



MENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

We all experience different levels of mental health throughout our lives. In fact, half of us will deal with some type of mental health challenge over the course of our lifetime. Unfortunately, sometimes these challenges can become more serious and require more attention. However, there is good news. Recovery is also common, and we can all do something to help.

We all want support systems that can help us through challenges, like supportive relationships and safe living environments. Sometimes we have these support systems, and sometimes we don't. Many of us will also experience life challenges like problems at home, at school, or relationship issues. Regardless of what situation you may find yourself in – in wellness or not – there is help available.

Educational Videos:

- Mental Health Continuum: <https://vimeo.com/461994134>
- Mental Illness & Stigma: <https://vimeo.com/461994134>
- Mental Health Conditions: <https://vimeo.com/461994502>

MENTAL HEALTH QUICK FACTS



75%

Percentage of all mental illnesses that start by the age of 24.

Source:
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)



6 - 8 years

Amount of time young people wait from onset of symptoms before getting help.

Source:
JAMA Psychiatry, 2005



70% - 90%

Percentage of individuals reporting improved quality of life after receiving support and treatment.

Source:
NAMI California

Snapshot of Canada: An estimated 1.2 million children and youth in Canada are affected by mental illness—yet, less than 20 per cent will receive appropriate treatment. By age 25, approximately 20 per cent of Canadians will have developed a mental illness. But an estimated 75% of children with mental disorders do not access specialized treatment services.² Youth who are engaged in child and adolescent mental health services, and who require continued services, are also often not well supported as they prepare to enter the adult mental health system.³ Wait times for counselling and therapy can be long, especially for children and youth. In Ontario, wait times of six months to one year are common.⁴

¹ National Institute for Mental Health, *Mental Illness Exacts Heavy Toll-Beginning in Youth*. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/ncsr-study/nimh-funded-national-comorbidity-survey-replication-ncs-r-study-mental-illness-exacts-heavy-toll-beginning-in-youth.shtml> (May 2013)

² Waddell et al. (2005). A public health strategy to improve the mental health of Canadian children. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 50: 226-33.

³ Mental Health Commission of Canada.

⁴ Children's Mental Health Ontario (2016). Ontario's children waiting up to 1.5 years for urgently needed mental healthcare. Retrieved from <https://cmho.org/blog/article2/6519717-ontario-schildren-waiting-up-to-1-5-years-for-urgently-needed-mental-healthcare-3>.



What is Stigma?

In order to understand the reasons behind why people wait so long to receive help for mental health needs, it's important to understand the concept of stigma. Research tells us that the largest barrier to reaching out for mental health needs is stigma.

- Stigma is a way of thinking that says that certain people are less deserving of our respect.
- Stigma comes from negative and incorrect beliefs, or stereotypes, about groups of people.
- Fear of being left out or picked on because of who you are is stigma.
- The effects of stigma can make you feel sad, ashamed or alone.

Stigma can be seen in the attitudes of those around us toward mental illness, but also in the way we judge our own challenges with this issue. Stigma can be found in numerous places and there are many types of stigma:

Self-stigma: refers to attitudes and beliefs within yourself.

- For example, someone who is experiencing mental illness may think that they are unable to live a fulfilling life because of their condition.

Public stigma: refers to the attitudes and beliefs of the general public towards persons with mental health challenges or their family members.

- For example, the public may assume that people with psychiatric conditions are violent and dangerous.

Institutional stigma: refers to an organization's policies or culture of negative attitudes and beliefs.

- For example, stigma is often reflected in the use of clinical terms, such as a "schizophrenic." It is preferable to use "people first" language, such as "a person experiencing schizophrenia."

Cultural stigma: refers to the level an identity is culturally devalued by members of that group.⁵

- For example, one cultural group may be less open to viewing mental illness as a "real" illness, and instead view mental illnesses as choices rather than medical conditions.

People with mental health challenges often experience stigma. They get called names by those around them who don't understand what they are going through. These labels are based on stereotypes, not on facts, and they represent stigma – a fear and lack of knowledge that stops people from speaking up about their needs, that keeps them suffering in silence. Besides the obvious problems of feeling isolated and alone that stigma can create, it can also delay the time in which someone gets help. This delay can lead to worsening of all the problems associated with stigma, further taunting, and increasing mental health challenges.

It's our responsibility to strike down stigma wherever we find it. A growing body of international evidence demonstrates that promotion, prevention, and early intervention initiatives show positive returns on investment.⁶ You can help break down stigma by learning more and sharing the truth about mental health through your film. You can help us end the silence.

⁵ Quinn, D. M., & Chaudoir, S. R. (2009). Living with a concealable stigmatized identity: the impact of anticipated stigma, centrality, salience, and cultural stigma on psychological distress and health. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 97(4), 634–651. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015815>

⁶ Roberts and Grimes (2011). Return on investment: Mental health promotion and mental illness prevention. A Canadian Policy Network / Canadian Institute for Health Information report. Ottawa: CIHI. Mental Health Commission of Canada (2014). Why investing in mental health will contribute to Canada's economic prosperity and to the sustainability of our health care system. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/node/742>.