



Out of the shadows,  
forever



The Mental Health  
Commission of Canada

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An Overview

Out of the shadows,  
forever

## Mission & Goals

The Mental Health Commission of Canada promotes mental health in Canada.

Our mission has two goals. The first is to change the attitudes of Canadians towards mental health problems and mental illness. The second is to work with stakeholders to improve mental health services and supports.

We are working with governments, mental health service providers, employers and researchers as well as Canadians living with mental illness, their families and their caregivers. Our ultimate purpose is to create an integrated mental health system that places people living with mental illness at its centre.



The Commission was formed in 2007. It grew out of a recommendation in the first-ever national report on mental health, *Out of the Shadows at Last*. The study was prepared by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and released in May 2006. Michael Kirby chaired the committee and co-authored the report.

We are a non-profit organization funded by the Government of Canada, operating at arm's length from the government. The Commission has the support of all provincial and territorial governments except Quebec. We do not provide services—rather, we are a catalyst for action.



“ This is a time for leadership, innovation and energy in mental health care across Canada. ”

Michael Kirby  
Chair, Mental Health Commission of Canada



“ By supporting people with mental health problems and mental illness, we can help them lead meaningful and productive lives. ”

Michael Howlett  
President & CEO, Mental Health Commission of Canada

## Initiatives, Committees & Partners

The Mental Health Commission of Canada works towards its goals by focusing on four major initiatives and one program. They are:

- Mental Health Strategy for Canada
- At Home/Chez Soi Research Demonstration Project for Mental Health & Homelessness
- Opening Minds: Anti-stigma/Anti-discrimination Initiative
- Knowledge Exchange Centre
- Stand in the Light: Partners for Mental Health

Eight Advisory Committees provide insight and direction to the Commission and its initiatives.

- Family/Caregivers
- Child and Youth
- Science
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- Service Systems
- Mental Health and the Law
- Seniors
- Workforce

The Commission can only reach its goals and mission by cooperating and collaborating with partners across Canada.

We are already working with some of Canada's leading corporations, communities, and health and charitable organizations. We continue to seek new partnerships that bring expertise, innovation and greater awareness to our initiatives and program.

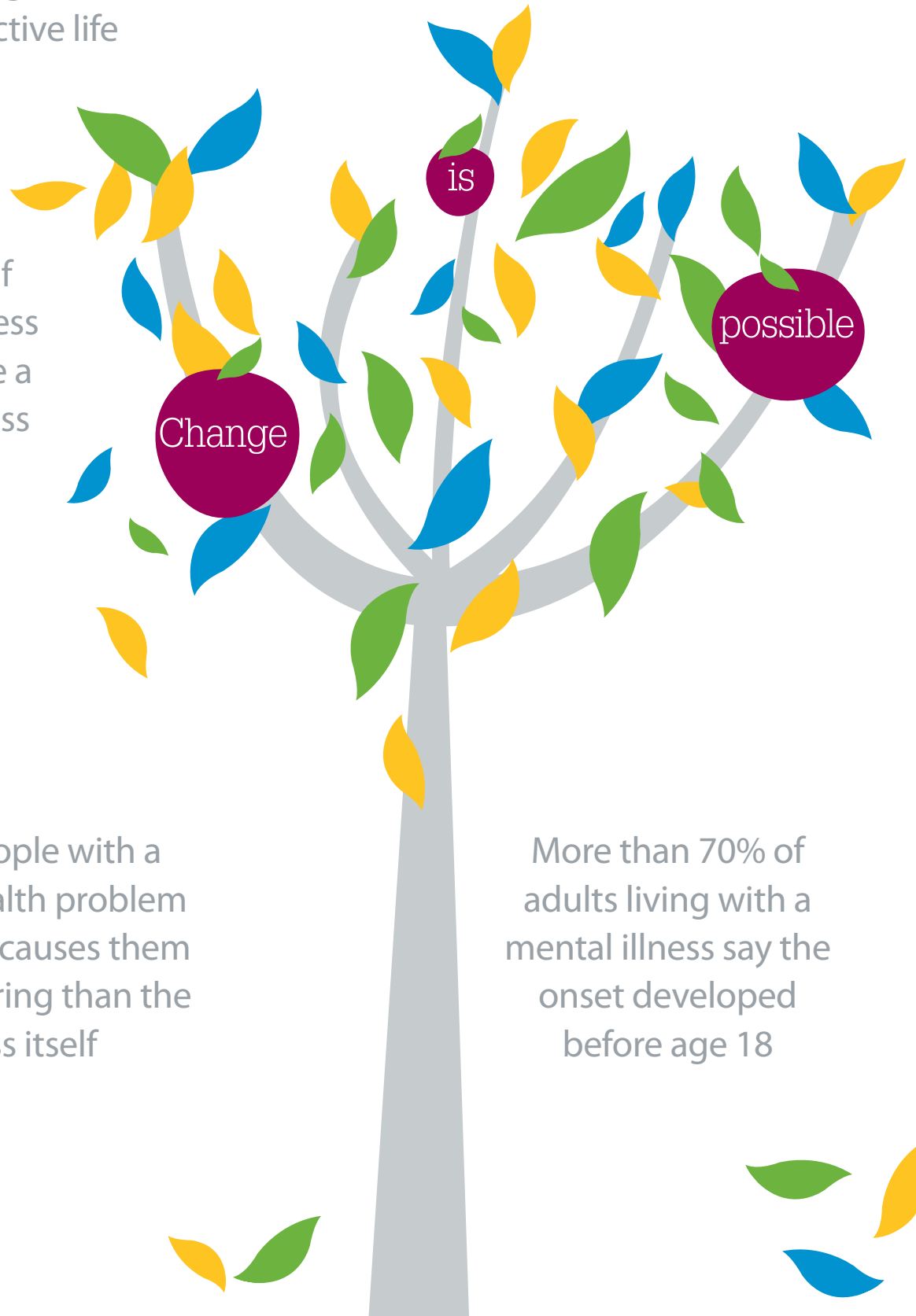
The need is great.  
The rewards are greater.  
It takes all of us to make  
it happen.



The stigma of mental illness keeps many people from seeking help and leading a full and productive life

Seven million Canadians will experience a mental health problem this year

Almost half of all homeless people have a mental illness



Many people with a mental health problem say stigma causes them more suffering than the illness itself

More than 70% of adults living with a mental illness say the onset developed before age 18

## MentalHealthStrategyforCanada

The main goal of Canada's first-ever mental health strategy is to improve health and quality of life for people living with mental health problems and illnesses. The strategy must be useful and practical. And it must be adaptable to the differing needs and resources of our partner provinces and territories.

In Phase I, we established broad goals focused on recovery and well-being. In early 2009, we consulted a broad range of stakeholders at 15 meetings in 13 Canadian cities. More than 1,700 participated in our online consultation process. Now in Phase II, we are producing a detailed roadmap for how these goals can be achieved.

To learn more, see our brochure Mental Health Strategy for Canada or visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and follow the links from Initiatives & Projects.



### At Home/Chez Soi: Research Demonstration Project in Mental Health & Homelessness

This is the largest research project of its kind in the world. More than 2,200 homeless people living with mental illness will participate in five At Home/Chez Soi programs across Canada; more than 1,300 people will receive housing and support services.

This \$110-million project, which is funded by the Government of Canada, is based on the successful Housing First model. It will run until 2013 in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Moncton. Each city's At Home/Chez Soi program will target specific community needs and issues.

Vancouver's program will deal with substance abuse and addictions; Winnipeg's will assist urban Aboriginal people; and Toronto's will focus on ethno-cultural diversity, including new non-English speaking immigrants. Montreal's At Home/Chez Soi program will look at mental

health services provided to homeless people in Quebec, including French-speaking new Canadians. Moncton's program will address the shortage of mental health services in both English and French.

To learn more, see our At Home/Chez Soi brochures or visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and follow the links from Initiatives & Projects.



ChangingHowWeSeeMentalIllness

### Opening Minds: Anti-stigma/Anti-discriminationInitiative

Opening Minds is the largest anti-stigma program in Canadian history. This 10-year initiative is all about changing the attitudes and behaviours around mental health and mental illness. It is bold and ambitious as well as much needed and long overdue.

This initiative will be based on a targeted, results-oriented strategic plan and will take shape using the best available research, knowledge and practices. The initiative's effectiveness will be measured and reported.

Opening Minds has three main goals:

- Change the view of Canadians so they treat people with mental illness as full citizens
- Encourage organizations to eliminate discrimination
- Ensure individuals living with mental illness experience equal opportunities in society and life

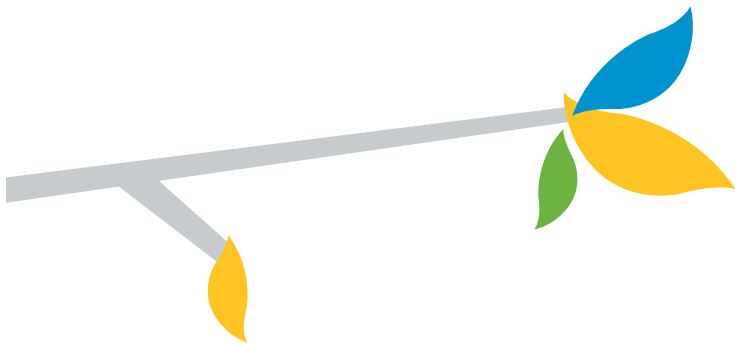
The first two groups being targeted are children and youth, and health care providers. We're targeting children and youth because it's important to reach and treat them early. We're targeting health care providers, because many people living with a mental illness feel disrespected and discriminated against by front line health care professionals.

To learn more, see our Opening Minds brochure or visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and follow the links from Initiatives & Projects.

## Knowledge Exchange Centre

The Knowledge Exchange Centre is based on people sharing information about mental health. Using a combination of networking and Internet-based technology, the centre will be a bilingual information clearinghouse for the public and for groups with specialized interests. It will also connect mental health partners and information sources from across the country. The centre will reflect and support the mandate and goals of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and will weave research and evaluation into its activities.

To learn more, see our brochure Knowledge Exchange Centre or visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and follow the links from Initiatives & Projects.



## Stand in the Light:

### Partners for Mental Health

Stand in the Light: Partners for Mental Health is a grassroots movement of Canadians who are supporters of positive mental health as well as advocates for individuals living with mental illness. Working together, they are creating a national voice to express the need for widespread change to Canada's mental health system. This includes promoting mental health in all levels of education and our communities and workplaces.

To learn more, see our brochure Stand in the Light or visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and follow the links from Initiatives & Projects.



Providing better mental health services and programs is not only the right thing to do in our country, it's a smart social and business solution.

Mental health problems and illness affect millions of Canadians and cost the national economy an estimated \$33 billion a year.



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