

Psychology in Canada

The Canadian Psychological Association

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national organization that represents the science, education, training and practice of psychology in Canada. CPA is also the voice of psychology internationally, and represents the discipline to the International Union of Psychological Science and the World Health Organization.

CPA's key messages

Mental health care needs to be coordinated across sectors. Psychologists are unique among service providers in mental health, in that they work across multiple private and public sectors (e.g. schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, community offices and clinics, industry). People live in multiple sectors and bring their mental health needs with them.

We need to facilitate access to care. Psychologists are the country's single largest group of regulated mental health care providers, and their services are increasingly provided in the private sector. Because of the way Canada's health care systems are structured, Canada's many systems publicly provide medical care and not health care. We need to advocate for system change, which allows people to access the right service, from the right provider at the right time. Early intervention is important in mental health care.

Many mental health problems are long term. It is important that we help Canadians live well in health and with illness. Psychological research and practice is pivotal

to achieving this goal. Mental illness is not just major mental illness. It is depression and anxiety that constitute the mental health problems encountered by the greatest number of Canadians and, correspondingly, have great consequences for the individual, families and communities.

Efforts to combat stigma must address the biopsychosocial dimensions of mental health and mental illness. Health and illness of any variety have biopsychosocial determinants and solutions. The solution to reducing stigma is not simply to prove the biological basis of mental illness, but to increase awareness and acceptance of the biopsychosocial factors involved in maintaining health and living with illness.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada

Chaired by Nova Scotia Senator Michael Kirby, the goal of the Mental Health Commission of Canada is to help bring into being an integrated mental health system that places people living with mental illness at its centre. To this end, the Commission encourages cooperation and collaboration among governments, mental health service providers, employers, the scientific and research communities, as well as Canadians living with mental illness, their families and caregivers. The organization of publicly funded mental health services to the general population is the responsibility of each provincial and territorial government, not of the Commission.

The Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Charter (CCMHC)

The CCMHC reflects the commitment of national consumer and provider organizations of mental health services to improving the mental health of persons in Canada. These organizations, who are signatories to the Charter (below), agree to promote & support the Charter through their membership. The Charter states that:

- All Canadian residents have the right to live in a society that promotes health, and provides for the prevention and early detection of mental health problems
- All Canadian residents have the right to health services that promote a healthy mind, body and spirit
- All Canadian residents have the right to collaborative, effective and timely mental health services
- Consumers, along with their social supports, have the right and responsibility to be full partners in their recovery
- All Canadian residents have the right to receive mental health services and supports in a manner that respects their diverse needs
- All Canadian residents have the right to be informed about the range of mental health services and supports that can meet their needs
- Mental health services must be supported by policy, and provided with adequate financial and human resources

CCMHC Signatories

- Canadian Alliance on Mental Health & Illness
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses
- Dietitians of Canada
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Canada
- Canadian Nurses Association
- College of Family Physicians of Canada



Psychological treatments

Psychological treatments are as viable as prescription drug therapies for a variety of conditions:

- Psychological therapies are less vulnerable to relapse & have lower drop-out rates
- Patients prefer psychological therapies
- Psychoeducational programs for coronary heart disease reduced mortality by 34% and reinfarction rate by 29%, over and above the impact of standard medical care
- Investing in psychology saves money. When patients are provided with psychological services, patients decrease use of medical and hospital services
- Psychological treatments resist relapse better than medication interventions
- Average **savings around 40%** — range from 20-30% to 80%
- Every \$1 spent on psychology services yield \$5 saved on medical costs
- Depression costs the economy 20 times the actual cost to the health care system

Cost of care

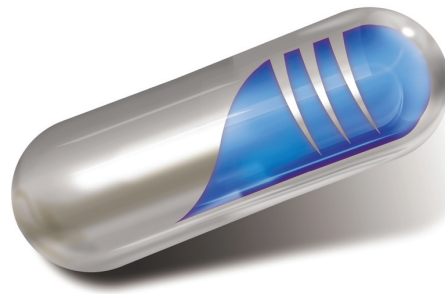
- The estimated cost of mental disorders in Canada was **\$14.4 billion** in 1998, a little more than 25% of money invested in public health care that year
- Psychological factors are major sources of suffering and contribute to decreased productivity
- Psychological problems in children are often undetected by physicians, and are more successfully treated by multidisciplinary teams
- Between **40% and 70%** of visits to primary physicians are behavioural, emotional or psychological in nature
- Those with anxiety disorders often make unnecessary use of general health resources and specialty services, such as cardiologists and emergency services. If psychological services were more optimally delivered, costs could be reduced
- Psychologists play a role in diagnosis, treatment, consultation, health promotion and research, program design, education and program evaluation

Psychology enhances quality of life

- Psychological services are an integral component of effective home care and community health services
- Psychologists develop plans that are developmentally appropriate for patients
- Psychologists design coordinated interventions to prevent stress and burnout for caregivers
- Psychologists educate caregivers on psychological factors in disability and illness

Various submissions to the Romanow Commission & Out of the Shadows at Last, final Report on Mental Health, Mental illness and Addiction, Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology.

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More than mental health services

70% of all premature death could be prevented by the modification of individual behaviour and environmental factors. Psychotherapy can help to:

- Decrease alcohol & tobacco consumption
- Lower cholesterol
- Lower obesity
- Decrease hypertension
- Decrease unsafe sex practices
- Reduce heart disease mortality by 34% and re-infraction rate by 29%

Access to health care

Where interdisciplinary collaboration is present in primary health care, patients/clients have access to the “right service, provided at the right time, in the right place and by the right health professional.” Through this approach, geographic barriers are minimized and services are available close to where people live, work and learn. **Equity of access** to primary health care teams must also respect age, income, gender, culture, language, religion and/or lifestyle factors and differences. EICP - Steering Committee Approved Principles & Framework, 092205.

The BC Psychological Association

Since 1977, the BC Psychological Association (BCPA) has represented psychologists in British Columbia. It is a voluntary body and is committed to advancing psychology, the interests of psychologists, and the psychological well-being of all British Columbians.

The BCPA sponsors professional development and networking activities for members, publishes the BC Psychologist, and operates a province-wide referral service.

The BCPA seeks to maintain relationships with government, with the goal of working with its Ministers to expand the role of psychologists in the Province's health care and contributing to public policy matters.

By supporting initiatives such as the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards, the BC Psychological Association hopes to promote the value of a psychologically healthy population — not just in the workplace, but also in every aspect of our lives.

BCPA's mission is to provide leadership for the advancement and promotion of the profession and science of psychology in the service of our membership and the people of British Columbia.