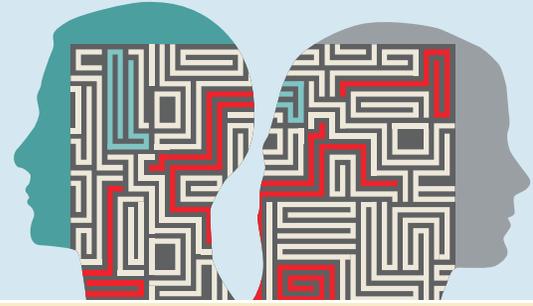


Inequalities in Perceived Mental Health in Canada



5.9%

of Canadian adults perceive their mental health as fair or poor. This is considered as low self-rated mental health (SRMH).*

Factors that contribute to poor mental health:



experience of trauma (violence and/or discrimination)



lack of access to jobs and education



inadequate housing



isolation or community belonging



food insecurity and a lack of clean water

Between conception and age three, a child's brain undergoes an impressive amount of change, which shapes developmental pathways and later mental health.

Low SRMH is:

7.9x
GREATER

among adults permanently unable to work than those adults who had a job

4.1x
GREATER

among adults in the lowest income group than those adults in the highest income group

2.9x
GREATER

among adults with less than a high school education than among university graduates

2.2x
GREATER

among adults working in unskilled occupations than among adults in professional occupations

22.1x
GREATER

among adults with severe functional impairment than among adults without functional impairment

3.1x and 1.7x
GREATER

among bisexual and gay/lesbian adults, respectively, than among heterosexual adults

1.9x
GREATER

among First Nations living off reserve

1.5x
GREATER

Métis than among non-Indigenous people

Inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations are a direct result of colonial policies and practices that included massive forced relocation, loss of lands, creation of the reserve system, banning of Indigenous languages and cultural practices, and creation of the residential school system. Unaddressed intergenerational trauma adds to the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples.

Several factors are known to improve mental health among Canadians. These include:



access to employment and education



social support or community belonging



access to safe and affordable housing



access to mental health services



addressing stigma and discrimination



access to opportunities for physical activity

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* SRMH is a subjective measure of overall mental health status. It incorporates information about mental illness and distress, as well as positive states and evaluations of well-being.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey—Annual Component (2010–2013)

For more data on health inequalities in Canada, visit: www.health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities

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