



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# Consensus Conference on the Mental Health of Emerging Adults

Making Transitions a Priority in Canada

## Northern Perspectives Northern Realities

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# MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM SUPPORT

# Theme and policy question(s)

## Mechanisms for Improving Mental Health System Responsiveness

1. What needs to be done to ensure professionals have the appropriate competencies to provide the best care to emerging adults?
2. What system capacity issues need to be addressed to better meet the needs of emerging adults?
3. What is needed at each tier and as they move between tiers to ensure appropriate services are available to support emerging adults?

# Objectives

## 1. To apply a filter to the questions, within the context of:

- Public Service program delivery
- First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples
- Remote locations

## 2. To reflect on the questions from a territorial perspective, considering:

- Policy Implications
- Practice Implications

# What we know

## Public Service program delivery

- Programs and services are delivered within a socio-cultural context
- “Evidence-based” is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition
- System capacity issues can be confounded with system ineffectiveness
- Deficit-based approaches can be counter-productive

## First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples

- Residential school experiences created inter-generational trauma
- Spiritual healing and cultural connectivity are key considerations in recovery
- Mental health can be a political issue
- Language and culture need to be factored into the equation

## Remote locations

- Canada’s northern territories provide unique challenges and opportunities
- Remoteness creates an issue for equitable access to services
- Population disbursement creates a resource distribution problem
- Limited resources make inter-disciplinary work imperative

# Implications

## Policy Implications

- There are no “one size fits all” solutions
- Proof of concept must be demonstrated on site
- Strength-based, resilience-directed approaches are preferred
- Instead of asking for more money, look to transformative change

## Practice Implications

- Cultural competence and trauma-informed practice are essential ingredients
- There is a duty to consult: “Nothing about us without us”
  
- Please, not another specialty service
- Unfettered pathways to comprehensive care are critical to success
- Develop flexible, situational policies

# Theme and policy question(s)

## Mechanisms for Improving Mental Health System Responsiveness

1. What needs to be done to ensure professionals have the appropriate competencies to provide the best care to emerging adults?  
Cultural competence (and for some groups, trauma-informed practice) should become embedded in the professional credentialing process.
2. What system capacity issues need to be addressed to better meet the needs of emerging adults?  
Let's not jump the gun by focusing on capacity issues until we have established proof of system effectiveness, through rigorous evaluation of outcomes, in multiple contexts
3. What is needed at each tier and as they move between tiers to ensure appropriate services are available to support emerging adults?  
Unfettered access to each tier, no professional silos within the tiers, and seamless transition between tiers.

# Recommendations

1. Encourage professional organizations and credentialing bodies to embed cultural competency as a core requirement.
2. Encourage program funders to make outcome evaluation a condition of continuing support.
3. Encourage those responsible for program design to give consideration to seamless linkages to complimentary programs (e.g., inpatient psychiatry to community mental health)
4. If consensus supports a specialty approach, then provide guidance on adapting it to a generalist model of practice.
5. Craft your evidence to resonate with the social, political and cultural aspirations of your audience.
6. Policy and practice go hand-in-hand; focus on inter-sectorial collaboration in both, simultaneously.