



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada



Mental Health Commission of Canada



Partnership
in Action

A Force for Progress

As the number of people in Canada affected by issues of mental health and substance use health continues to grow, so too does the importance of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Since its inception in 2007, the Commission has continually built and expanded the infrastructure needed to strengthen health care systems, and engage and empower individuals, communities and organizations. This infrastructure includes everything from Canada's first national strategy on mental health to essential standards, assessment frameworks and training programs, along with the partnerships needed to drive ongoing progress.



Advancing mental health and well-being in Canada necessitates a broad and collaborative effort. Practitioners and organizations must have access to evidence-based tools, such as quality standards and care protocols. Individuals and communities require effective guidelines and processes to develop and implement appropriate solutions. To meet these needs, the Commission collaborates closely and continuously with provinces and territories, communities, service providers, employers, and researchers, as well as people with lived and living experience. Together, we are supporting the development of an integrated, recovery-focused, and high-functioning mental health system where evidence-based supports and treatments are readily accessible, and where recovery is expected.

This report highlights the work of the Commission across four key areas: eliminating stigma; improving access to quality care; realizing the full potential of e-mental health; and preventing suicide. The Commission makes headway in each of these areas, by convening and engaging committed interest holders and community members.

We also play a vital role in informing public policy and developing national standards. Our efforts are reflected in the growing number of provinces that have integrated the pillars of our community-led Roots of Hope model into provincial suicide prevention strategies. Through these initiatives, we are inspiring collective action and driving lasting change.

Economic, political, and environmental uncertainties contribute to growing levels of anxiety, depression and mental illness in Canada. The Commission acts as a compass to guide and support the eco-system that individuals, communities and organizations rely on to maintain and improve mental health and well-being.



Lili-Anna Pereša

President and Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Commission of Canada



Chuck Bruce
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Board Chair, Mental Health Commission of Canada



Leading E-Mental Health Innovation

Challenge

Realizing the full potential of e-mental health will require proof of efficacy, evidence-based guidelines for users and practitioners, and adequate mechanisms for data protection and cultural safety.

E-mental health (e-MH) tools offer an abundance of potential advantages over traditional models of care. Readily accessible and relatively inexpensive, e-MH tools can provide effective care, and alleviate difficult systemic issues such as excessive costs and lengthy waiting lists. To realize this potential, however, more evidence of clinical efficacy is needed, along with validated guidelines for practitioners and mechanisms to protect personal data and cultural safety. The Commission is at the forefront of the collaborative effort underway to build the evidence base and infrastructure needed to realize the full potential of e-MH tools.

Based on extensive national consultations with leaders, practitioners, users, and people with lived and living experience, An E-Mental Health Strategy for Canada is the Commissions blueprint for the development and implementation of effective e-MH solutions. The Strategy emphasizes culturally appropriate care, frameworks for data collection and retention, and clinical safety—particular with regard to artificial intelligence. Governments and health organizations can use the Strategy's 12 recommendations to set priorities, plan infrastructure investments and establish beneficial partnerships.



**20,000
apps¹,**

one comprehensive,
evidence-based assessment tool.

Commission Accomplishments

- An E-Mental Health Strategy for Canada (2024)
- Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps (2023)
- The E-Mental Health Implementation Toolkit and associated Learning Modules (2018, 2021)

¹ American Psychological Association. Mental health apps are gaining traction. January 1, 2021. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/01/trends-mental-health-apps>



The global market for
MH apps was estimated at
**CAD \$10.3 billion
in 2024**
and is projected to reach
**CAD \$24.2 billion
by 2030**

The Assessment Framework for Mental Health Apps provides people and organizations across Canada—and around the world— a practical way to choose the e-MH apps most likely to deliver beneficial results. The Framework’s more than 400 criteria prioritize key considerations such as evidence of efficacy and protection of personal information, and two dedicated sections that address First Nations, Inuit and Métis security, privacy, and cultural competency. This work has also included apps developed for and with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, including [Talking Stick](#), the [Aaniish Naa Gegii Child Health and Wellbeing Measure](#), and [JoyPop](#). The Commission continues to partner with health authorities in several provinces to develop libraries of apps assessed against the Framework; a long-term goal is to create a publicly accessible national database of assessed apps.

Additional Statistics

- The [Learning Modules](#), developed in collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, based on the Commission’s [The E-Mental Health Implementation Toolkit](#) and accredited by the Canadian College of Health Leaders, have attracted more than 2,200 learners (as of June 2025).
- The global market for e-MH apps was estimated at CAD \$10.3 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach CAD \$24.2 billion by 2030.²



2 <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/press-release/global-mental-health-apps-market>



Eliminating Stigma

Challenge

Many of the seven million people in Canada who need help with mental health concerns this year will not get it because of the associated stigma.

Stigma, in all its forms, represents the greatest single obstacle to improving mental healthcare. This stigma not only triggers shame and discrimination, but also leads to laws, policies and practices that prevent people from getting timely, effective help. Commission training and tools identify, measure and eliminate stigma from hearts, minds and organizations.

Training

The Commission, through its Opening Minds division, collaborate continually with public- and private-sector organizations to design, deliver and improve training courses. Flagship offerings include: Mental Health First Aid, which trains non-professionals to recognize and respond supportively to potential crises until professional help is available; and [The Working Mind](#), which focuses on mental health in the workplace. [HEADSTRONG](#) encourages students in grades 6 through 12 to challenge stigma and promotes mental wellness and early help-seeking.



**More than
1.1 million**

Canadians have completed Commission-certified mental health literacy training.

Commission Accomplishments

- [Mental Health Structural Stigma in Healthcare eLearning Course](#) (2024)
- [Dismantling structural stigma in health care](#) (guidebook, 2023)
- [Stigma Cultures in Health Care Scale](#), [Structural Stigma in Mental Health Care Scale](#) (validated 2023, 2024)
- [The Working Mind](#), [Mental Health First Aid](#) (number of courses expanding continually since 2010)



Tools

Dismantling Structural Stigma in Health Care is a practical guide to eliminating the stigma related to mental health and substance use embedded within health-care organizations. To accurately assess the scope and severity of structural stigma, the Commission created Stigma Cultures in Health Care Scale and Structural Stigma in Mental Health Care Scale. Validated through field tests at two health care organizations, both measure from the perspective of people seeking help. In addition, the Commission published evidence-based standards for psychological health and safety in Workplaces and Post-Secondary Institutions.

Additional Statistics

- More than 700,000 Canadians have completed Mental Health First Aid training and approximately 400,000 have completed job-specific training through The Working Mind suite of courses.
- Twenty-five thousand young people across Canada have participated in over 250 HEADSTRONG summits.



**More than
700,000
Canadians**
have completed
Mental Health
First Aid training.



Supporting Quality Care

Challenge

The lack of access to quality care is the largest single issue facing Canada's mental health care system.

Increasing access to high-quality mental health care requires progress in three broad areas: quality standards must be established and adopted; more efficient delivery models must be validated and implemented; and solutions must be found for longstanding issues, such as excessively high rates of mental health problems among people involved in the justice system.

The Schizophrenia Quality Standards National Demonstration Project, aimed to increase access to quality schizophrenia care nationwide, is a critical project due to the complex symptoms, potential for serious complications, and lifelong nature of the illness. During the Project, four health centres across Canada delivered care according to the Schizophrenia Quality Standards: a series of actionable, measurable, evidence-based best practices. The results, along with input from experts in schizophrenia care and people with lived and living experience, informed the development of an Implementation Toolkit that enables healthcare organizations to abide by the Standards, and improve patient outcomes and quality of life.



The annual economic cost of mental illness in Canada is estimated at nearly **\$200 billion** per year, including \$20 billion due to work-related causes.¹

Commission Accomplishments

- Schizophrenia Quality Standards National Demonstration Project (2023–2025)
- National Standard for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students (2020)

¹ **CSA Group.** *Navigating the Mental Health Crisis in Canada: The Critical Role of Employers.* 6 Feb. 2025, <https://www.csagroup.org/news/canada-is-facing-a-mental-health-crisis-and-work-is-part-of-the-problem/>.



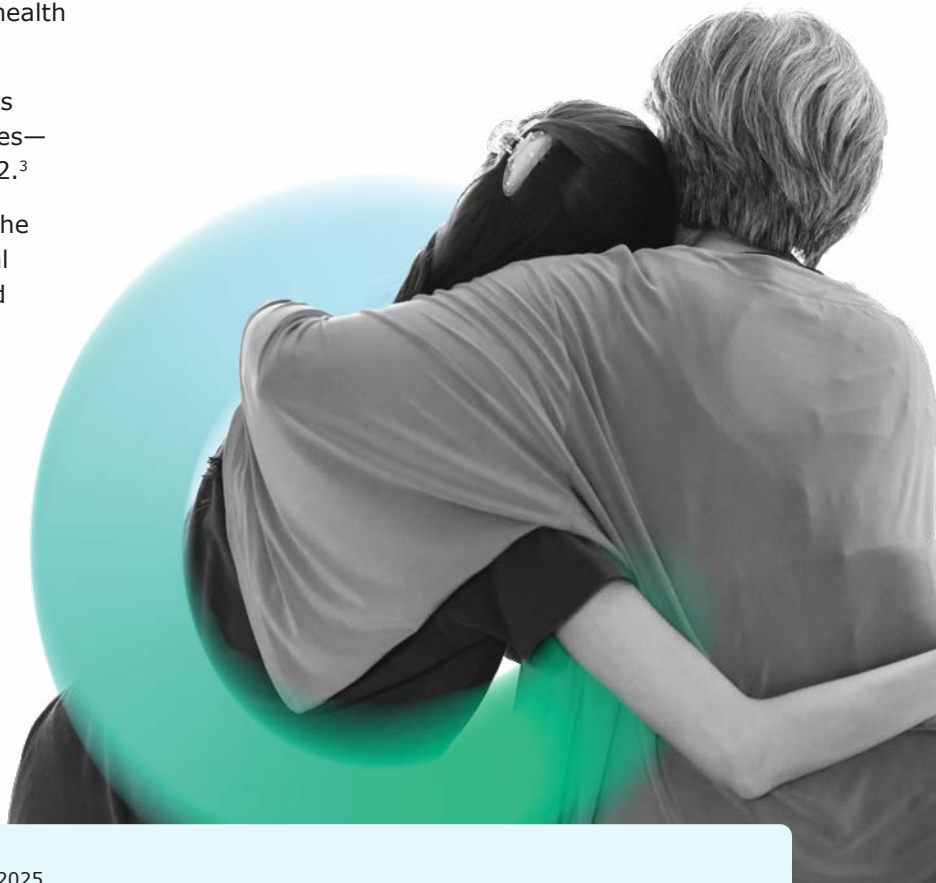
The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students is the first of its kind in the world. It is a set of flexible, voluntary guidelines to help post-secondary institutions support the mental health and well-being of their students. The Standard addresses key elements such as institutional policies, practices, and resources, campus culture, supports for students in crisis, and the promotion of life skills and resiliency. An estimated 200 post-secondary institutions now implement the standard.

Criminal justice and corrections workers are more likely than other people in Canada to experience symptoms of mental disorders. The National Action Plan on Mental Health and Criminal Justice, expected in 2026, was informed by over two years of research, hundreds of engagements with experts, people working in the justice system, and people with lived experience, and reviewed by more than 100 key partners.

Additional Statistics

- 50% of Canadians experience a mental health problem during their lifetime.²
- In 2025, 35% of post-secondary students reported negative mental health outcomes—17 percentage points higher than in 2022.³
- Of the 920 patients who participated in the Schizophrenia Quality Standards National Demonstration Project, 69% experienced substantial reductions in symptom severity and 68% reported improved daily functioning.
- Research indicates that nearly three-quarters of all incarcerated adults in Canada meet the criteria for one or more mental disorders.

Of the 920 patients who participated in the Schizophrenia Quality Standards National Demonstration Project, **69% experienced substantial reductions** in symptom severity.



2 <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/>

3 <https://www.casa-acae.com/pse-students-struggle-2025>




Preventing Suicide and Reducing its Impacts

Challenge

In 2023, suicide claimed the lives of more than 3,800 people in Canada and ranked 12th among causes of death.¹

Given its lasting, harmful effects on individuals, families and communities, suicide is a serious public health problem. In many small and remote communities—and among specific groups of people, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities—suicide is an urgent crisis. The Commission continually develops, improves and expands evidence-based initiatives that prevent suicide and alleviate its impacts.

Launched as a pilot project seven years ago in a handful of communities, Roots of Hope continues to thrive. The project provides communities with a model to identify and implement prevention initiatives best suited to local circumstances. Today, a National Community of Practice facilitates the exchange of best practices, guidelines and tools, helping expand the evidence base for effective interventions.



The Commission's Roots of Hope program—cited in the National Suicide Prevention Action Plan—involves

more than 20 communities, and includes local, regional and provincial partners.

Commission Accomplishments

- Roots of Hope (established 2018)
- Toolkits for people impacted by a death by suicide and by a suicide attempt (updated 2025)
- Free suicide-prevention training for healthcare professionals (2023)

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310039401>

In 2022: males comprised approximately half of Canada's population but accounted for **nearly 75% of suicide deaths.**

The Commission's co-created a suite of continuing-education courses to help address a troubling reality: although more than half of those who die by suicide in Canada had been in contact with a primary healthcare provider in the months prior to their death, relatively few healthcare professionals learn about suicide and suicide prevention during their training. Suicide: facing the difficult topic together, created in collaboration with the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and HealthCareCAN, is a series of free, online courses accredited by a growing number of professional organizations.

Additional Statistics

- In 2022: males comprised approximately half of Canada's population but accounted for nearly 75% of suicide deaths.
- Adults aged 30–59 years accounted for 56% of suicide deaths in 2022.





The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a proud member of HealthPartners.

Funds raised through HealthPartners helps us to fund a broad array of initiatives.

Thank you to all of our donors!



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The Mental Health Commission of Canada head office is located on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation. As a national organization, we also acknowledge that we work on the traditional lands of many different nations.

Mental Health Commission of Canada

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