Compendium of Foundational Resources

This compendium of resources is intended to provide summaries of foundational information relevant to mental health promotion in public health. The summaries have been grouped into the following categories:

- background documents
- mental health literacy education
- interventions and programs
- population-level policy recommendations
- advocacy and action
- indicators and evaluation frameworks.

Each resource is hyperlinked to its source for easy access. Resources are also marked with the following tags based on their relevance to important topics and populations:

⊕ Indigenous communities

🖥 Workplace mental health

👪 Health equity practices

💗 Suicide prevention

🧍 Children and youth

Background Documents

Defining a Population Mental Health Framework for Public Health[1]

This briefing note proposes a framework for population mental health. It discusses:

- **concepts** of public mental health and population health

- **mental health outcomes** that can be monitored through the framework

- **determinants of mental health**, risk factors and protective factors, and the dual relationship that characterizes mental health outcomes and social inequalities

- **interventions and policies** that can be used to link the determinants of mental health with mental health outcomes

- **roles** that public health actors, at varying levels of practice, may play within such a framework.

The conceptual framework is influenced by the core principles of mental health promotion. Interventions and policies that promote mental health and wellbeing in the population and prevent mental disorders are presented.

National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. *Mental Health Impact Assessment: A Guide for Practice.* Published 2014. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The goal of this briefing note is to provide a new perspective on the role of public health in advancing population mental health and to define a population mental health framework.

Fostering Mental Health in Our Community - Ottawa Public Health Strategic Direction: A Background Document[2]

💙 Suicide prevention

This document sets out three main areas of focus:

- mental health awareness and stigma reduction

- building a resilient community

- suicide prevention

It includes a population mental health framework with three main components:

- public health interventions,

- determinants of mental health

- health outcomes (mental and physical)

The strategy framework supports the need for public health interventions and policies that focus on individual, family, community, and society over the course of the lifespan. This report laid the foundation for the Mental Health Strategy and offers examples of evidence-based interventions used within Ottawa Public Health to promote mental health across the lifespan. It details Ottawa's plan to address mental health by focusing on stigma, resilience, and suicide prevention. The framework presented explicitly includes mental health promotion within programs and services to enhance overall health outcomes for Ottawa's diverse communities.

Ottawa Public Health. *Fostering Mental Health in Our Community, Ottawa Public Health Strategic Direction, 2015-2018.* Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this background document is to provide a strategic plan to enhance mental health across Ottawa by focusing on stigma reduction, community resilience, and suicide prevention.

Mental Health Promotion Guideline, 2018[3]

👪 Health equity practices

This report provides an overview of mental health promotion as an area of consideration for public health in Ontario, including:

- **an overview of key concepts** and frameworks to inform planning, implementation, and evaluation

- **the core functions** that boards of health need to consider, including application of the Foundational Standards

- **guidance to support boards of health** in implementing their roles and responsibilities

- **considerations for embedding mental health promotion strategies** and approaches across programs and services

- **whole-population and community-based interventions** across the life course.

The guidelines cite the Two Continua Model of Mental Health and Mental Illness, which conceptualizes mental health and mental illness as related but distinct dimensions, acknowledging the ability to experience positive mental health despite the presence of mental illness.

Ontario Ministry of Health. *Mental Health Promotion Guideline.* Published 2018. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This guideline outlines how public health units can integrate mental health promotion into their programs and services. It identifies strategies and approaches to be used during planning, implementation, and evaluation of these programs.

Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability[4]

⚕ Health equity practices

This document provides the Ministry of Health requirements for the provision of mandatory health programs and services. It describes the Policy Framework for Public Health Programs and Services, outlining the purpose and scope of the standards, as well as specific processes and tools that ensure implementation is informed by research and best practices. The framework is informed by the core public health functions: assessment and surveillance, health promotion and policy development, health protection, disease prevention, and emergency management. Its foundational standards include:

- population health assessment
- health equity
- effective public health practice
- emergency management.

Ontario Ministry of Health. *Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability.* Published 2021. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this report is to identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services delivered by Ontario's 34 boards of health.

The Roles of Public Health in Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion - Guidance Report 2022[5]

⊕ Indigenous communities

This report presents a guidance document on the roles of public health in population mental health and wellness promotion (PMHWP) across Canada. It builds on conversations that occurred at a Forum on Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion in 2018.

The relationship between a population-based approach to mental health promotion and Indigenous perspectives is discussed, emphasizing the need to learn from Indigenous perspectives on mental wellness.

The public health roles identified as being important to population mental health and wellness promotion include:

- **partnering and building collaborative relationships** across sectors to create cohesive strategies
- **sharing information** and best practices across stakeholders
- **integrating mental health promotion** across all aspects of public health planning, implementation and evaluation
- **supporting capacity-building** and community engagement
- **advocating for the development of policies** that prioritize mental health and wellness.

Mantoura P. *The Roles of Public Health in Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2022. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This report provides guidance for public health professionals involved in professional development to incorporate upstream interventions to promote population mental health and wellness.

World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health For All[6]

This report argues for a worldwide transformation of our mental healthcare system. It outlines three key approaches to transformation that can accelerate progress toward this goal:

- **shifting attitudes** to mental health
- **addressing risks** to mental health in our environment
- **strengthening systems** that care for mental health.

This report is intended for decision-makers in the health sector. This includes ministries of health and other partners in the health sector who are generally tasked with developing mental health policy and delivering mental health systems and services.

It is a call to action for governments, health organizations, and communities to work together to improve mental health outcomes for all.

World Health Organization. *Mental Health in Emergency Settings: Guidance for Public Health and Other Stakeholders.* Published 2021. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This report uses international examples to provide a comprehensive analysis of mental health challenges and strategies to enhance mental health systems worldwide.

Population Mental Health in Canada: Summary of Emerging Needs and Orientations to Support the Public Health Workforce[7]

🖥 **Workplace mental health**

The public health workforce is not receiving the support it needs to advocate for a population-based approach to mental health promotion.

This report provides suggestions and outlines possible next steps based on the findings of four reports assessing practitioners' needs in population mental health. It is intended for stakeholders who wish to understand the needs of the public health workforce at local and regional levels and develop resources and tools that meet those needs.

Some of the recommendations include:

- **providing continuing education** and developing competency frameworks that outline the skills and knowledge required for public health professionals in mental health promotion
- **fostering intersectoral collaboration** and stronger upstream connections to better address the social determinants of mental health
- **enhancing data collection** to monitor mental health trends and inform policy decisions
- **facilitating access to best practice resources**, monitoring and evaluation tools, and communities of practice
- **increasing institutional support** to ensure sufficient resources to support mental health initiatives within public health frameworks
- **highlighting systematic concern** for workplace policies that promote employee mental health and wellness.

Mantoura, P. *Mental Health Promotion: Needs and Orientations for Public Health Action.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2017. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this briefing note is to highlight the needs of public health practitioners in population mental health.

Mental health promotion in public health: perspectives and strategies from positive psychology[8]

Positive psychology concerns the assets and strengths that helps individuals and communities thrive. This research article argues that approaching population mental health through this lens can provide:

- **a new orientation to public health initiatives** that actively promote mental wellbeing and contribute to community wellness

- **innovative ways to reduce stigma** by focusing on the positives

- **integrative strategies that enhance positive emotions** within public health policies

- **a range of evidence-based community interventions** to improve mental health outcomes for all.

Kobau R, Seligman ME, Peterson C, Diener E, Zack MM, Chapman D, Thompson W. Mental health promotion in public health: perspectives and strategies from positive psychology. *Am J Public Health.* 2010;100(8):1511-1518.

This journal article makes the case that asset-based paradigms of positive psychology can help promote mental health in innovative ways.

Better Mental Health For All: A Public Health Approach to Mental Health Improvement[9]

🖥 **Workplace mental health**   👪 **Health equity practices**

This report advocates for strategies that promote wellbeing, prevent mental health problems, and support recovery, aiming to achieve better mental health outcomes for all.

- **Section 1** reviews the importance of integrating mental health into public health strategies to ensure it is embedded across policies and interventions.

- **Section 2** outlines risk and protective factors and the need to create mentally healthy environments at work, home, and school.

- **Section 3** describes data collection strategies and interventions to improve mental health across the lifespan.

- **Section 4** offers guidance for public health practitioners to maintain their own mental health, recognizing the challenges inherent in their roles.

Throughout the report, case studies showcase examples of innovative public mental health programs and projects being run across the UK.

Regan M, Elliott I, Goldie I. *Better Mental Health for All: A Public Health Approach to Mental Health Improvement.* Mental Health Foundation; 2022. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This resource supports the development of knowledge and skills among public health practitioners. It is intended to encourage a proportionate universal approach with a focus on mental health promotion and high-level support for those most at risk. In this way the resource complements recovery and prevention approaches.

Mental Health Literacy Education

[A Facilitators Guide. Intersectional Approaches to Mental Health Education](#)[10]

Health equity practices

This guide is based on information obtained through a literature review about the intersections between mental health and other aspects of identity such as gender, race and sexuality. It is designed to support conversations about the impacts of risk factors like homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, colonialism, classism and ableism. Content of the guide is driven by a focus on intersectionality and the unique mental health challenges that arise via intersecting marginalized identities.

The following recommendations can help organizations create more equitable and inclusive mental health practices:

- **acknowledge systemic barriers** and advocate for policies that reduce these barriers in workplaces, schools, and communities
- **foster inclusive mental health conversations** and create safe spaces to have open discussion
- **develop culturally safe mental health support services** that are responsive to the needs of those with intersecting identities
- **promote leadership and decision-making roles** for individuals from diverse backgrounds who have lived experience
- **engage in self-reflection** and continuous education to unlearn biases.

Massie M. *Intersectional approaches to mental health education: a facilitator's guide.* University of British Columbia. Published 2020. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this guide is to support mental health literacy education through the lens of inclusion and diversity. The information can help supplement current training programs by filling in gaps related to health equity.

[A Review of Mental Health Literacy Strategy for Adolescence](#)[11]

Children and youth

This article presents findings from a systematic literature review on mental health literacy strategies for adolescents from across the world. The results draw from 11 single studies. It references mental health literacy strategies at various socioecological levels and settings, including:

- **national-level** strategies like government policies and awareness campaigns
- **community-level** strategies like workshops, support networks, and outreach programs to promote mental well-being
- **school-based** stragies that integrate mental health education into formalized curricula
- **self-empowerment** tools to support adolescents who are looking for resources and support about their mental health.

Yulianti PD, Surjaningrum ER. A review of mental health literacy strategy for adolescence. *Int J Public Health Sci.* 2021;10(4):20364.

> This systematic literature review was conducted to identify various strategies implemented to enhance mental health literacy among adolescents around the world.

Mental Health Literacy: Past, Present and Future[12]

👥 Health equity practices

This paper provides an overview of mental health literacy, its evolution and ongoing development, challenges related to mental health literacy intervention outcomes, and future directions for the development and deployment of mental health literacy.

- Originally focused on the ability to understand and apply health information, the concept has evolved to address broader social determinants of health and population-level health equity.

- Mental health literacy has developed to include abilities like maintaining mental health, recognizing mental disorders, reducing stigma, and improving help-seeking behaviours.

- It is important to integrate real-life contexts like school and work within mental health literacy training.

- Interventions should be customized for different audiences (e.g. teachers vs. police officers).

- There are challenges with evaluation and assessment of the overall impact of mental health literacy interventions. More research is needed.

Kutcher S, Wei Y, Coniglio A. Mental health literacy: past, present and future. *Can J Psychiatry.* 2016;61(3):154-158.

This journal article presents an overview of the concept of mental health literacy, its history, and its value related to health outcomes.

Interventions and Programs

First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework[13]

⊕ **Indigenous communities**

This resource presents a First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum which is a complex model, rooted in culture, and with many foundational layers and elements. It aims to support mental wellness across the lifespan and includes Indigenous social determinants of health, emphasizing the importance of First Nations culture in all programs and services.

Developed by Health Canada in partnership with First Nations, the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework presents a vision for the future of First Nations mental wellness programs and services and practical steps towards achieving that vision. It is designed to strengthen federal mental wellness programming and support appropriate integration between federal, provincial, and territorial programs. It also provides guidance to communities to adapt, optimize, and realign their mental wellness programs and services based on their own priorities.

This framework calls for a shift toward prevention, healing, and long-term wellbeing. By centering First Nations knowledge, self-determination, and cultural approaches, the framework envisions a future where all Indigenous people can thrive in mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

Assembly of First Nations, & Health Canada. *First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.* Health Canada. Published 2022. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The goal of this resource is to improve mental wellness outcomes for First Nations. It provides practical steps for strengthening and integrating comprehensive mental wellness programming across jurisdictions.

Identifying Areas of Focus for Mental Health Promotion in Children and Youth for Ontario Public Health[14]

🧍 **Children and youth**

This report provides the findings from a research study that aimed to identify the evidence-informed areas of focus for child and youth mental health promotion initiatives that are consistent with the core principles of Ontario's public health system. This included a comprehensive literature review, one-on-one provincial stakeholder interviews, and public health leader focus groups. The findings shaped the following recommendations:

- **develop a shared understanding** of mental health promotion across sectors
- **define a clear and consistent role** for public health units
- **promote the connection** between mental and physical health
- **address mental health needs** across the lifespan
- **advocate for intersectoral collaboration** to advance agendas effectively
- **focus on social determinants** of health
- **enhance social connectedness**, resilience, and mental health literacy

Murphy J, Pavkovic M, Sawula E, Vandervoort S. *Identifying Areas of Focus for Mental Health Promotion in Children and Youth for Ontario Public Health: A Locally Driven Collaborative Project.* Public Health Ontario. Published 2015. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This report provides guidance to Ontario public health units in promoting mental health among children and youth.

Mental Health Interventions for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Canada: A Systematic Review[15]

Suicide prevention   **Indigenous communities**

This systematic review summarises the key components of mental health interventions among First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations. Emphasis is placed on cultural relevance and community engagement.

- Mental health programs should incorporate traditional practices, including ceremonies, land-based activities, and the involvement of community Elders to enhance cultural relevance and effectiveness.

- Engaging community members in the design and implementation of culturally responsive interventions ensures they are tailored to specific needs and contexts.

Graham S, Stelkia K, Wieman C, Adams E. Mental Health Interventions for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Canada: A Systematic Review. *Int Indig Policy J.* 2021;12(2):10820.

This systematic review provides a comprehensive understanding of effective interventions for Indigenous Peoples in Canada, addressing anxiety, depression, and suicidality in these communities.

Together to Live[16]

Suicide prevention   **Children and youth**

This web-based guide provides community-based approaches to preventing suicide in youth. The guide provides an overview of how to create a community suicide prevention plan and includes real stories from communities who have taken action to prevent suicide. The components include:

- a step-by-step planning guide

- comprehensive information about suicide prevention, intervention during a crisis, and post-intervention strategies

- real community stories to provide inspiration and practical insights

- other evidence-based resources and materials.

Centre for Suicide Prevention. *Together to Live: A Resource for Mental Health Promotion.* Accessed March 24, 2025.

This online tool helps communities develop and implement effective suicide prevention plans.

Mental Wellbeing at Work[17]

Workplace mental health

This guideline provides recommendations for creating the right conditions for mental wellbeing at work. It aims to promote a supportive and inclusive work environment, including training and support for managers and how to help people who have or are at risk of poor mental health.

It is intended for employers, senior leadership and managers, human resource teams, employees, self-employed people and volunteers, local and regional authorities, and employee-representative organisations.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). *Mental Wellbeing at Work.* Published 2021. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This guideline provides recommendations to foster mental wellbeing within the workplace.

Working Together to Prevent Suicide in Canada: The Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention[18]

💗 Suicide prevention   ⊕ Indigenous communities

The Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention sets out the Government of Canada's strategic objectives, guiding principles and commitments in suicide prevention. It focuses on better connections among people, information and resources, as well as research and innovation in order to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and prevent suicide. The strategic objectives are to:

- **reduce stigma**, raise public awareness, encourage open discussions about suicide prevention societally
- **connect Canadians to information**, resources, and culturally responsive crisis intervention services, including virtual care options
- **accelerate the use of research** and innovation in suicide prevention
- **support Indigenous-led initiatives**, incorporating traditional knowledge and healing practices into mental health services.

Government of Canada. *A Framework for Suicide Prevention in Canada.* Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This framework aims to align federal activities in suicide prevention while complementing provincial and territorial efforts, as well as the efforts of Indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations and communities, and the private sector.

Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools[19]

🧍 Children and youth

This resource emphasizes the critical role of schools in fostering positive mental health among students. It outlines a planning tool to help schools implement mental health strategies and action plans. The resource provides information and guidance for:

- **"developing a shared language** related to mental health that partners can use for collaborative conversations and planning
- **understanding the connections** between brain development and mental health
- **shifting to a more strength-based approach** by building resiliency, enhancing social-emotional learning and supporting recovery
- **implementing a whole-school approach** that supports positive mental health
- **designing a continuum of supports** and services to meet the mental health needs of students and their families
- **understanding what is meant by pathways** to services
- **identifying roles of key partners** in supporting mental health in schools." (p5)

Alberta Education. *Working Together to Support Mental Health: A Resource for School Communities.* Published 2017. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The goal of this resource is to build a shared understanding of how schools, community partners, and government can better work together to support the mental health of students.

Mental Health Promotion: Let's Start Speaking the Same Language[20]

Children and youth   **Workplace mental health**

This document describes the findings of a literature review of evidence-based strategies for promoting mental health and wellbeing at a population level. It outlines three categories of mental health health promotion interventions:

- **interventions with at least two evidence sources indicating effectiveness** (e.g., maternal and child health interventions including, perinatal and child programs; school-based mental health promotion; high quality day care and pre-school provision)

- **interventions with at least one evidence source** (e.g., workplace mental health promotion; older adult interventions; physical activity/exercise)

- **interventions that require more research** (e.g., universal mental health promotion and prevention for postsecondary students; early interventions for people with mental disorders; informal caregiver interventions).

Watson S, McDonald K. *Mental Health Promotion: Let's start speaking the same language.* Region of Waterloo. Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The purpose of this report is to review mental health promotion, define important concepts, and describe helpful interventions.

National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy[21]

Suicide prevention   **Indigenous communities**

This strategy is a comprehensive plan to address disproportionately high rates of suicide among Inuit communites in Canada. It provides a unified approach to suicide prevention in Inuit Nunangat that transforms collective knowledge, experience and research on suicide into action. It promotes a shared understanding of the context and underlying risk factors for suicide among Inuit, provides policy guidance at the regional and national level on evidence-based approaches, and identifies stakeholders and their specific roles in preventing suicide. Strategic recommendations include:

- **creating social equity** by working across government levels to improve social determinants of health

- **fostering cultural continuity** and promoting culturally responsive programs for Inuit youth to strengthen cultural identity

- **nurturing healthy Inuit children** by building up early interventions that address intergenerational traumas

- **ensuring access to mental wellness services** that are Inuit-specific and accessible across all age groups

- **healing unresolved trauma and grief** via the creation of new research-based tools and resources

- **mobilizing Inuit knowledge** within community-led, resilience-building, suicide prevention efforts.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. *National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.* Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The document provides a description of the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, developed by Inuit Tapirlit Kanatami.

Indigenous-specific mental health and/or wellness strategies in Canada[22]

💓 **Suicide prevention**   ⊕ **Indigenous communities**

This document provides a comprehensive overview of mental health and wellness strategies tailored for Indigenous communities across Canada. Each strategy is broken down into a general summary; objectives; guiding values and principles; dimensions of mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, and early intervention; elements of its evaluation; any preceding versions of the strategy. The report emphasizes the importance of:

- **integrating cultural practices** and traditional knowledge into mental health strategies to ensure they resonate
- **actively involving community members** in the development and implementation of initiatives
- **adopting holistic approaches** that consider the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being.

Arulthas S. *Indigenous-specific mental health and/or wellness strategies in Canada.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2018. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This document describes the most recent Indigenous-specific mental health and/or wellness strategies in Canada, based on a scan of the grey literature.

Strategies related to suicide prevention in Canada[23]

💓 **Suicide prevention**

Similar to above, this document provides a summary of each strategy, as well as its objectives, guiding values, dimensions of mental health promotion, and evaluation elements. Some of the overall findings include:

- **diverse approaches** to suicide prevention across provinces and territories that are tailored to specific demographic, cultural, and regional needs
- **community involvement** as a necessary means to achieving effectiveness
- **comprehensive initiatives** that integrate mental health promotion, early intervention, and support services.

Arulthas S. *Strategies Related to Suicide Prevention in Canada.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2018. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This document presents the findings from a scan of grey literature focused on strategies related to suicide prevention across Canada.

Scan of Canadian Provincial and Territorial Strategies in Mental Health[24]

Similar to above, this document provides a summary of each strategy, as well as its objectives, guiding values, dimensions of mental health promotion, and evaluation elements. In addition to what has been noted by the above resources, some of the overall findings include:

- **emphasis on prevention** to enhance population wellbeing
- **integration of services** to provide comprehensive support.

National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. *Scan of Canadian Provincial and Territorial Strategies in Mental Health.* Published 2018. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This document lists the most recent Canadian provincial and territorial strategies in population mental health.

Population-level Policy Recommendations

[A Public Health Approach to Population Mental Wellness](#)[25]

⊕ **Indigenous communities**

This position statement published by the Canadian Public Health Association provides direction for governments planning mental health promotion at the population level. Recommendations are clustered as follows:

- **Define a national strategy for population mental wellness that incorporates social determinants of health**.

    Articulate an implementation approach and provide necessary funding via mental wellness accords.

    Support community-level initiatives.

    Monitor implementation progress.

- **Integrate mental health promotion into all policies.**

    Prioritize early intervention and lifespan approaches that are culturally sensitive and consider the needs of at-risk populations.

    Adopt a strengths-based, holistic approach to care that supports Indigenous communities and addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

    Support both performance management activities and workplace mental health programs.

    Acknowledge and develop approaches to address the anxiety and grief caused by climate change, COVID-19, and the drug toxicity crisis.

- **Strengthen emergency response processes.**

    Outline population mental health policies to be implemented during emergency response situations and also following the event.

- **Investigate and monitor the determinants of population mental wellness via rigorous evaluation activities.**

    Develop evaluation methodologies for all programs and strategies for addressing gaps.

Canadian Public Health Association. *A Public Health Approach to Population Mental Wellness.* Published 2021. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This report outlines recommendations for government to consider when implementing a public health approach to population mental wellness. It focuses on policy and programs, emergency response, research, surveillance, and evaluation.

A Shared Responsibility. Ontario's Policy Framework for Child and Youth Mental Health[26]

🧍 Children and youth

This framework applies to children and youth in Ontario and is intended to support ongoing policy development. This information is the result of discussions with over 300 government and community partners across the province. Findings were supplemented with extensive literature review and consultations with mental health experts. The framework:

- "outlines the vision for child and youth mental health in Ontario

- defines a continuum of needs-based services and supports

- promotes a focus on health promotion, illness prevention and earlier intervention

- identifies strategic goals and priority areas for action to guide change over the next decade

- provides the foundation for the development of provincial service standards, guidelines and outocme measures

- sets the stage for cross-sectoral community and government planning." (p.ii)

Ministry of Children and Youth Services. *A shared responsibility: Ontario's policy framework for child and youth mental health.* Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The purpose of this policy framework is to provide strategic direction to improve the child and youth services sector in Ontario. It is designed to foster cross-sectoral collaboration.

A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System[27]

👪 Health equity practices

As a way forward, the report asserts the importance of stable funding, improved tools, innovative governance models, and an effective workforce. This report is divided into three sections:

- **Section one sets the context** by exploring health inequities, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how Canada's public health system needs to be strengthened.

- **Section two outlines the role of public health systems** and their role in actioning opportunities for system-level improvements.

- **Section three shares a vision for a possible future** in which our public health systems are capable of effectively addressing current challenges and public health emergencies.

Public Health Agency of Canada. *A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System.* Published 2021. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This annual report from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada examines the current state of public health in Canada and proposes strategies for strengthening the public health system.

Healthy Public Policies and Population Mental Health Promotion for Children and Youth[28]

Children and youth **Health equity practices**

This report provides an overview of:

- **possible policy examples** to promote mental health of children and youth
- **the structural determinants** of health for various populations
- **examples of policy** areas that could target these determinants
- **the importance of social interaction,** relationships, and networks, and their impact on inequalities in mental health
- **the role of the public health workforce**.

National Collaborating Centres for Public Health. *Healthy Public Policies and Population Mental Health Promotion for Children and Youth.* Published 2017. Accessed March 24, 2025.

The purpose of this document is to provide information for public health practitioners driven to integrate mental health promotion for children and youth within a strong public health practice. It draws connections between healthy public policies and the reduction of health inequities among children and youth.

Supporting Ontario's Youngest Minds: Investing in the Mental Health of Children Under 6[29]

Children and youth

Ontario is making significant changes to its child and youth mental health system, emphasizing the importance of early childhood mental health (ages 0-6). Research highlights that early childhood experiences shape lifelong mental well-being, making this a critical period for intervention. The Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is prioritizing infant and early childhood mental health to ensure services are accessible and effective.

Key findings indicate that early mental health issues can lead to long-term challenges, and early intervention is both beneficial and cost-effective. Secure caregiver-child attachments, social determinants (e.g., income, education, housing), and supportive environments play crucial roles in mental health development. To strengthen Ontario's approach, the paper recommends:

- **engaging families and caregivers** in mental health policy planning
- **using a clear "zero to three" framework** for mental health in infancy and early childhood
- **ensuring both universal and targeted services are available** across Ontario
- **investing in workforce training** to enhance the skills of professionals working with young children
- **strengthening data collection**, research, monitoring, and communication among ministries
- **coordinating government efforts** and designating one ministry to lead early childhood mental health initiatives.

Clinton J, Kays-Burden A, Carter C, Bhasin K, Cairney J, Carrey N, Janus M, Kulkarni C, Williams R. *Supporting Ontario's Youngest Minds: Investing in the Mental Health of Children Under 6.* Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. Published 2014. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This policy paper aims to establish a shared understanding of infant and early childhood mental health, summarize current evidence on effective policy and practice, provide a snapshot of the current system from a service provider perspective, and make specific recommendations to ensure accessible mental health services during children's early years.

Let's Put Our Heads Together 2022. Coordinating Our Efforts to Improve Mental Health and Well-being for Ontario's Children and Youth[30]

👤 **Children and youth**   👥 **Health equity practices**

The Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health is a network of organizations from various sectors working together to improve mental health services for young people. The coalition highlights the growing mental health needs of Ontario's children and youth and calls for a coordinated system to ensure timely, equitable, and effective care. This report organizes its recommendations within three key areas of focus:

System coordination

- work with all system partners to pilot a system of care for better service coordination
- develop a sustainable, long-term plan for communication between ministries
- engage the coalition as an expert advisory group.

Equity

- increase investment in culturally responsive mental health supports
- work directly with equity-deserving communities to improve data collection about youth mental health to inform policies
- expand French-language mental health services.

Mental health promotion, early identification, and prevention:

- provide training and resources for educators and caregivers to support mental health promotion and referral to appropriate supports
- strengthen schools as hubs for mental health support and early identification of mental health issues
- center mental health education in schools to improve awareness and accessibility.

Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health. *Let's Put Our Heads Together 2022. Coordinating Our Efforts to Improve Mental Health and Well-being for Ontario's Children and Youth.* Published 2022. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This report outlines three priority issues (i.e., system coordination; health equity; mental health promotion, early identification, and prevention) and provides tangible recommendations the Government of Ontario can adopt to ensure the wellbeing of children and youth.

Framework for Healthy Public Policies Favouring Mental Health[31]

This resource was published by the National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy. Through its proposed framework, the document:

- defines what is meant by the expression "healthy public policies favouring mental health"
- presents the determinants of mental health to illustrate the areas where public policies might have the most influence
- concludes with a brief overview of evidence to support healthy public policy favouring mental health.

Institut national de sante publique du Quebec. *Framework for Healthy Public Policies Favouring Mental Health.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2014. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This briefing note proposes a public policy framework for mental health.

Advocacy and Action

A Framework for Supporting Action in Population Mental Health[32]

Health equity practices

This report presents a comprehensive approach to enhancing mental health promotion at the population level. Currently there is a need for proactive strategies and structured frameworks to help guide the work of public health practitioners. This framework, published by the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy and also available in French, enables leadership and action by providing the following information:

- the various dimensions central to mental health inequities that are implicated in the promotion of population mental health

- a populational responsibility perspective and its important role in actioning this framework.

Mantoura P, Roberge M-C, Fournier L. *A Framework for Supporting Action in Population Mental Health.* National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Published 2017. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This framework aims to highlight the momentum for change at the policy level to support population mental health action.

Advancing Mental Health Strategy for Canada – A Framework for Action (2017-2022)[33]

This report, published by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, builds on the foundational "Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada" released in 2012. Its framework for action supports the implementation of that strategy's original recommendations. The framework's four focal points for change emphasize the need for:

- **dedicated leadership and sustainable funding** to drive systemic change

- **public awareness and early intervention initiatives** that support mental health promotion and the prevention of mental illness

- **improved access to timely and appropriate care** for all individuals accessing mental health services

- **robust data collection and research** to inform evidence-based policies and practices in mental health care.

Mental Health Commission of Canada. *Advancing the Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Framework for Action (2017–2022).* Published 2016. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The main goal of the framework is to outline practical ways to support the uptake of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada.

Prevention First Framework: A Prevention and Promotion Framework for Mental Health[34]

This resource provides a national framework for strategic action to prevent mental illness and promote mental health and wellbeing in Australia. It is aimed at governments, policymakers, mental health workers, and other sectors impacting mental health, such as children's services, education, and business. The goals of the framework are to:

- **clarify key concepts** and distinguish between promotion, prevention, and early intervention, addressing common misconceptions

- **advocate for population-level strategies** and targeted interventions, outlining the full range of activity needed

- **set a coordinated action agenda** that aligns efforts across various sectors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to mental health promotion that improves mental health outcomes for all.

Everymind. *Prevention First: A Public Health Approach to Mental Health Promotion.* Published 2017. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This plain-language mental health promotion framework provides practical guidance and coordinated action plans for governments and policymakers.

Indicators and Evaluation Frameworks

[Evaluating Mental Health Promotion Programs Supplement](#)[35]

👤 Children and youth   **👥 Health equity practices**

Developed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, and Toronto Public Health, this resource provides best practice guidelines for children and youth, older adults, and refugees. For each population, this resource provides:

- **guidelines for integrating best practices** within existing initiatives
- **examples** of mental health programs
- **worksheets** to help practitioners apply these guidelines in their work
- **outcome and progress indicators** to support evaluation efforts.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). *Evaluating Mental Health Promotion Programs: A Supplement to the Best Practice Guidelines Series.* Accessed March 24, 2025.

> This resource provides direction on how to evaluate mental health promotion programs. It will support program planners and evaluators in tracking program progress and outcomes.

[Informing the Future: Mental Health Indicators for Canada](#)[36]

⊕ Indigenous communities

The report provides a comprehensive set of mental health and mental illness indicators based on research and key stakeholder consultation. The indicators are intended to inform policy-making and guide public health practitioners to set appropriate priorities in order to enhance mental heath infrastructure.

Members of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities were given significant consideration during the engagement process in order to include non-traditional indicators to broaden the scope of measurement and monitoring. The indicators are organized within 13 key categories:

- **access and treatment** (e.g. hospitalizations, readmissions, etc.)
- **adults** (e.g. self-rated mental health, suicide consideration, etc.)
- **caregiving** (e.g. caregiver stress, etc.)
- **children and youth** (e.g. school mental health supports, etc.)
- **diversity** (e.g. mental health challenges for immigrants, members of northern communities, lesbian/gay/bisexual individuals, etc.)
- **economic prosperity** (e.g. disability claims, stress at work, etc.)
- **First Nations, Inuit, and Métis** (in progress)
- **housing and homelessness** (e.g. shelter capacity, etc.)
- **population wellbeing** (e.g. anxiety/mood disorders, drinking habits, etc.)
- **recovery** (e.g. employment, sense of belonging, etc.)
- **seniors** (e.g. self-rated mental health, suicide consideration, etc.)
- **stigma and discrimination** (e.g. unmet needs, willingness to seek help, etc.)
- **suicide** (e.g. suicide rates, suicide consideration, etc.)

Mental Health Commission of Canada. *Informing the Future: Mental Health Indicators for Canada.* Published 2015. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The document aims to create a set of mental health and mental illness indicators that allow each jurisdiction across Canada to measure its progress in transforming the mental health system and improving outcomes.

Monitoring Positive Mental Health and Its Determinants in Canada: The Development of the Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework[37]

The conceptual framework contains five outcome indicators and 25 determinant indicators organized within the individual, family, community, and societal levels. This indicator framework can be used to inform programs and policies to enhance population mental health.

This journal article describes the process of arriving at these 25 indicators. For more information about the indicators themselves, see the resource below.

Orpana H, Vachon J, Dykxhoorn J, McRae L, Jayaraman G. Monitoring positive mental health and its determinants in Canada: the development of the Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework. *Health Promot Chronic Dis Prev Can.* 2016;36(1):1-10.

This journal article describes the results of a literature review and environmental scan completed in order to develop a conceptual framework for surveillance of positive mental health and its determinants.

Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework[38]

The framework stands as an essential tool for understanding the broader context of mental health beyond the absence of mental illness, by focusing on the positive aspects of mental well-being and the factors that contribute to it.

Based on the journal article summarized above, the Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework contains a core set of indicators grouped by positive mental health outcomes and four key domains. These include:

- **individual level:** resiliency, coping, nurturing childhood experiences, control and self-efficacy, violence, health status, physical activity, problematic substance use (drugs or alcohol), spirituality

- **family level:** family relationship quality and connectedness, parenting style, family physical and mental health status, substance use by family members, household composition, household income and lack of material resources

- **community level:** community involvement, social networks, social support, school environment, workplace environment, neighbourhood social environment, neighbourhood built environment

- **societal level:** inequality, discrimination, political participation.

Each indicator has a corresponding measure. For each measure, Canadian estimates are available for different age groups, along with breakdowns by key demographic and socioeconomic variables.

A framework for children is under development. The latest edition of the framework includes data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The publications section lists additional surveillance products using Canadian data sources to report on positive mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Government of Canada. *Positive Mental Health Surveillance Indicator Framework.* Updated 2024. Accessed March 24, 2025.

This indicator framework provides information on positive mental health outcomes and their associated risk and protective factors. It includes a "Data Tool" that links to available national data for each indicator.

Measuring Wellness: An Indicator Development Guide for First Nations[39]

⊕ **Indigenous communities**

This resource is designed to help First Nations communities define and measure wellness from their unique cultural perspectives. Recognizing that traditional Western metrics may not fully capture Indigenous concepts of health and wellbeing, this guide provides a framework for communities to develop their own indicators that reflect their values, traditions, and aspirations. While it is specifically designed for First Nations communities in British Columbia, its principles and methods can be adapted for other Indigenous communities.

Taking a community-driven approach, this guide is a practice tool that provides a step-by-step process for creating wellness indicators that reflect a First Nations perspective on health and wellbeing.

Geddes B. *Measuring Wellness: An Indicator Development Guide for First Nations.* First Nations of British Columbia. Published 2015. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this resource is to help First Nations communities develop specific indicators that are meaningful and allow them to measure their community's wellness accurately.

Mental Health Promotion Knowledge Competencies - International Union for Health Promotion and Education[40]

In order to build effective training curricula, this resource outlines the specific knowledge competencies necessary to support effective mental health promotion practices. Organizations and educational institutions should integrate these competencies into training programs to ensure that practitioners are equipped with the necessary knowledge.

Seven competencies are identified and briefly summarized:

- **concepts and principles** (e.g. ethical values, equity and social justice, positive mental health and its relationship to population health, etc.)
- **the determinants of mental health** and their implications for action
- **awareness and respect for social and cultural diversity**, including Indigenous concepts of mental health
- **knowledge of theories and models** that guide effective advocacy and partnership building (e.g. needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation)
- **knowledge of research methods**, including participatory qualitative and quantitative approaches, impact assessments, and population-level mental health indicators
- **knowledge of systems and policies** (e.g. legislation, the concept of "mental health in all policies," etc.)
- **effective communication knowledge**, including relevant technologies.

Fanslow J, Barry M, Cooper M, Doherty A, Fox C, Mantoura P, Rickwood D, Stansfield J, Tamminen N, on behalf of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education Global Working Group on Mental Health Promotion. *Mental Health Promotion Knowledge Competencies.* International Union for Health Promotion and Education. Published 2023. Accessed March 24, 2025.

> The purpose of this document is to identify the unique knowledge areas that enable mental health promotion teams to effectively implement their services.

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