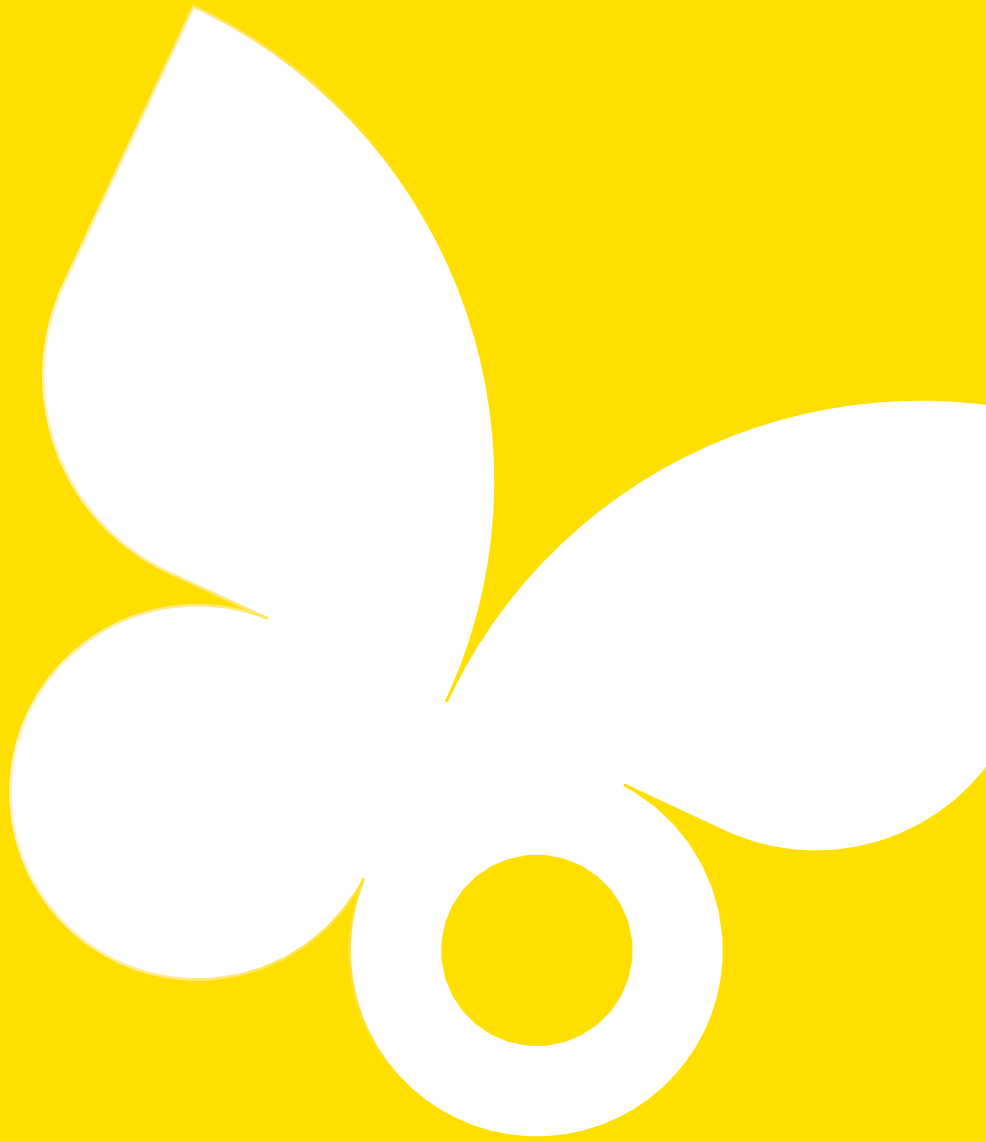


FreeStyle  
**Libre**



DIABETES CARE DIVISION

## FreeStyle Libre Report

*The Power of Positive Motivation  
for Type 2 Diabetes Management*



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# Foreword from Luz Herrera

Nearly 12 million people in Canada are living with diabetes or pre-diabetes, and the overwhelming majority have or will be diagnosed with type 2.<sup>1</sup> As these rates continue to rise, Abbott hopes to empower people living with type 2 diabetes to make progress in their diabetes journey.

This year's FreeStyle Libre Report explores the factors affecting motivation and the power of positivity through the lived experiences of Canadians with type 2 diabetes.

Along with the broad input from Canadians living with diabetes, a panel of experts from across Canada share their recommendations on ways to support an improved diabetes experience. This panel proposes opportunities for those living with the condition, their loved ones, healthcare teams, and government and community leaders to provide support that is encouraging and empathic, that can empower those living with diabetes to live life on their terms.

At Abbott, we are committed to positively transforming the lives of all people impacted by diabetes. By shining a light on the type 2 diabetes experience and sharing solutions we can all contribute to, we hope to support the holistic health and wellbeing of the millions across the country striving to truly live fuller lives.



**Luz Herrera**

General Manager  
Diabetes Care Division  
Canada



**At Abbott,  
we are committed  
to positively  
transforming the  
lives of all people  
impacted by  
diabetes.**

# Summary

As we learn more about the type 2 diabetes experience, it's vividly apparent that the condition comes with a host of emotions. This year's report was informed by a survey of Canadians living with type 2 diabetes, and validates our understanding that many continue to feel stressed, anxious and overwhelmed.

Thankfully, there is power in support and encouragement. Positivity has come out on top, as the majority of respondents report finding positive words are more motivating than criticism, even when these comments are well-intentioned. Positive feedback and advice from healthcare providers, encouragement from loved ones and data from supportive diabetes tools appear to serve as effective motivators for those living with the condition.

All these factors contribute to a sense of control and achievement. When people living with diabetes get a “pat on the back” from their physician or hear uplifting comments from their loved ones, they feel more inclined to adapt and maintain habits that help them continue to make progress in their diabetes journey. Tools like sensor-based continuous glucose monitors reinforce this feeling, offering information that lets users know when they are on the right track and when they might need to make adjustments. With this circle of support, those living with type 2 diabetes can feel in charge of their own journey and carve their own path with the condition.

## Methodology

Abbott's FreeStyle Libre Report: The Power of Positive Motivation for Type 2 Diabetes Management explores the perspectives of Canadians living with type 2 diabetes and how they interpret the role of motivation in their diabetes management and overall experience.

The report pulls data from an online survey conducted by Leger Marketing, on behalf of Abbott, between May 23 and May 30, 2024. The survey was made up of 307 Canadian respondents, 18 years and older, living with type 2 diabetes, and a probability sample would have a margin of error of  $\pm 5.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The sample was designed to ensure the respondent population accurately reflects the diversity of each region, gender, age, ethnicity and language in Canada.



# Key Findings

## AN EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED CONDITION

While nearly two in five Canadians living with type 2 diabetes (36 per cent) say they feel “in control” and “accepting” of their condition, about a quarter still experience stress (25 per cent) and anxiety (21 per cent) around their diabetes. The reality is that many still feel overwhelmed by their diabetes and find it difficult to find motivation to make changes that can help improve their care.<sup>2</sup>

### How does type 2 diabetes make people feel?

**36%**  
In Control &  
Accepting<sup>2</sup>

**21%+**  
Stressed &  
Anxious<sup>2</sup>

**45%**  
Overwhelmed &  
Unmotivated<sup>2</sup>

### Power of Positivity

**82%** agree that **positive words** are more effective motivators than criticism, even when it's constructive.<sup>2</sup>

## THE IMPACT OF OTHERS

The words and actions of those around them can have a profound impact on people living with type 2 diabetes. From their perspective, words of encouragement are more effective at motivating them than criticism and unsolicited advice, even when these are shared with the best of intentions.<sup>2</sup>

Most respondents agree that positive reinforcement – from both their healthcare providers (80 per cent) and loved ones (67 per cent) – help them better manage their diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

## HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS VS LOVED ONES

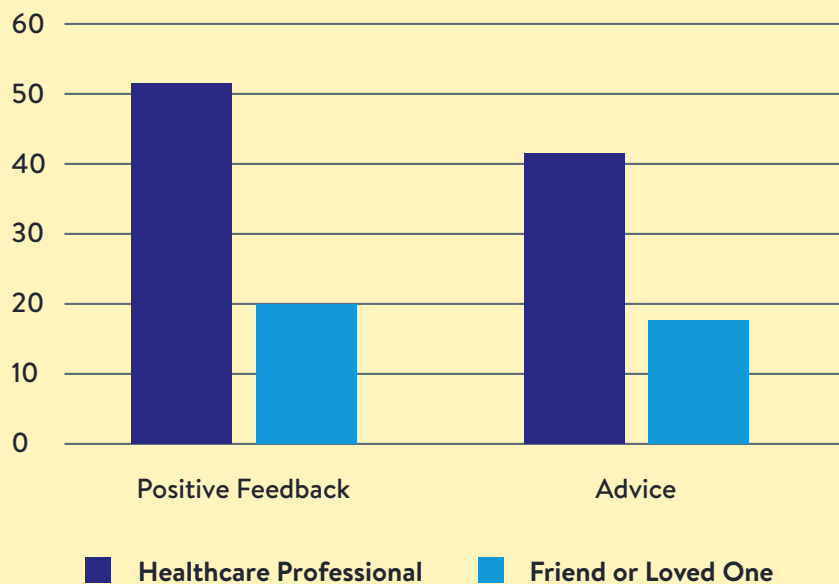
While positive reinforcement seems well-received regardless of who it comes from, feedback from healthcare providers, compared with those from friends and loved ones, lands differently.

Half of respondents (51 per cent) say it helps keep them motivated when they receive positive feedback from their healthcare provider that they are “doing the right thing” to manage their diabetes. This type of encouragement is particularly motivating for women (61 per cent) vs. men (40 per cent). Recommendations on what else they could do better are also welcomed by two in five respondents (41 per cent).<sup>2</sup>

In stark contrast, only about one in five agree that loved ones offering positive feedback (20 per cent) and suggestions on diabetes management (17 per cent) help boost their motivation.<sup>2</sup>

### Healthcare Providers vs Friends & Loved Ones?<sup>2</sup>

Q8: Which of the following help motivate you to take steps to better manage your diabetes?



This suggests that while cheering on a loved one with diabetes might be beneficial, offering a critical opinion on how they should manage their condition may do more harm than good. In fact, 21 per cent say they often receive negative or judgmental comments about their diabetes and over a third (35 per cent) note feeling frustrated when family or friends voice their opinions about their diabetes management. That said, two in five (44 per cent) say they prefer not to talk about their diabetes with the people in their lives.<sup>2</sup>

## SMALL CHANGE DRIVES LASTING SUCCESS

When it comes to diabetes management, motivation and control go hand in hand. Over four out of five respondents (88 per cent) agree that instead of a complete lifestyle overhaul, making small, sustainable changes to their daily habits helps them stay motivated to better manage their condition. Actions like making mindful food choices, meal planning and setting aside time for regular exercise help respondents feel in control of their diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

Healthcare teams play a critical role in enabling this type of change, with more than three quarters (77 per cent) agreeing that support from their healthcare provider helps them stay consistent with small lifestyle changes that contribute to better diabetes management.<sup>2</sup>

**Achievable  
success with  
supportive  
tools**

**77%** say support from their healthcare provider helps them maintain small lifestyle changes that improve their diabetes management.<sup>2</sup>



## THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Innovative tools also support control and motivation. Looking specifically at users of sensor-based glucose monitors, like Abbott's FreeStyle Libre systems, more than three-quarters (77 per cent) say their monitoring system motivates them to better manage their diabetes. More than four in five (85 per cent) note that looking at the data on their glucose monitor motivates them to make changes that can enhance their diabetes management, and nearly as many (82 per cent) say the data helps them understand how those changes positively impact their diabetes outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

Having already experienced the benefits of these systems, respondents who use sensor-based glucose monitors agree (86 per cent) that the more they know about their condition, the more empowered and in control they feel. According to them, this technology helps them live life with diabetes on their terms.<sup>2</sup>



## Sensor-based glucose monitors help with:<sup>2</sup>

**85%**

Making changes that enhance diabetes management.

**82%**

Understanding how lifestyle changes improves diabetes outcomes.

**71%**

Staying motivated to better manage diabetes.



# Recommendations

We all have a role to play in helping those living with diabetes feel more comfortable and supported in their journey. Building on the input from our survey of Canadians living with type 2 diabetes, we have engaged healthcare experts from across Canada to share their perspectives and provide suggestions on how we can all move towards a more positive diabetes experience together.

## FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES



### Set realistic goals

Breaking down larger goals into smaller ones can help create more realistic targets. For example, going from zero exercise to an hour of intense cardio a day may be too large a leap. Instead, start with a 15-minute walk every day and aim to increase your level of activity slowly. Working on smaller goals and achieving those milestones can then give you a sense of accomplishment and support longer-term motivation.<sup>3</sup>



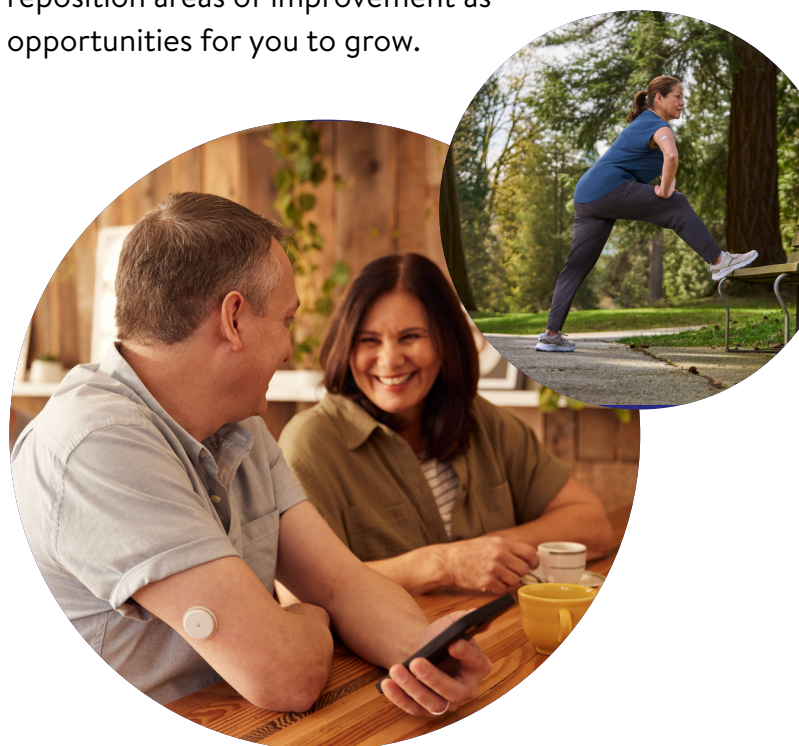
### Lean on your community

Misperceptions of type 2 diabetes and the shame associated with the diagnosis can often lead to feelings of isolation – but you don't have to go at it alone. Identify the people in your life – friends, loved ones, your healthcare team – who show empathy for your experience and can help you stay on track.<sup>5</sup> Speaking with others with diabetes can also be a key support tool.



### Shift your perspective

Managing diabetes can trigger an emotional response that can lead to negative self-talk and reinforce distorted thinking that you are not being “good” about managing your condition.<sup>4</sup> Show yourself the same compassion you might show someone else in your shoes. Recognize all the ways, big or small, that you are working to improve your diabetes management and reposition areas of improvement as opportunities for you to grow.



# Recommendations

## FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY



### Listen with empathy

The survey suggests that sharing opinions on how a loved one is managing their diabetes may not be as helpful as you think. While your words may come from a good place, they might be perceived more as criticism and disappointment that your loved one is not doing enough to take care of themselves. Instead, listen to their experiences when they share them with you and acknowledge the challenges they face. Giving them space and hearing their stories without judgment can go a long way in helping them cope with the emotional struggles that come with diabetes.



### Join their journey

Focus on supportive actions that help assure your loved one that you are there for them. Join them on a walk or exercise of their choice. Help them with preparing their meals. Show an interest in their experience and learn more about their condition on your own. These actions can help let them know that they don't have to face diabetes alone.



**“Advice like  
‘you should try to drink  
less pop’ might come from  
a good place but likely makes  
your loved one feel badly about  
themselves. Instead, try asking  
them questions and leave room  
for them to tell you what  
they need.”**

**Dr. Akshay Jain**  
Endocrinologist



# Recommendations

## FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



### Lead with the positive

The report shows that positive feedback on how your patients are improving their diabetes management increases their motivation to keep doing even better. Reinforcing their helpful behaviours, along with suggesting other habits they could improve upon, can help facilitate longer-term success.



### Offer information on supportive tools

People living with diabetes value information and data from tools such as sensor-based glucose monitoring systems, which can help keep them stay motivated. Sharing information about these tools, from their benefits to available insurance options, can help patients decide if these systems are the right choice for them.



### Position yourself as an ally

Acknowledging your patients' efforts and collaborating with them on ways to continue enhancing their diabetes management helps them feel less alone. Frame their diabetes goals as something you are both working towards and celebrate successes together.

**“Establishing a bond with your patient and focusing on achieving goals together can help them feel supported and valued. Remind them that you’re on the journey together.”**

**Dr. Michael Vallis**  
Health Psychologist

# Recommendations

## FOR GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY LEADERS



### Create opportunities for peer support

People living with type 2 diabetes often feel isolated in their experience – yet millions face the realities of the chronic condition every day. Continuing to invest in ways to connect the type 2 diabetes community can help them feel less alone.



### Enable access to tools

Access to technology such as sensor-based glucose monitoring systems can significantly motivate people living with diabetes regardless of where they are in their journey. When considering access to diabetes treatment options, it's important to also consider supportive tools that can help improve overall diabetes management and the holistic wellbeing of people living with the condition.



# About the Expert Panel

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## **Dr. Akshay Jain**

Dr. Akshay Jain is a Vancouver-based endocrinologist and the first Canadian physician to be triple board-certified by the American Boards in Endocrinology, Internal Medicine and Obesity Medicine. He is also the only Canadian physician to win the AACE Rising Star in Endocrinology Award (2022) and to feature on Medscape's list of 25 Top Rising Stars of Medicine (2020). A renowned educator, Dr. Jain has spoken at more than 800 medical conferences and events around the world.



## **Dr. Jeremy Gilbert**

Dr. Jeremy Gilbert is an endocrinologist, providing care in hospital and at his own outpatient practice in Toronto, Ontario. He has a special clinical interest in patients with diabetes and its complications and collaborates with other medical services, including cardiology, nephrology and cardiovascular surgery in order to positively impact diabetes research and care. He serves as medical advisor to the Charles H. Best Centre for Diabetes, specialty chair for endocrinology and metabolism for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and as steering committee member for the Diabetes Canada Guidelines. Dr. Gilbert also shows great enthusiasm for teaching and educates young aspiring physicians as an assistant professor at the University of Toronto.

# About the Expert Panel

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## **Mélanie Desautels**

Mélanie Désautels is a clinical nurse working in diabetes management at CSSS Champlain-Charles-LeMoine (a hospital located on Montreal's South Shore). Having been a diabetes nurse clinician for 10 years, Mélanie works closely with clients, helping them understand their condition, monitor glucose levels and adopt healthy lifestyle habits. She regularly organizes educational workshops for her team, gives conferences, participates in advisory boards and offers personalized sessions to support patients in their diabetes management journey. Mélanie is also active in supporting other diabetes teams through discussion, mentoring and education. She continues her professional development with ongoing educational programs on the latest advances in diabetes treatment. Her commitment to the education of patients and health professionals has made her a reference in her field in Quebec.



## **Dr. Michael Vallis**

Dr. Vallis is a registered health psychologist practicing in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is a health behaviour change consultant and associate professor in Family Medicine at Dalhousie University. His main areas of expertise are diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular risk and gastroenterology. Having worked in public health for 35 years, Dr. Vallis now focuses his efforts on his private practice and academic endeavours. He regularly supervises clinical and academic students at Dalhousie and is active in research on motivation, behavioural change and psychosocial adaptation to chronic disease. He was awarded a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Government of Canada on the recommendation of Diabetes Canada.

# About Abbott

Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 114,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries.

Connect with us at [www.abbott.com](http://www.abbott.com) and on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).

# References

<sup>1</sup> Diabetes Canada. “Diabetes in Canada,” Diabetes.ca. 2023. <https://www.diabetes.ca/advocacy---policies/advocacy-reports/national-and-provincial-backgrounders/diabetes-in-canada>.

<sup>2</sup> Leger Marketing. Abbott Diabetes Care: Type 2 Diabetes. June 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Fenn S. “Motivation and diabetes: a delicate balance,” Diabetes Care Community, January 5, 2023. <https://www.diabetescarecommunity.ca/living-well-with-diabetes-articles/motivation-and-diabetes-a-delicate-balance/>.

<sup>4</sup> MacNeil, G., “Action plan to deal with diabetes distress,” Diabetes Care Community, June 7, 2022. <https://www.diabetescarecommunity.ca/living-well-with-diabetes-articles/mental-health-articles/action-plan-to-deal-with-diabetes-distress/>

<sup>5</sup> Fenn S. “Motivation and diabetes: a delicate balance,” Diabetes Care Community, January 5, 2023. <https://www.diabetescarecommunity.ca/living-well-with-diabetes-articles/motivation-and-diabetes-a-delicate-balance/>.



