

Introduction to Mental Health and Mental Illness



Mental Health

A state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own potential to cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can contribute to their community.

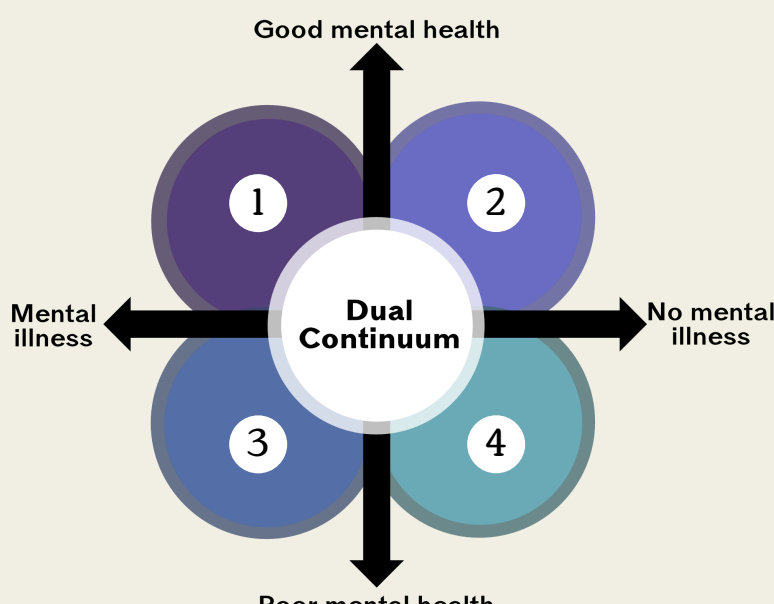


Mental Illness

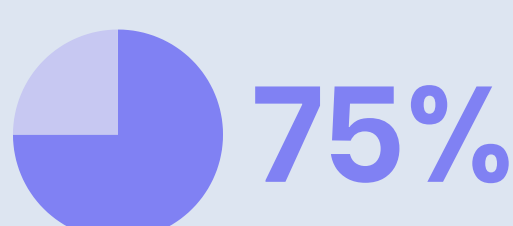
Implies that a person has received a clinical diagnosis and/or is experiencing clinically significant symptoms of a mental illness.

Mental Health & Mental Illness Continuum

This model conceptualizes mental health and mental illness as separate, but interconnected continuums. Mental health can range from good to poor, sitting anywhere along that spectrum.



Statistics



75% of mental illnesses occur before age 25¹



50% of Canadians will have experienced a mental illness by age 40²

1 in 5 Canadians report poor mental health or a mental illness²

Risk Factors



Social

- Lack of social support
- Low socioeconomic status
- Exposure to discrimination



Biological

- Genetic vulnerabilities
- Health comorbidities



Psychological

- Prolonged exposure to stress
- Traumatic experience(s)

Mental Healthcare in Canada

The majority of services are not considered “medically necessary” and are paid for out-of-pocket or covered by insurance

While mental illness accounts for approximately 10% of the burden of disease in Ontario, it receives just 7% of health care dollars³

Each type of care provider is qualified to offer different types of treatment



Family Doctors

Prescribe medication, but do not typically provide psychotherapy



Psychologists

Provide psychotherapy but cannot prescribe medication



Psychiatrists

Can prescribe medication and offer psychotherapy

Not everyone struggling with mental health will require medication and/or psychotherapy to recover and may benefit from lower-intensity options

Post-Secondary Students

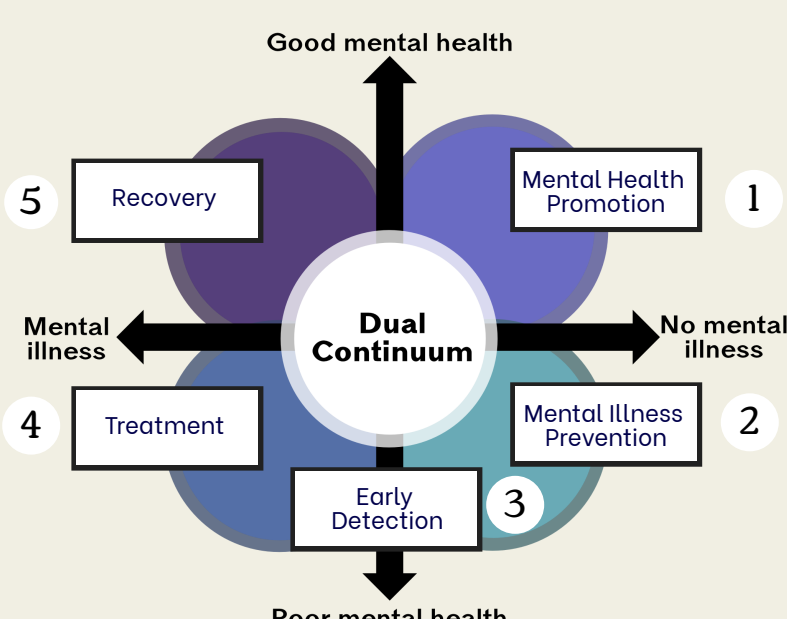
Note that post-secondary students can access both physical and mental health services from their **Student Wellness Services (SWS)** on campus. The practitioners at your SWS will be happy to work with your family doctor back home to put together a treatment plan that works best for you.



The Mental Health Service Continuum

Describes the different levels of mental health care. There is a relationship shown between the **level of need** and the **intensity of care** provided

Upstream services aim to intervene prior to the development of symptoms (**mental health promotion, mental illness prevention**), while **downstream** are intended for intervention following symptom development (**treatment and recovery**)



Barriers to Help-Seeking

Almost **1 in 5** Canadians needed mental health care in 2018, and only **1/2** of them felt that their needs were fully met⁴

Three of the most common barriers to seeking help for mental health related issues in Canada are **accessibility, affordability, and stigma**.



Individual-level

- Impact of the symptoms of mental illness
- Side effects of medication
- Episodic nature of mental illness
- Educational disadvantage
- Self-stigma
- Logistical (i.e., financial burden, unaccommodating work schedule, transportation)



Community-level

- Community and workplace stigma
- Low expectations for healthcare professionals
- Lack of culturally appropriate care
- Language barriers (i.e., care not provided in language other than English)

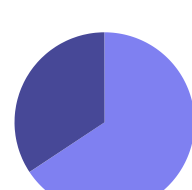


System-level

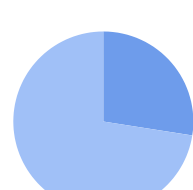
- Disincentives caused by the income support system
- Lack of intersectoral collaboration between mental health and employment services
- Lack of available services due to limited practitioners
- Lack of timely care (i.e., long wait times for care)

Student Mental Health Stats (NCHA, 2019)⁵

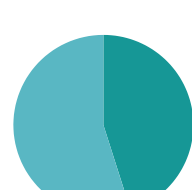
Within the past 12 months,



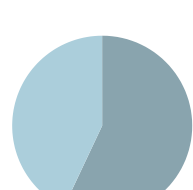
65.7% of students felt overwhelmed



13% of students seriously considered suicide



45.1% felt so depressed it was hard to function



45.5% rated their stress “more than average” with 13.4% experiencing tremendous stress

References

- 1 Kessler RC, Amminger GP, Aguilar-Gaxiola S, Alonso J, Lee S, Utsun TB. Age of onset of mental disorders: a review of recent literature: *Curr Opin Psychiatry*. 2007 Jul;20(4):359–64.
- 2 Fast Facts about Mental Health and Mental Illness [Internet]. CMHA National. [cited 2022 Jun 27]. Available from: <https://cmha.ca/brochure/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/>
- 3 The Crisis is Real [Internet]. CAMH. [cited 2022 Jun 27]. Available from: <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real>
- 4 Mental health care needs, 2018 [Internet]. [cited 2022 Jun 27]. Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2019001/article/00011-eng.htm>
- 5 American College Health Association. National College Health Assessment II [Internet]. 2019. Available from: <https://www.cacuss.ca/files/Research/NCHA-II%20SPRING%202019%20CANADIAN%20REFERENCE%20GROUP%20EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf>