bit, they would come over from dinners. And as it progressed into the summer I had a smaller circle of friends that I saw, but it was much larger than it was back in lockdown."*

At first, most participants said they started getting together with family and friends, but primarily outside because they felt that being outside was lower risk than indoors. However, some participants admitted to taking part in potentially risky behaviour outdoors, even though they did not seem to necessarily identify these as risky; for example, playing sports with friends (e.g., soccer, ultimate, basketball) or having parties outdoors.

As it moved into the summer, there was a difference in behaviours between youth and student participants. Students tended to maintain their behaviours, mostly engaged in getting together with friends, but did not have a significant amount of interactions with friends in public gatherings (e.g., restaurants). Many youth said that in late June and early July, they started going out in public with groups of friends on a seemingly normal basis. This included primarily going to restaurants, but also pubs and bars (*"And then eventually as cases started to drop we started going out again together, to more restaurants, bars, and stuff like that as they opened up"*).

In terms of other behaviours, participants said that they tended to maintain behaviours such as hand washing, using hand sanitizer, and social distancing (where possible), but mask use was inconsistent. Most were not consistently wearing masks during the summer, and many admitted that they did not wear them in public at all. Some said they started to wear their masks in public more often as the number of cases started to increase in August and into September, even before they became mandatory; however, it was not consistent. After masks became mandatory in public in late September, all said they began wearing them consistently.

2.3 Influencers of behaviours

For the most part, participants' behaviours for reducing risks of transmission (e.g., wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, social distancing, etc.) are primarily influenced by guidelines and restrictions set out by the provincial government. Otherwise, they are influenced by their parents and/or school guidelines to a lesser extent.

Friends do not have much influence on them in terms of following guidelines, but do have an influence on them in terms of not following them or doing things that they think may increase their risk of catching COVID-19. The influence is not usually overt; that is, it is not that their friends tell them to do something unsafe, it is just that others are not following guidelines, and in order to not be (or feel) excluded, participants often have to break rules that they may follow. It appears that, because many have reduced their social interactions with friends, when opportunities for social interactions arise, they are more likely to break rules in order to maintain those social interactions, as shown in many of the comments below.

- *"I have a friend who left in the summer to move back to Niagara. So he lives in Niagara and his job is a role where you'd think he'd making responsible decisions and he enforces the law in some aspects. His big plan is in a few weeks from now, to fly back to Winnipeg just to hang out for a few days. And he's already unfortunately purchased tickets and rented an Air BnB and has this big plan to party. It's really tough to get out of it because he has spent all this money, but I'm concerned to be around him because he's coming from Niagara."*
- *"There was a birthday party the exact weekend that they announced the new restrictions so I went to the party and didn't know how many people were going to be there. It was at a restaurant and there were 20 in our group. I didn't know there were going to be that many and when I got there I was extremely uncomfortable. I toughed out dinner but left immediately afterwards and didn't go to the after party."*
- *"I encountered that situation today where we were trying to plan a group lunch. I told them I didn't want to go and my friend kept nagging me. I ended up going but I wasn't going to eat and was just going to wear my mask."*
- *"There may have been a time in the summer where me and my friends went out to 'Fishbowl Fridays' and part of me wanted to stay at home because there was new cases within the province, but part of me didn't want to be excluded from the group. I weighed the pros and cons from the situation and at the time it wasn't like there was a ridiculous number of cases, but there was still obviously the chance of getting into contact, especially in a social setting."*

2.4 Accessing information about COVID-19

For the most part, participants are getting information about COVID-19 passively, most commonly through parents/family, work (for youth participants), or school (for student participants). Otherwise, participants get information through social media (primarily Instagram, although Twitter was also mentioned by a few participants), but the information is almost always received passively. Through social media, participants say they get information via friends sharing links or images from news sources or through local media's pages (e.g., Energy 106, Virgin Radio). A few participants also say they get information through local news, primarily by watching on TV at 6 p.m.

Part of the reason participants are more passive in getting information is that many admit to being fatigued by the amount of information about COVID-19, and they have started to tune it out, as noted by the comments below.

- *"I have become burnt out with hearing it, as I was personally following it more to begin with. Now I'm just hearing it from my mother or other people telling me by word of mouth. I'm not interested in following it, to be honest."*
- *"I still want to know where the exposures were, but I was constantly being bombarded with info before and became too much."*
- *"I limit myself to the daily updates now. At the beginning, I agree that we were all bombarded with news all the time. I think a lot of it was just added stress."*
- *"I get information mostly from the people around me. I don't really go looking for it. There was so much at the beginning that it made me feel overwhelmed."*
- *"Right at the beginning I was checking the numbers every day. Since then, in the last couple of months since school has started, not just because I'm busy but because I'm burnt out. I don't personally don't need to be checking the numbers every day because I know they're going up. And I don't need to be checking the protocols because I know them now. I would go so far as to say that I avoid the information about it because it's very tiring, especially the stuff going on in the States. Even the stuff in Canada, it can be very exhausting to hear about day after day."*

Participants did not seem to rely on social media influencers, celebrities, and so forth for information about COVID-19, and these did not appear to be sources they would trust for information on COVID-19. Part of the reason is that they turn to these people for non-COVID related information/entertainment, and if those people started to give information about COVID-19, it may turn them off from those sources since they use them as an escape from the stresses of COVID-19.

2.5 Impact of COVID-19 on high school (student groups only)

Perceptions of safety related to COVID-19. In general, student participants feel safe while at school, noting that there are many different precautions being taken to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. It appears participants are simply grateful to be able to return to at least some in-class learning (which tends to be preferred by most and is discussed later in this section), and may be overlooking any potential issues because of their desire to be at school. Below are some comments highlighting participants' discussion of the safety at school.

- *"I actually feel pretty safe at school because there are arrows on the ground and people generally follow the rules. You have to wait outside before your teacher comes to let in. When we do go into the school, everyone is a good distance apart. We sanitize as we go into our classroom and we stay in that room until the end of class. As long as everyone has masks on, I feel pretty safe."*
- *"I feel pretty safe because each grade has a different entrance that they go into and they have sanitize stations all around the school. Also you can always ask for sanitizer from the teachers. They sanitize the desks and chairs after every class. They make us feel comfortable and they remind us to stay six feet apart. They make sure we're wearing our masks."*

Although most generally feel safe, there are times at school where issues arise, primarily related to the inability to properly social distance from other students. Most of the issues with social distancing happen outside of class time, that is, in the hallways, in common areas, or when leaving school. As this participant explains, *"There's a lot of friend groups getting together in the halls as they're going to classes. It's frustrating trying to get past them because we have to walk single file."*

The other issue that many participants noted is that, as soon as people leave school, they are gathering/walking in groups and removing their masks, either walking home or to another destination. For example, *"After school, most of the students just go outside, take off their masks, and then hang out in really big groups of people."*

The other time participants noted that they do not feel completely safe is in gym class, where they are often given the option to remove their masks and distancing cannot always be maintained. They have also had experiences where they felt that protocols were not followed, for example, students passing/throwing balls to each other.

Experiences at school. Although participants generally feel safe at school, their experiences at school are significantly poorer than pre-COVID. Their in-class learning experiences are generally unchanged; however, their social interactions with friends and classmates have been significantly negatively impacted. The comments below highlight the challenges and negative impacts COVID-19 has had on their social lives.

- *“I miss the social aspects of school. Being in the same class with your friends, getting to sit with your friends, etc. Now there’s no point. I’m only going for two hours. I have to sit away from everyone. I don’t talk to anyone.”*
- *“I have a lot of friends who are a year older than me and my school has separated us out to be Grades 9 and 10 and Grades 11 and 12. I’m in Grade 10 so I’m on different days from my Grade 11 friends. We never get to see each other and that’s been the hardest thing for me.”*
- *“For me, it’s a lot different because me being the youngest here, I was excited to go to high school because I’d like a new environment. It doesn’t feel like that at all because you’re just going up a flight of stairs, walking into your room, sitting there for two hours and then leave. It just doesn’t feel like school.”*
- *“It really sucks. It’s my senior year and I’m only there fifty minutes every two days. As seniors, I only have one class a semester in school. I only really have that for two classes and even then I can only see them every two days.”*

The issues identified above are magnified by the fact that participants are not in class every day (or not in full days of classes), so not only are the interactions at school poorer, but they are having these interactions less often.

Experiences with distance learning. Most student participants, especially male participants, are not enjoying and/or engaged with their distance learning. The biggest issue seems to be that most of their distance learning courses have replaced teaching or lecture components with self-guided or self-taught learning. As one participant explains how one of their courses is being taught, *“I’m in pre-Cal(culus) and our teacher only did one video and made us do the entire unit. It’s so frustrating to have to try and figure all this out on our own when they could make calls or more videos. They’re not really doing any live teaching at all.”*

Not only is the instruction not meeting expectations, a lot of participants mentioned that their teachers’ expectations for their distance learning are drastically different than the end of the 2019-20 school year. Participants said that teachers are putting in more quizzes and tests (likely to verify the self-guided learning students are supposed to be doing), and this causes them a lot of stress because it is not what they are used to (either from their distance learning last year or how they are taught for in-class learning).

Another issue with distance learning is that students are struggling to stay engaged in their courses. When at school, they have to be engaged because they are physically in class, but with more self-guided learning, they find it hard to maintain focus and motivation (*“You just don’t feel motivated at all”*).

Even when teachers are able to incorporate online (live) teaching, many students say that some courses do not translate well to distance learning, with students most often mentioning arts programs such as band, choir, and theatre. As one student said, *“Classes are a lot more boring*

now than they were before because all of our extra curriculums are online. I'm a musician and I sing – not being able to be in the same room to sing with the people that I love to sing with makes the day drag by."

Impact on their education. Most participants agree that the quality of distance learning is not as good as in-class learning, and many are concerned for their current and future education. Participants in grade 11 and grade 12 were concerned about being taught everything they need to know for post-secondary, and how that may impact them (*"For classes for pre-Cal, physics, or the sciences, if you took it online you might not get the same understanding in time for university, and when university comes around, you'd be behind"*).

Another student noted that with the removal of provincial exams for grade 12 students, they were missing a significant component of their learning experience, and something they felt would help prepare them for post-secondary education. As this student said, *"We don't have provincial exams. I've only written one exam all of high school, so I don't think I would be too ready for university exams. I was kind of looking forward to provincial exams to prepare me."*

However, a few participants in the female group said that distance learning may benefit them in their post-secondary education because they are having to do more self-taught learning, which is a core component of post-secondary education. They believe that remote learning will help improve their ability in this area, which should aid them down the road.

Feelings about full-time remote learning. Given most participants had concerns with the current state of remote learning, it is not surprising that when asked how they would react if their schooling had to return to all remote learning, most were against it. For the most part, they are against it if the way the majority of their courses are being taught remained unchanged; however, they may be more open to it if there were more live teaching sessions that mimicked more of their in-class experiences. As one participant said, *"I'm not opposed to doing completely remote learning, but I definitely think that things would need to change because some of my teachers explain things but they skip a whole bunch of steps, like in physics, and that's not good."*

However, even with a shift in how their classes were being taught, many still believe that their education would not be as good as in-class learning, primarily because they believe that remote learning requires significantly more self-motivation to stay engaged and learn, which is difficult for many participants to maintain while at home and isolated from their peers.

2.6 How to change behaviours related to COVID-19

As mentioned in Section 2.3, most participants simply adopt the behaviours that the government has told them to adopt, and are more likely to do it when it is mandatory rather than simply a suggestion or a best practice. As an example, most did not consistently wear masks in public until the province required it at the end of September 2020. The comments below highlight participants' reliance on the government to help change their behaviours.

- *“Mandatory restrictions put in place by the government. Some people do things and others are staying home. It’s hard to know what’s okay and what’s socially acceptable unless there are set guidelines.”*
- *“My boss is 28. We were having conversations about mask wearing. I was wearing my mask but she wasn’t. She kept saying, ‘I wish the government would just say everybody has to wear a mask. Make it the rule.’”*
- *“I think going forward there needs to be more restrictions in place and to emphasize the overall severity of what’s going on, and I think that would make people more accountable for their actions. I think the younger demographic would be able to process that and realize that their actions have consequences and they need to take accountability for their actions going forward.”*

In one group, a few participants mentioned that part of getting young people to adhere to restrictions and guidelines was to rely on social shaming. For example, they talked about how there is considerable shaming that occurs on social media when people are shown in situations where they may be breaking restrictions (e.g., at a party with too many people or not social distancing), and a few in that group said that they avoid group gatherings because of a fear of something appearing on social media.

3.0 Creative discussion

After discussing COVID-19 and the impacts on their lives, participants were shown two creatives aimed at changing behaviors related to behaviors that may put people at risk of contracting and/or passing on COVID-19.

3.1 COVID Safety

Below are the key discussion points on the *COVID Safety* creative.

- ▶ **Ad is relatable.** Participants relate to the concept and the idea that interacting with others puts you in touch with the people they have interacted with. Even student group participants related to the ad, although many of them did not go out to eat at restaurants with a single friend or have a job. The connections with other people's groups resonates because it is something participants recognize as being important, but it is not something they often consider when hanging out with friends; as one participant said, *"I know who I'm with at home but rarely consider the amount of people I'm in contact with out there and who else they've been in contact with. It goes on and on until everyone has been in contact with everyone else."*
- ▶ **Images in bubbles resonate.** Participants also seemed to relate to the ad because the visual of having close contacts shown around the person in bubbles is symbolic for how they speak about their close contacts. That is, many participants during the discussion about COVID-19 spoke about their bubbles and how they believe using and maintaining these bubbles is a way of staying safe; however, the mix of the characters' bubbles helped to show how that thinking may not always be true. As one participant's comment helps explain, *"I've heard lots of people talking about sticking with their own bubble and how they'll be fine because they're doing that. This is a great ad because it shows you how the people in your bubble have other, different bubbles."*
- ▶ **Call to action is weak.** Across all groups, participants had difficulty identifying the call to action. The youth groups had a slightly better time identifying a call to action, with a few saying the action was to *"stay home and restrict,"* while a few others thought it was pointed specifically at not going out to restaurants. The student groups could not identify a call to action at all.
- ▶ **May not be memorable.** Partly related to participants' inability to identify a clear call to action, many said that the ad may not stick with them because there was not anything incredibly memorable about the message or visuals. As one participant said, *"Maybe this ad doesn't hit hard enough? Will it cause anyone to change their behaviour? He's having reflections but I can't see that causing change."* Many participants said the ad needed something negative to happen at the end to truly show the consequences of the character's actions, relating it to other social responsibility advertising they have seen that has impacted them. One participant noted, *"I know when I was in middle school and high school there would be a series of smoking ads that we would watch and vote on in a similar fashion, and the ones that always won were the ones that showed the open lungs and the open heart and the ones that showed how ugly smoking looks."*

3.2 It All Adds Up

Below are the key discussion points on the *It All Adds Up* creative.

- ▶ **Ad is clearly targeted at young people.** Participants recognized that the ad is aimed at young people, specifically from some of the dialogue used, as well as the reference to bar hopping at the end of the ad. Some participants liked the references to youth activities (e.g., video games, zombies) and language (e.g., bleeped out language), while others felt like it was an attempt to try to connect with young people that falls a bit short. As one participant said, *“I’m not a fan of assuming that to talk to young people, you have to talk video games or zombie apocalypse. It’s so stereotyped. I see right through it. I’m saying, just cut the crap. Tell me the facts and what I need to know.”*
- ▶ **Ad has clear calls to action.** Unlike the first creative, participants liked that the concept had very clear calls to action, such as staying in more, not visiting different bars/restaurants, and so on. The latter call to action specifically resonated with the youth participants because it was something they or their friends were doing when their concern about the pandemic was lower.
- ▶ **May not capture attention.** The one area of concern for many participants was that the amount of information in the ad was substantive and required participants to maintain attention throughout in order to hear all of the messages/calls to action. However, because of the level of detail, many did not think they would be able to maintain focus for the entire ad (*“There’s definitely a good message associated to this, it’s just there’s so much to digest, and definitely in order to get the consumer’s attention span, you need something much shorter than this in my opinion”*).

4.0 Other discussions

- ▶ **Media habits.** For the most part, participants' media habits matched how they get information about COVID-19, that is, primarily through social media. While Instagram seemed to be the most memorable and influential social media choice, participants also spoke about using TikTok and Snapchat; however, those were not typically used for news or information about COVID-19 (or any other news, for that matter).
- ▶ **Flu shots.** About half of participants received flu shots last year, and when asked if they planned to get a flu shot this year, slightly more were interested. Most did not say they were planning on getting a flu shot for reasons related to COVID-19, but when asked, many said that getting the shot will help for a few reasons. The most common belief was that getting the shot reduces the risk of getting the flu, which has similar symptoms to COVID-19, and would reduce the number of people who may need to go for COVID-19 testing (*"Getting vaccinated against influenza will have no impact on COVID risk. The only thing it can work on is the redundant symptoms – you won't get the symptoms that potentially could be confused as COVID"*). The other belief was that if someone had a flu and COVID-19 simultaneously, it could potentially increase the risks (*"Getting a flu shot decreases me getting the flu, in my knowledge, and not having the flu means my immune system is working at its best so when I get COVID, if I get COVID, I'm not trying to fight the flu and COVID, which means I have a greater chance of coming out on top"*).

Appendix A — 18 to 24 year-olds moderator's guide

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

0:00 INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Good evening, my name is Nicholas Borodenko and I work for PRA Inc., a market research company.

We invited each of you to participate in today's focus group to hear your opinions about COVID-19 and how it is impacting you. Before we begin, I have some meeting guidelines I would like to review.

- There are no right or wrong answers. We invited you here today to give your opinions, so please provide your honest opinions, even if they are different from others in the group.
- Please try to speak one at a time, so the entire group can hear your comments.
- Please leave yourself muted, except when you would like to speak. If you have something you would like to say, please raise your hand (visually) or in the chat and I can call on you.
- To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, I may call on you to get your opinion. Conversely, I may interrupt you, not because what you have to say is not important, but to allow others to have the opportunity to speak.
- We are recoding this group to make sure our notes accurately reflect what everyone says. We will not use your name in our report, and after the report is complete, we will destroy the recordings.

[REFERENCE VIEWERS VISIBLE ON ZOOM WITH CAMERAS OFF]

Before we begin, does anybody have any questions?

First, I'll call on you one by one, please say your name, what area you live, what you do for a living, and who you live with in your household.

0:10 PERCEPTION OF COVID [10 MINUTES]

1. I want to go around and have people tell me how concerned about getting COVID-19 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned?
2. How would you have rated your concern 3 months ago? 6 months ago? Why has it changed?

0:20 COVID BEHAVIORS OVER TIME [30 MINUTES]

3. When COVID-19 first started in March/April of 2020, describe to me how it changed your lifestyle?
4. How did your behaviors change as we moved into the summer months? [PROBE: Going out, hanging out with friends, etc.] Why did they change?
5. What were you doing differently in the summer months during COVID than what you might normally have been doing?

6. How did your behaviors change as we moved into the late summer and fall months? Why did they change?
7. What behaviors to reduce the risk of COVID-19 have you found yourself doing less often since the pandemic started? Why are you doing these less? [PROBE: Wearing a face mask, washing hands, using hand sanitizer, staying home when sick]
8. What behaviors have you found yourself doing more often since the pandemic started?
9. Before Winnipeg implemented mandatory masks in public places, how often were you wearing masks when going out? When would you find yourself more likely to be wearing a mask? Less likely?
10. How has your behavior going out with friends changed since the pandemic? Do you have restrictions or rules you follow when going out with friends? [PROBE: Bars, restaurants, homes, parties, etc.]
11. [IF NOT MENTIONED] How concerned are you about getting COVID and passing it onto other people? How does getting it and passing it on impact your behavior?
12. [IF NOT MENTIONED] Is anyone concerned about the long-term impacts of getting COVID-19? What long-term impacts do you think COVID may have for yourself?
13. At any point have you gone out and felt uncomfortable or anxious about getting COVID-19? Please describe the situation and what made you feel uncomfortable.
 - What did you do about in that moment?
 - Did it make you change your behavior later? Why or why not?
14. Do you ever talk to your friends about COVID-19? What do you say to them?
15. Have you ever been in a situation where a friend or family member was doing something unsafe related to COVID-19 and you told them about it? What was the situation? What did you say?
16. Have you ever been in a situation where a friend or family member was being unsafe and you didn't say anything? Why did you not say anything?
17. Have you ever felt pressure from friends to do something you felt might have been unsafe or put you at risk of getting COVID-19? What was the pressure? What did you say/do?

0:50 INFORMATION ABOUT COVID [15 MINUTES]

18. Where were you getting most of your information about COVID-19 during the early stages of the pandemic?
19. Where are you getting your information about COVID-19 now? Why/how has it changed?
20. Have you found yourself more or less interested over time in information about the pandemic? Why has it changed?
21. What sources do you trust most for information about COVID-19 locally? Nationally? Globally? Why do you trust these sources?
22. Are there people/public figures/influencers that you listen to most about information about COVID-19?

23. Are the sources that you use for COVID different than the sources you use for other news or information? How are they different? What other sources do you use?
24. By show of hands, how many of you got a flu shot last year? How many plan on getting on this year? How do you think getting the flu shot impacts you getting COVID-19?

1:10 INFORMATION/AD USE [5 MINUTES]

25. Are there people/public figures/influencers you listen to for other information? Who are those?
26. What social media sources are you most likely to pay attention to advertising? What others sources do you pay attention to advertising? [PROBE: SnapChat, TikTok, Instagram]

1:15 FINAL COVID THOUGHTS [10 MINUTES]

As you may have heard, young people in Manitoba have been getting COVID-19 at a higher rate than older people, specifically people under 30.

27. What would it take for you and your friends to restrict your behavior significantly? That is, limiting going out for anything that is not non-essential?
28. What things might get you to stay home more often and reduce going out?
29. How do you think restrictions such as bar/restaurants serving alcohol to only 10 pm will affect you? How might it change your behavior?
30. Does the government need to implement other restrictions to reduce how often young people are going out/putting themselves at risk, or are there other ways to convince young people?

[CHECK WITH VIEWERS FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS]

Thank you. Those are all of the questions I have.

I appreciate you taking the time to discuss your opinions.

Appendix B — High school students moderator’s guide

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

0:00 INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Good evening, my name is Nicholas Borodenko and I work for PRA Inc., a market research company.

We invited each of you to participate in today's focus group to hear your opinions about COVID-19 and how it is impacting you. Before we begin, I have some meeting guidelines I would like to review.

- There are no right or wrong answers. We invited you here today to give your opinions, so please provide your honest opinions, even if they are different from others in the group.
- Please try to speak one at a time, so the entire group can hear your comments.
- Please leave yourself muted, except when you would like to speak. If you have something you would like to say, please raise your hand (visually) or in the chat and I can call on you.
- To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, I may call on you to get your opinion. Conversely, I may interrupt you, not because what you have to say is not important, but to allow others to have the opportunity to speak.
- We are recoding this group to make sure our notes accurately reflect what everyone says. We will not use your name in our report, and after the report is complete, we will destroy the recordings.

[REFERENCE VIEWERS VISIBLE ON ZOOM WITH CAMERAS OFF]

Before we begin, does anybody have any questions?

First, I'll call on you one by one, please say your name, what area you live, where you go to school, and who you live with in your household.

0:05 PERCEPTION OF COVID [5 MINUTES]

1. I want to go around and have people tell me how concerned about getting COVID-19 on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned?
2. How would you have rated your concern 3 months ago? 6 months ago? Why has it changed?

0:10 COVID BEHAVIORS OVER TIME [30 MINUTES]

3. When COVID-19 first started in March/April of 2020, describe to me how it changed your lifestyle?
4. How did your behaviors change as we moved into the summer months? [PROBE: Going out, hanging out with friends, etc.] Why did they change?
5. What were you doing differently in the summer months during COVID than what you might normally have been doing?

6. How did your behaviors change as we moved into the late summer and fall months? Why did they change?
7. What behaviors to reduce the risk of COVID-19 have you found yourself doing less often since the pandemic started? Why are you doing these less? [PROBE: Wearing a face mask, washing hands, using hand sanitizer, staying home when sick]
8. What behaviors have you found yourself doing more often since the pandemic started?
9. Before Winnipeg implemented mandatory masks in public places, how often were you wearing masks when going out? When would you find yourself more likely to be wearing a mask? Less likely?
10. How has your behavior going out with friends changed since the pandemic? Do you have restrictions or rules you follow when going out with friends? [PROBE: Restaurants, shopping, homes, parties, etc.]
11. [IF NOT MENTIONED] How concerned are you about getting COVID and passing it onto other people? How does getting it and passing it on impact your behavior?
12. [IF NOT MENTIONED] Is anyone concerned about the long-term impacts of getting COVID-19? What long-term impacts do you think COVID may have for yourself?
13. At any point have you gone out and felt uncomfortable or anxious about getting COVID-19? Please describe the situation and what made you feel uncomfortable.
 - What did you do about in that moment?
 - Did it make you change your behavior later? Why or why not?
14. Do you ever talk to your friends about COVID-19? What do you say to them?
15. Have you ever been in a situation where a friend or family member was doing something unsafe related to COVID-19 and you told them about it? What was the situation? What did you say?
16. Have you ever been in a situation where a friend or family member was being unsafe and you didn't say anything? Why did you not say anything?
17. Have you ever felt pressure from friends to do something you felt might have been unsafe or put you at risk of getting COVID-19? What was the pressure? What did you say/do?

0:40 COVID BEHAVIORS AND SCHOOL [15 MINUTES]

18. How do you find the restrictions in place with you at school? Do you feel safe from catching COVID-19 at school?
19. How are restrictions impacting your experiences at school (e.g., sports, extra curricular, etc.)?
20. What precautions do you and your friends take when going to school, coming home, recess, breaks, etc.? What precautions do you not follow?
21. How have you found remote learning days? Are they better or worse than you expected? What are the positives? Negatives?
22. What would happen if you had to return to entirely learning at home again, like in the spring of last year?

0:55 INFORMATION ABOUT COVID [10 MINUTES]

23. Where were you getting most of your information about COVID-19 during the early stages of the pandemic?
24. Where are you getting your information about COVID-19 now? Why/how has it changed?
25. Have you found yourself more or less interested over time in information about the pandemic? Why has it changed?
26. What sources do you trust most for information about COVID-19 locally? Nationally? Globally? Why do you trust these sources?
27. Are there people/public figures/influencers that you listen to most about information about COVID-19?
28. Are the sources that you use for COVID different than the sources you use for other news or information? How are they different? What other sources do you use?
29. By show of hands, how many of you got a flu shot last year? How many plan on getting on this year? How do you think getting the flu shot impacts you getting COVID-19?

1:05 INFORMATION/AD USE [15 MINUTES]

30. Are there people/public figures/influencers you listen to for other information? Who are those?
31. What social media sources are you most likely to pay attention to advertising? What others sources do you pay attention to advertising? [PROBE: SnapChat, TikTok, Instagram]

[SHOW CONCEPT 1 & CONCEPT 2 – BELOW QUESTIONS FOR BOTH]

32. What are your thoughts about this concept? What do you like or dislike?
33. What is the main message this ad is trying to communicate to people?

1:20 FINAL COVID THOUGHTS [10 MINUTES]

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[CHECK WITH VIEWERS FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS]

Thank you. Those are all of the questions I have.

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