

The Mental Health Impact of COVID-19

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Agenda

1. The mental health landscape, pre- and mid-COVID
2. Impact of mental illness on business
3. Working with ADHD



Mental Healthcare in Pre-COVID Canada

In any given year, **1 in 5**
Canadians will personally
experience a mental
illness.



Source: <https://cmha.ca/fast-facts-about-mental-illness#:~:text=In%20any%20given%20year%2C%201.some%20time%20in%20their%20lives.>

Challenge – Access to Psychiatry



Many family practitioners and nurse practitioners (FP & NP) are **not confident** managing mental illness and have **limited access to psychiatrists**.¹

87%

said inadequate psychiatric guidance negatively impacted their patients.¹

56%

don't have adequate access to psychiatry.²

75%

said wait time to see a psychiatrist is between 6 and 24 months.²



1. PsychedUp Survey (n=1050)
2. PCP survey (SwitchRx and PsychedUp May 2020 (n=443))

Challenge – Access to Psychiatry



6/230

Psychiatrists in Vancouver agreed to see a patient within 2 months.¹

50%

Toronto psychiatrists working FT treat fewer than 100 patients a year (10% treat only 40 patients).²

40%

Patients who attempted suicide saw a psychiatrist within 6 months of their ER visit.¹

50%

Canadian psychiatrists are at or nearing retirement age; backfill is very poor.³



1. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2011;56(8):474–480.
2. <https://health.sunnybrook.ca/navigator/long-wait-psychiatrist/>
3. <https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/2019-01/psychiatry-e.pdf>

Challenge – Impact on Canadian Economy

76% of Canadians ranked mental health as the **principal factor of their workplace well-being** (more than physical, personal and financial health).

500K

Canadians unable to work each week due to poor mental health.*

30-40%

STD claims are related to mental health (30% LTD).*

\$51B

Annual cost of poor mental health in the workplace.*

\$2.5T

The cost of poor mental health to the Canadian economy by 2041 in CAD.*



*Source: Deloitte Insights The ROI in workplace mental health programs: Good for people, good for business

Challenge –Canadian Workers

60%

of employees said they would **accept less money** if the prospective employer offered better wellness benefits.

77%

of workers would consider **changing jobs** for an employer who offers better support for mental health and well-being.



Source: <https://www.morneaushepell.com/ca-en/workplace-mental-health>

What is Mental Health?

The WHO:

“A state of **well-being** in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can **cope** with the normal stresses of life, can **work productively** and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”



What is Mental Health?

- Economists: focus on happiness or well-being
 - Satisfaction with life, positive emotions, and the perception of living a meaningful and productive life
- Medical field: focus on absence of symptoms
- The two are inextricably linked: symptoms of mental illness impact happiness, sense of meaning and worth (as well as physical health)



Economy vs. Health

- An individual with a low income is up to 3 times more likely to suffer from mental illness than a wealthy person¹
- Job loss and income declines often precede mental illness²
- Recessions are associated with mental illness, substance abuse, and suicide³





Work is good for you!

- Most individuals with mental illness, even if severe, **wish to engage** in meaningful work¹
- Paid employment provides financial security, daily structure, a sense of worth and regular supportive social engagement
- Many studies have found work is associated with **better mental well-being**, lower prevalence of depression and lower incidence of suicide^{2,3}

1. Aust N Z J Psychiatry 2013; 47: 421–424.;
2. Psychol Med 1999; 29: 27–33.;
3. J Epidemiol Community Health 1993; 47: 14–18

Chronic, unpredictable stress is bad for us

The most reliable animal model employed to research/predict depression

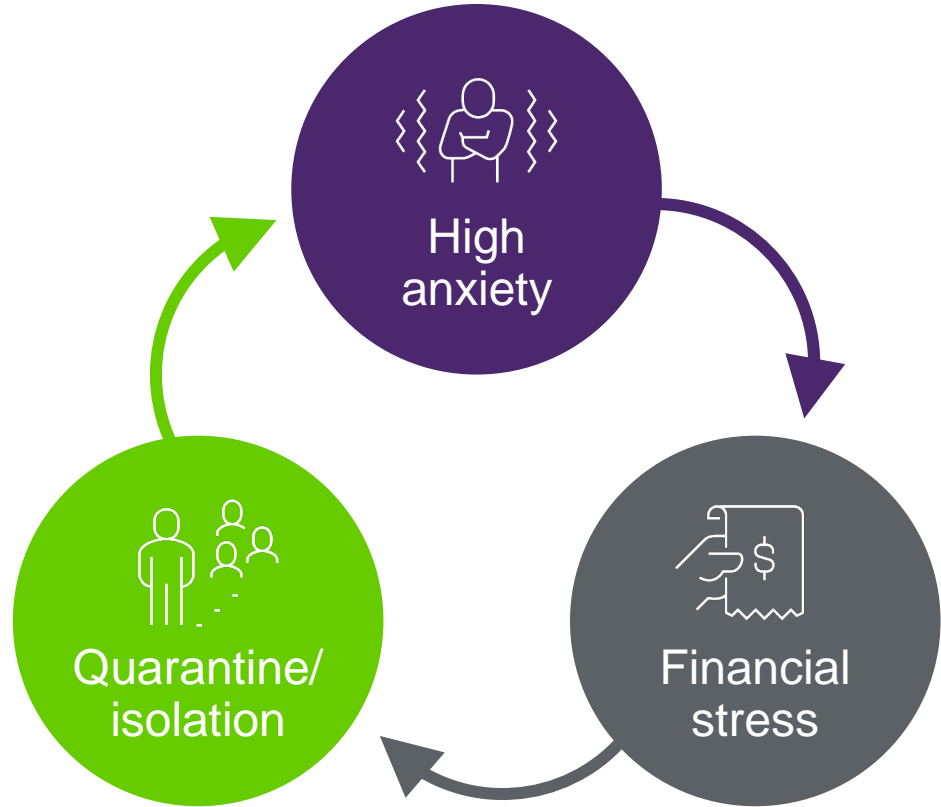
Chronic, unpredictable stress associated with:

- Depression
- Cognitive impairment
- Inflammatory illnesses
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Structural and functional brain changes



Source: [Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews Volume 99, April 2019, Pages 101-116](#)

COVID-19 Mental Health Trifecta





Mental Healthcare in Mid-COVID Canada

“Mental health in crisis: how COVID-19 is impacting Canadians”

- Quadrupling of **high anxiety levels**
 - Alberta (+20%), Ontario (+17%); Atlantic (+16%); BC (+15%); Quebec (+10%).
- 28% of Canadians indicated an **increase in the consumption of alcohol**
- 57% of recently unemployed Canadians report their mental health is negatively impacted by **job loss**



Source: released on May 19, 2020 by Mental Health Research Canada (<https://www.mhrc.ca/our-research/>)

The Mental Health Spectrum



Healthy

Stressed

Functional
impairment

Crisis



Interventions across the mental health spectrum

	Self-care/ social support		Professional help	
	Healthy	Stressed	Functional impairment	Crisis
Interventions	Exercise/yoga Professional coaching Dietitian Mindfulness/meditation Intermittent assessment E-solutions (E.g. steps, sleep)	Healthy + Psychotherapy (CBT/iCBT/DBT) Financial budgeting / parenting support / MH education Sleep tools	Psychotherapy GP / supported by psychiatrist	Psychiatrist / psychologist Hospitalization Disability management program

What can we suggest to support RTW/ home life?

- We all thrive on a schedule
 - Makes return to workplace more tolerable
 - Include wake-sleep time, start and stop work time, breaks, meals, fitness, fun
 - Scheduling essential for effective parenting
- Encourage adherence to treatment
 - Mood/ irritability/ frustration especially important when trapped at home
 - Reduced side effects
 - LAIs are underused (and physicians are likely cause)
- Avoid avoidance
 - Anxiety building over finances



What can we suggest to support RTW/ home life?

- If possible, separate work and home life
 - Do not work from bed/ sofa
 - Keep workspace in separate area
 - Spent time creating “normal” workspace
 - Go outside
- Avoid alcohol/cannabis
 - Impact on sleep
- Find the positive in this challenging time:
 - Gratitude
 - Anxiety is contagious



Control What You Can Control

- Anxiety thrives with unknowns
- Encourage reputable sites for information
- Put changing medical information into context
- Limit screen time
- Teach critical thinking
 - An opportunity to teach your children how to assess information, fake news etc.



Control only what is under your control

Source: Inna Khazan

Thank You!





Q & A
