

SOUNDCHECK

Mental Health in the Canadian Music Industry

INDIGENOUS FINDINGS | May 2026



The following data is drawn from the Indigenous subset of the 2025 Soundcheck survey, the most comprehensive study of mental health and workplace culture in the Canadian music industry, led by Catherine Harrison, M.Psych., Founder and President of Revelios. This subset includes 36 respondents who identified as Indigenous, including First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Two-Spirit peoples. The majority were born in Canada, with English as their primary language, and were based across British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and other provinces. Data reflects the perspectives of music industry professionals across roles and career stages.

Prevalence of Mental Health Challenges

Mental health challenges are not a peripheral concern for Indigenous music industry professionals. They are the norm. Eighty-nine percent of respondents said they have personally experienced mental health challenges in their work. One hundred percent have personally witnessed them in others. Of those who responded to questions about suicidality, 75 percent said they had wished they were dead, and a majority reported having thought about taking their own life. These are not abstract indicators of a stressed workforce. They point to a population facing serious, ongoing crisis.

89% of Indigenous respondents have personally experienced mental health challenges in the music industry.

100% have personally witnessed mental health challenges in colleagues or peers.

75% of respondents who answered the question had wished they were dead.

A majority reported having thought about taking their own life.

Knowledge, Resources, and Support

Despite the near-universal exposure to mental health challenges, access to relevant support is severely limited. Eighty-six percent of respondents were unaware of any mental health resources specifically tailored to the Canadian music industry. Of those who were aware, the

references were primarily to Unison, with several noting cost as a significant barrier to accessing general therapy. Responses to the open-ended questions pointed to a clear pattern: people are largely navigating these challenges through personal networks, self-directed learning, and whatever their communities can offer. Only a small number reported formal benefit coverage, and several noted that even where it exists, annual limits are too low to be meaningful.

86% were unaware of any mental health resources specifically tailored to the Canadian music industry.

Workplace Environment and Leadership

The majority of respondents described their workplace environment as unsupportive of mental health. Most strongly or somewhat disagreed that the overall environment in the Canadian music industry supports their well-being. The data on leadership is equally stark: most respondents disagreed that people in charge put measures in place to support mental health. Eighty-four percent of Part 2 respondents agreed that interactions with leadership and persons in power directly impact their well-being. Yet the characteristics most valued in leaders were empathy, communication, integrity, and accountability. The gap between what people need from leadership and what they are currently getting is wide.

84% agree that their interactions with leadership and persons in power directly impact their well-being.

The characteristics most valued in leaders: empathy, communication, integrity, and accountability.

Financial Stress and Precarity

Financial precarity is one of the most consistent threads in the Indigenous data. Nearly two-thirds of respondents strongly agreed their financial situation causes them stress, and nearly half said their financial situation is directly tied to their mental health. Most said they do not believe they have job security. Several open-ended responses pointed specifically to inadequate compensation from streaming platforms, systemic barriers to breaking into international markets, and the structural concentration of industry power in large corporations as contributing factors. For this population, the mental health conversation cannot be separated from the economic one.

Most respondents do not believe they have job security.

Nearly two-thirds strongly agreed their financial situation causes them stress.

Nearly half said their financial situation is directly tied to their mental health.

Work Schedules and Industry Change

The structural demands of working in music are registering as a direct stressor. Most respondents agreed that the all-on/all-off nature of music industry work schedules negatively impacts their mental health. When asked about modern industry changes, including streaming, social media, and AI, the majority disagreed these changes support their ability to do their best work, manage their mental health, or sustain their work overall. Close to half found modern changes stressful and overwhelming. These responses suggest that for Indigenous professionals in the music industry, structural change is arriving faster than the support structures needed to navigate it.

Most respondents agreed the all-on/all-off nature of music industry schedules negatively impacts their mental health.

Close to half found modern industry changes stressful and overwhelming.

Discrimination, Identity, and Representation

Discrimination is not an occasional experience for this population. It is a consistent one. The majority of respondents who answered questions about sexism, racism, harassment, bullying, and ageism said these experiences are directly related to their mental health. Responses to the open-ended questions were particularly candid: respondents described experiences of racial discrimination in hiring and staffing decisions, barriers to advocating for Indigenous crews at venues on treaty land, and the ongoing failure of industry organizations to follow through on equity commitments in practice. Most respondents said they do not feel accurately represented in the Canadian music industry.

Most respondents do not feel accurately represented in the Canadian music industry.

The majority connected experiences of sexism, racism, harassment, bullying, and ageism directly to their mental health.

Training, Education, and Accountability

Formal mental health training is almost entirely absent. Most respondents had received no training or development to support their own mental health, and nearly all had received none to support their peers. Among Part 2 respondents, strong agreement emerged that ongoing mental health training for music industry professionals is important, and that accountability for this work should be shared across employers, industry organizations, government, and educational institutions. The gap between what people believe should exist and what currently does is not small. It is close to total.

Nearly all respondents had received no training or development to support their peers' mental health.

Strong agreement that accountability sits with employers, industry organizations, government, and educational institutions.

A Note on These Findings

Several patterns in this data deserve particular attention. The suicidality figures are serious. More than three-quarters of respondents who answered those questions had wished they were dead, and a majority had thought about taking their own life. These figures are not a backdrop to the other findings. They are the findings.

The accounts of discrimination are direct and specific. Respondents described being passed over for staffing opportunities because of race, encountering institutional skepticism about Indigenous-led crews, and navigating an industry that has adopted the language of equity without consistently following through on it. These experiences are not separate from the mental health data. They are part of what is driving it.

The absence of industry-specific mental health resources, the financial precarity, and the structural demands of music industry work are all converging on the same population. Each of these would be a meaningful stressor on its own. Together, they describe a systemic problem that requires a systemic response.

A note on scope: this report reflects the responses of 36 Indigenous music industry professionals. Directional trends are meaningful, but this subset is not large enough to support statistically definitive conclusions. It should be read alongside the full Soundcheck Report as a signal, not a census.

About the Soundcheck Report

Soundcheck is the most comprehensive study of mental health and workplace culture in the Canadian music industry. Led by Catherine Harrison, M.Psych., Founder and President of Revelios, the study drew on 1,250+ respondents nationwide. The full Soundcheck [Report](#) was published in February 2026. Revelios is the Official Music Industry Mental Health Partner of the 2026 JUNO Awards.

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