



INTRO TO MENTAL HEALTH

1

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health: a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stressors of life, can work productively, and can make a contribution to his or her community." (WHO)

Mental illness: implies that a person has received a clinical diagnosis and/or is experiencing clinically significant symptoms of mental illness. Mental illnesses envelop a broad categorization of conditions and can be short-lasting episodes or chronic, lifelong disorders.

2

RISK FACTORS

1. Social Factors

- a. Lack of social support and/or isolation from others
- b. Abusive relationships
- c. Weak social safety net (family & community factors)
- d. Low socioeconomic status
- e. Exposure to discrimination

2. Biological Factors

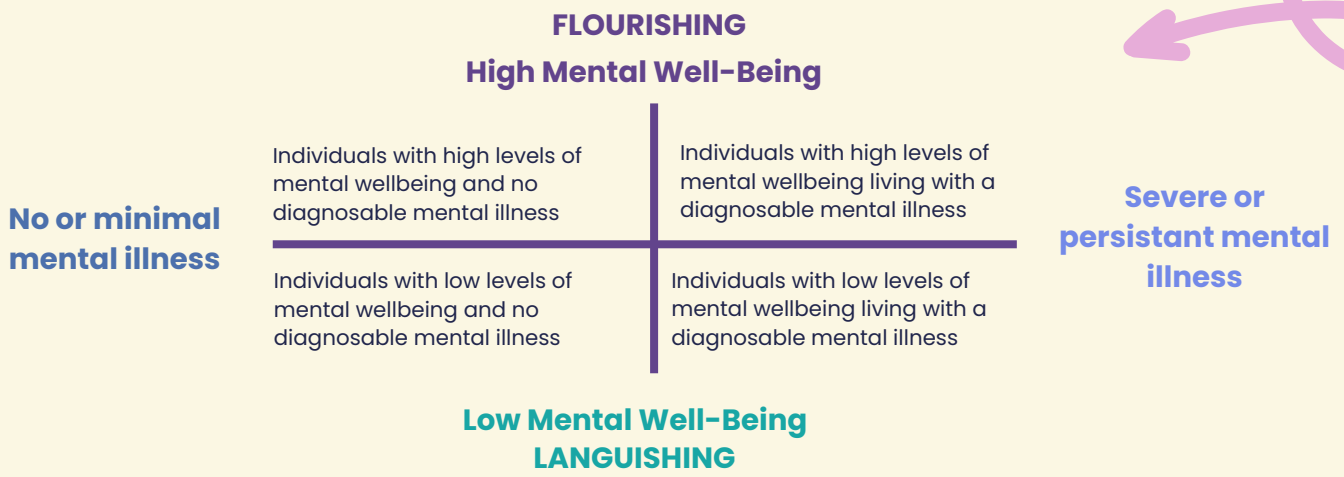
- a. Genetic vulnerability
- b. Health comorbidities (or generally poor physical health)
- c. Poor nutrition or sleep patterns
- d. Neurological deficits or injuries
- e. Substance abuse

3. Psychological Factors

- a. Prolonged exposure to stress
- b. Traumatic experience(s)
- c. Dissatisfaction with current life status
- d. Self-depreciation
- e. Certain personality traits, thoughts, emotions, and attitudes

3

DUAL CONTINUUM



4

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

- Health care in Canada is covered by the Canada Health Act, but many mental health-related services do not qualify for funding
- There are many different types of mental health care along the service continuum.
- Mental health promotion and mental illness prevention are upstream interventions that occur before the development of symptoms of mental illness.
- Early detection straddles upstream and downstream, aiming to intervene as soon as possible after the development of initial symptoms, while treatment and recovery are more firmly downstream services that aim to treat and manage mental illness.

5

BARRIERS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS

- **Individual-level barriers**
 - Impact of the symptoms of mental illness
 - Side effects of medication
 - Episodic nature of mental illness
 - Educational disadvantage
 - Self-stigma
 - Logistical (i.e., financial, work schedule, transportation)
- **Community-level barriers**
 - Community and workplace stigma
 - Low expectations for healthcare professionals
 - Lack of culturally appropriate care
 - Language barriers
- **System-level barriers**
 - Disincentives caused by the income support system
 - Lack of intersectoral collaboration between mental health and employment services
 - Lack of available services due to client saturation and/or limited practitioners
 - Lack of timely care (i.e., long wait times for care)

REFERENCES

Canadian Civil Liberties Association. (2017, February 9). The State of Mental Health in Canada. CCLA. <https://ccla.org/get-informed/talk-rights/the-state-of-mental-health-in-canada/>

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (2024). The Crisis is Real. CAMH. <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real>

HeretoHelp. (n.d.). Wellness Module 6: Getting a Good Night's Sleep | Here to Help. www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-module/wellness-module-6-getting-a-good-nights-sleep

Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). The mental health continuum: from languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43(2), 207–222. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12096700/>

Mayo Clinic. (2020, April 17). 6 Steps to Better Sleep. Mayo Clinic; Mayo Clinic Staff. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/sleep/art-20048379>

Moroz, N., Moroz, I., & Slovinec D'Angelo, M. (2020). Mental health services in Canada: Barriers and cost-effective solutions to increase access. *Healthcare Management Forum*, 33(6), 282–287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0840470420933911>

Scott, A. J., Webb, T. L., Martyn-St James, M., Rowse, G., & Weich, S. (2021). Improving sleep quality leads to better mental health: A meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, 60(101556), 101556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smrv.2021.101556>

Statistics Canada. (2019, October 7). Mental health care needs, 2018. Statcan.gc.ca; Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2019001/article/00011-eng.htm>