

*Changing Directions, Changing Lives: the Mental Health Strategy for Canada* calls on all levels of government to play a leadership role in responding to mental health problems and illnesses in Canada.



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

Municipalities can:

- Equip first responders and front-line service providers with the tools and training to respond appropriately to people living with mental illness or at risk of suicide
- Improve the integration and continuity of services needed by people living with mental health problems or illnesses to improve quality of life and reduce costs
- Model mentally healthy workplaces to reduce short and long-term disability claims and improve productivity
- Support activities to reduce the stigma that still surrounds mental health problems and illnesses
- Assess and adapt municipal services, plans and policies to positively impact mental health and help prevent suicide
- Consider a Housing First approach to help end chronic homelessness for people living with mental health problems

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Visit [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) to see all the tools you can use to promote mental health and wellness in your community.

**Come visit us at Booth 210**

## Creating Mentally Healthy Cities and Communities

The views represented herein solely represent the views of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.  
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Municipalities are key partners in helping to prevent mental illness and suicide, promote mental health and aid in recovery for those living with a mental health problem or illness.

- By the time people reach 40 years of age, one in two people in Canada will have had or have a mental illness.
- Today, more than 6.7 million people in Canada are living with a mental health problem or illness. By comparison, 2.7 million have type 2 diabetes.

### Municipalities as Employers

Mental health problems account for approximately 30% of short and long-term disability claims and typically peak at an age when people in Canada are in their prime working years. The economic cost of mental health problems and illnesses in Canada is at least \$50 billion per year.

*Take advantage of tools available to improve psychological health and safety in workplaces, such as the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, and the Mental Health First Aid training program, available at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca).*

### Suicide Prevention

In Canada, suicide is a leading cause of death for people aged 15-24. Over 350,000 people in Canada deliberately harm themselves every year and close to 4,000 of these die by suicide.

*Municipalities can play a role in helping to prevent suicides by offering stigma-reducing programs, mental health literacy for front-line service providers and other actions to promote mental health and increase access to related services and support. Learn more at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca).*

### An Aging Population

With the number of Canadians over the age of 65 expected to double by 2036, there will be a significant increase in the number of seniors with mental health problems and illnesses.

*Check out the MHCC's Guidelines for Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Older Adults in Canada and the Seniors' Mental Health Policy Lens Toolkit to spark the conversation, available at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca).*

### Chronic Homelessness

There are an estimated 150,000-300,000 homeless people across Canada, up to half of whom live with serious mental health problems.

The estimated cost of chronic homelessness is \$1.4 billion per year, primarily because of the high use of emergency services, shelters and the criminal justice system.

*Early results of the MHCC's At Home/Chez Soi research demonstration project indicate that not only does a 'Housing First' approach help reduce homelessness for people living with mental illness, but it makes better use of public dollars with up to \$3 saved for every \$2 spent on housing and supports for previously high users of emergency health, shelter and justice services. Read more about the project at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca).*

### Mental Illness and Policing

Municipal police services encounter people living with mental health problems and illnesses every day. Three in 10 people living with mental illness are involved with police at some point in their care. Half of these encounters result in a person's transportation to a police station or a referral to community services.

*Consult the Police Project to learn more about how to improve interactions between police and people living with mental health problems or illnesses, available at [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca).*