



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Backgrounder

Informing the Future: Mental Health Indicators for Canada is an important step in the implementation of “*Changing Directions, Changing Lives – The Mental Health Strategy for Canada*” which was released by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) in 2012. The Strategy called for the creation of a comprehensive set of indicators to track and monitor progress. The final project report and online dashboard, scheduled for release in April 2015, will represent the first-ever centralized set of mental health and mental illness indicators that can be used to inform and track policy and practice decisions across Canada.

The first phase of the Report, released on January 22, 2015, includes the first 13, of a total of 63, national mental health and mental illness indicators that serve as a foundation for evidence informed mental health policy and practice in Canada. Over a 22 month period commencing in July 2013, the MHCC has funded and coordinated this project which has been undertaken by Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions at Simon Fraser University. The data sets were made available through a variety of sources including Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the Pan- Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health and American College Health Association, and Service Canada.

In addition, the MHCC has been instrumental in the creation of a nation-wide Mental Health and Addictions Information Collaborative that provides a forum for the support and alignment of initiatives aimed at enhancing mental health and addictions information in Canada.

The goals of ***Informing the Future*** are to:

Move toward implementing a key recommendation of the Mental Health Strategy by creating:

- A set of indicators that provides the ability to track and monitor progress;
- A technical report and an online dashboard report.

Contribute to the fulfillment of the MHCC mandate ***to improve collaboration in the field of mental health and illness data in Canada*** through the:

- Creation of a Mental Health and Addictions Information Collaborative; and,
- Enhancement of strong relationships with Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, Canadian Institute for Health Information, Mental Health and Addictions Quality Initiative, and Statistics Canada.

Membership in the Mental Health and Addictions Data Collaborative includes the following organizations:



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

- Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse;
- Canadian Institute for Health Information;
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research;
- Health Canada;
- Public Health Agency of Canada; and,
- Statistics Canada.

Support international efforts to promote collaboration and uptake through:

- Collaboration with the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership, MHCC is championing efforts towards recovery.

The first phase of the project report is comprised of the following 13 indicators:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mental illness hospital readmission within 30 days | 8. Sense of belonging amongst immigrants |
| 2. Unmet need for mental health care among people with mental disorders | 9. Experienced high stress at work |
| 3. Experienced very high stress associated with family caregiving | 10. Mental illness related disability claims |
| 4. Anxiety and/or mood disorders – Youth | 11. Self-rated mental health in people with common mental health conditions – recovery & rights |
| 5. Intentional self-harm among college students | 12. Anxiety and/or mood disorders – Seniors |
| 6. Schools with mental health promotion modules | 13. Suicide rates – General population |
| 7. Experienced discrimination – General population | |

It is important to consider that this report on indicators is more than simply numbers. There is a story of Canadians' courage, recovery, and triumph behind every mental health statistic. Additional research may be required in order to determine root causes and/or the best levers for improving the system.

On its own, each indicator may not paint a complete picture. However, with the creation of this report we have a much more comprehensive picture of the national landscape. While some gaps remain, this project provides a framework that can be expanded over time as more information becomes available.



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Through the coordination of these data sets, we know enough to start taking collective action to become more strategic in how to inform policy development and programmatic decisions.

References and Description of the Mental Health Commission of Canada:

Additional information on this subject may be found in the MHCC document: Data Needs in Canada: Background, Needs and Gaps, released September 2014 and is available online at:
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/37826> .

The full text of “Changing Directions, Changing Lives – The Mental Health Strategy for Canada” may be found at: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives-and-projects/mental-health-strategy-canada> .

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a catalyst for improving the mental health system and changing the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians toward mental health issues. Each MHCC initiative and project is led by experts who bring a variety of perspectives and experience to the table.

The MHCC was created by the Government of Canada in 2007 and is funded by Health. The work of the MHCC includes the country’s first mental health strategy, working to reduce stigma, advancing knowledge exchange in mental health, and examining how best to help people who are homeless and living with mental health problems.

As a catalyst for change, the MHCC has created partnerships that focus on key projects and issues, and make recommendations on how best to improve the systems that are directly related to mental health care. The MHCC provides recommendations to governments, service providers, community leaders and many others, and works with these partners to implement them so improvements are made. Consulting with people who have experience living with a mental health problem or illness and their families is also a key aspect in all of the MHCC’s work.

-30-

ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a catalyst for change. We are collaborating with hundreds of partners to change the attitudes of Canadians toward mental health problems and to improve services and support. Our goal is to help people who live with mental health problems and illnesses lead meaningful and productive lives. Together we create change. The Mental Health Commission of Canada is funded by Health Canada.
www.mentalhealthcommission.ca | strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Media Contact:

Glenn Johnson, Senior Media Relations Specialist
Mental Health Commission of Canada
Mobile: 1-613-857-1292 gjohnson@mentalhealthcommission.ca



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Patti Robson, Director of Public Affairs
Mental Health Commission of Canada
Mobile: 613-282-1573 probson@mentalhealthcommission.ca



Sign up for the MHCC Newsletter

*The views represented herein solely represent the views of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.
Production of this document is made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada.*