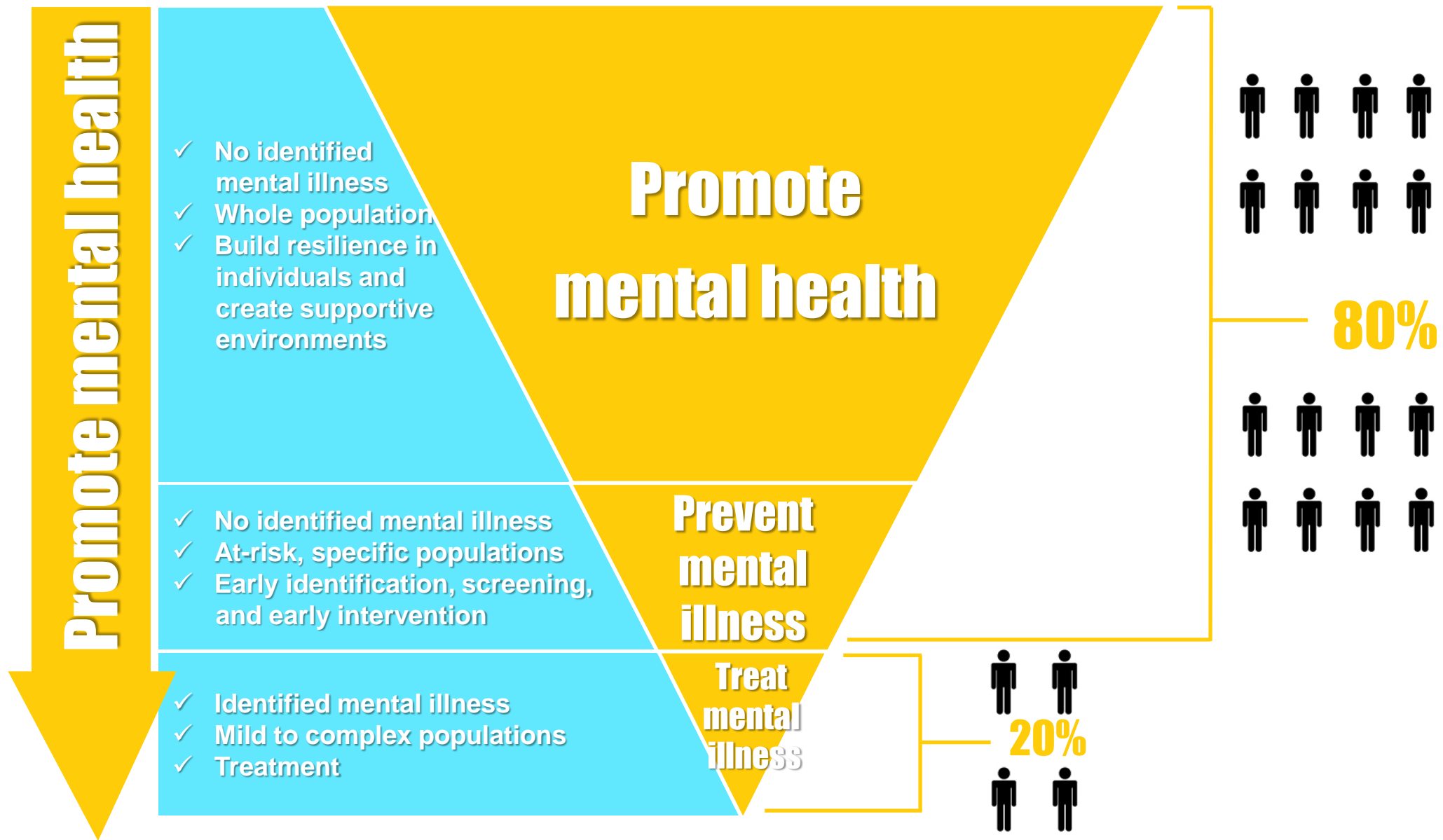


A POPULATION MENTAL HEALTH APPROACH

A population mental health approach* looks at the mental health and mental illness needs of different groups of people rather than the needs of individuals. Although related, mental illness is not the same as mental health. **Mental illnesses** are conditions where our thinking, mood and behaviours severely and negatively impact how we function in our lives.

Mental health, on the other hand, is a positive concept. It relates to our ability to manage life in ways that help us cope with stresses and reach our goals. In this way, mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. Both good mental health and physical health are important to our overall well-being.



BEYOND 1 IN 5

A population health approach focuses on promoting mental health across the whole population, including groups who may be at risk of, or have, mental illness. While 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness or addiction each year, 4 in 5, or 80% of the population, won't **. But this doesn't mean they are doing well mentally. They can still benefit from efforts to promote mental health and prevent mental illness.

There are also unique factors that may put us at risk of, or protect us from mental illness, at different stages of our lives. So, a population mental health approach also promotes mental health across the lifespan. Ultimately, promoting mental health in the whole population can have a big impact on overall population health. And, a mentally healthy population is a good return on investment.

THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



A population mental health approach addresses the broad social determinants of health as these are factors that impact mental health and mental illness. The icons above show just some examples of these determinants.

*The model presented in this resource has been adapted from: Government of British Columbia .(2010). Healthy Minds, Healthy People: a 10-year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia. Victoria, BC.

** Smetanin, P., Stiff, D., Briante, C., Adair, C.E., Ahmad, S. and Khan, M. The Life and Economic Impact of Major Mental Illnesses in Canada: 2011 to 2041. RiskAnalytica, on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada 2011.