



The Facts

In any given year, one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness, with a cost to the economy of well in excess of \$50 billion.^[1]

Only one in three people who experience a mental health problem or illness — and as few as one in four children or youth — report that they have sought and received services and treatment.^{[2][3]}

Of the 4,000 Canadians who die every year as a result of suicide, most were confronting a mental health problem or illness.^[4]

Children and Youth

Up to 70 per cent of young adults living with mental health problems report that the symptoms started in childhood.^[5]

Children who have mental health problems are more likely to become adolescents and then adults with mental health problems and illnesses.^[6]

Workplaces

Mental health problems and illnesses typically account for approximately 30 per cent of short- and long-term disability claims.^[7]

Mental health problems and illnesses are rated one of the top three drivers of both short- and long-term disability claims by more than 80 per cent of Canadian employers.^{[8][9]}

In 2010, mental health conditions were responsible for 47 per cent of all approved disability claims in the federal civil service, almost double the percentage of twenty years earlier.^[10]

Mental health problems and illnesses also account for more than \$6 billion in lost productivity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism.^[11]

Seniors

Rates of mental illness for adults between the ages of 70 and 89, including but not limited to dementia, are projected to be higher than for any other age group by 2041.^[12]

Criminal Justice System

The vast majority of people living with mental health problems and illnesses not involved are with the criminal justice system. In fact, they are more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators.^[13]

Estimates suggest that rates of serious mental health problems among federal offenders upon admission have increased by 60 to 70 per cent since 1997.^[14]

Services System

Adults with severe mental health problems and illnesses die up to 25 years earlier than adults in the general population, with cardiovascular disease being the most common cause of death.^[15]

People are more likely to consult their family physician about a mental health problem or illness than any other health care provider.

Some community mental health services are also less expensive — up to five times less expensive — than hospital-based care.^[16]

In a recent study, only 63 per cent of people who had been hospitalized for depression had a follow-up visit with a physician within 30 days after discharge, compared to 99 per cent of people with heart failure.^[17]

In the same 30 days, 25 per cent of people who had been hospitalized for depression either visited an emergency room or were readmitted to hospital.^[18]

Peer support for people living with mental health problems and illnesses can help to reduce hospitalization and symptoms, offer social support, and improve quality of life.^[19]

Housing, Income and Employment

Depending on which study is cited, between 23 and 74 per cent of people who are homeless in Canada report having a mental health problem or illness.^[20]

Among those with the most severe and complex mental health problems and illnesses, unemployment is estimated at between 70 and 90 per cent.^[21]

One study reported that 27 per cent of caregivers lost income and 29 per cent incurred major financial costs related to caring for a family member who is living with a mental health problem or illness.^[22]

Diversity

About 20 per cent of Canada's population has a mother tongue other than English or French, and 12 per cent still speak a language other than French or English at home.^[23]

Forty per cent of Francophones living outside of Quebec said finding French-language health care is difficult, usually because of a lack of French-speaking health professionals.^[24]

Women are more likely than men to experience anxiety and depression, including depression following the birth of a child, and men are more likely to develop schizophrenia at a younger age.^{[25][26]}

Girls and women attempt suicide at higher rates, but men and boys (particularly older men) die by suicide more often.^[27]

First Nations, Inuit and Métis

First Nations youth die by suicide about five to six times more often than non-Aboriginal youth. The suicide rates for Inuit are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average, and for young Inuit men the rates are 28 times higher.^{[28][29]}

Estimates suggest that 30 to 40 per cent of children living in out-of-home care in Canada are Aboriginal, yet Aboriginal children represent fewer than five per cent of children in Canada.^[30]

More than 50 per cent of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people live in urban and rural centres.^[31]

In 2008-2009, Aboriginal offenders represented 17.2 per cent of the total federal offender population while Aboriginal adults represent 4.0 per cent of the Canadian adult population.^[32]

Case for Investment

A recent report in the U.S. estimated that the lifetime economic cost of childhood mental health disorders was enormous — \$2.1 trillion, which with our smaller population would roughly translate to \$200 billion in Canada.^[33]

Children with conduct disorders are eight times more likely to develop ADHD as teenagers. Teens with ADHD are twice as likely as other children to develop anxiety or a substance use disorder as adults.^[34]

Preventing conduct disorders in one child through early intervention has been found to result in lifetime savings of \$280,000.^[35]

Improving a child's mental health from moderate to high has been found to result in lifetime savings of \$140,000.^[36]

Improved access to peer support, housing, and community-based services can improve quality of life and help to keep people living with mental health problems and illnesses out of hospitals and out of the criminal justice system.^[37]

Canada spends just over seven cents out of every public health care dollar (seven per cent) on mental health, far below the 10 to 11 per cent spent in countries such as New Zealand and the U.K.^[38]

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