

# ACCESS THROUGH INNOVATION

Maximizing Federal Mental Health Funding



CANADIAN FEDERATION  
OF NURSES UNIONS  
LA FEDERATION CANADIENNE  
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIERES  
ET INFIRMIERS

## FACT SHEET

JULY 2017

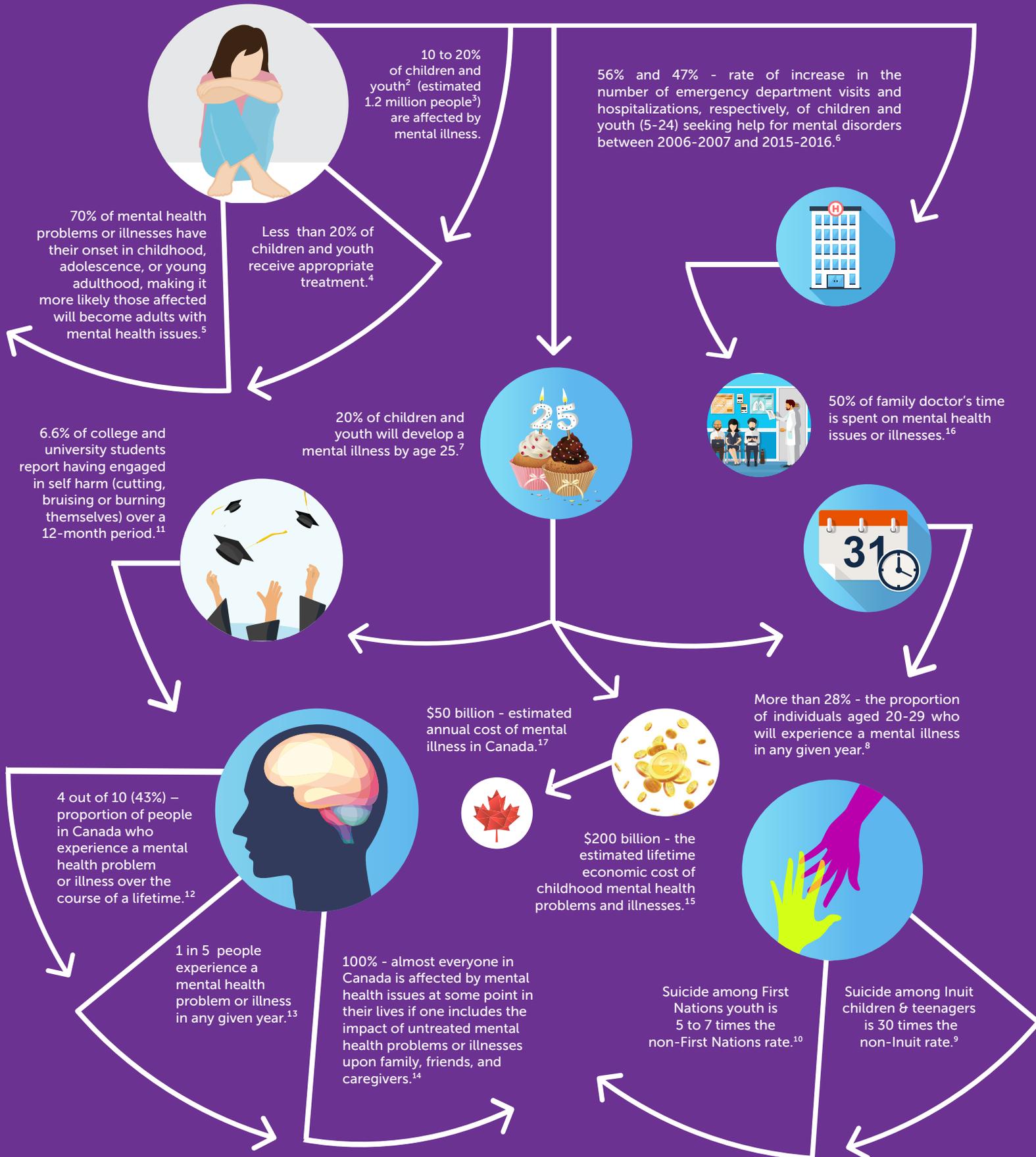
## MENTAL HEALTH AND NURSING

Nurses play a fundamental role in addressing mental health problems and illnesses in Canada as health care practitioners on the front lines of health care who employ a holistic approach to care. The CFNU, which represents close to 200,000 nurses and student nurses across Canada, recognizes that nurses can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of mental health services in Canada. In addition to those regulated nurses who are Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) in the four Western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., and Yukon), all nurses (Nurse Practitioners, RPNs, Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses) who work in acute care, primary care, community and long-term care make important contributions to providing care, assessment, early intervention and effective supports for mental health and mental illnesses. Increasingly the focus of mental health care is allowing those experiencing mental health problems and illnesses to continue living, and functioning, within the broader society and community, where public health nurses play a pivotal role. Nurses' roles include offering education and resources for health promotion and illness prevention, providing encouragement and support to those seeking help in daily living, while incorporating the social determinants of health into assessments and treatment plans.<sup>1</sup>



# MENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS:

## Prevalence and access



# INNOVATION OPTION:

## A focus on prevention and early intervention

National and International experience suggest that a focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention for children and youth can yield significant dividends for the health system and society as a whole, while helping children and youth who suffer from mental illness lead healthier lives as they emerge as adults.



### CANADA

*Partners for Life* is a Quebec province-wide depression awareness program for youth, offered in secondary schools, which uses an interactive, youth-friendly approach to enable students to recognize the signs of depression, substance abuse and suicidal behaviour, and to know what they can do, and where they can go, to get help for themselves or for friends. The program has reached over 1,000,000 young people as well as parents and care providers. In addition to raising awareness of depression as a risk factor for suicide, the program has helped youth to obtain referrals and treatment for depression.<sup>18</sup>

### UNITED KINGDOM

A study in the UK found that preventing conduct disorders in a single child through early intervention programming could result in combined savings in the criminal justice system, health system, and the productivity of individuals, amounting to \$ 365,000 per individual. If Canada could apply proven evidence-based programs such as these to prevent just 10% of the incidence of conduct disorders among children, it could save as much as \$3.1 billion while avoiding many of the personal and societal consequences resulting from conduct disorders.<sup>21</sup>

### AUSTRALIA

*Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS)* was introduced in 2001 by the Australian government to provide evidence-based psychological interventions by mental health professionals (i.e. psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses) for people with high-prevalence disorders.<sup>19</sup> *Headspace*, Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation, was established in 2006 to promote and facilitate improvements in the mental health, social well-being and economic participation of young people aged 12-25 years.<sup>20</sup> Both programs provide free or low-cost psychological services. *ATAPS* and *Headspace* have operated in a complementary fashion to fill a service gap for young people.

# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS: Prevalence and access

The proportion of disability costs related to mental health problems or illnesses is:<sup>25</sup>

**70%**

of Canadian employees are concerned about psychological health and safety in their workplaces.<sup>28</sup>

**14%**

of employees do not think their workplace is psychologically healthy and safe.<sup>29</sup>

The potential annual workforce with depression/anxiety, added each year until 2035, resulting from providing greater access to mental health services for depression/anxiety, is:<sup>31</sup>

**352,000**  
workers

The proportion of Canadian employers who rank mental health problems and illnesses as one of the top three drivers of both short- and long-term disability claims is:<sup>22</sup>

**> than 80%**

**1 in 3**

workplace disability claims are related to mental health issues.<sup>24</sup>

**Almost 25%**

of Canadians living with a mental illness are unable to work because of their symptoms.<sup>27</sup>

**500,000**

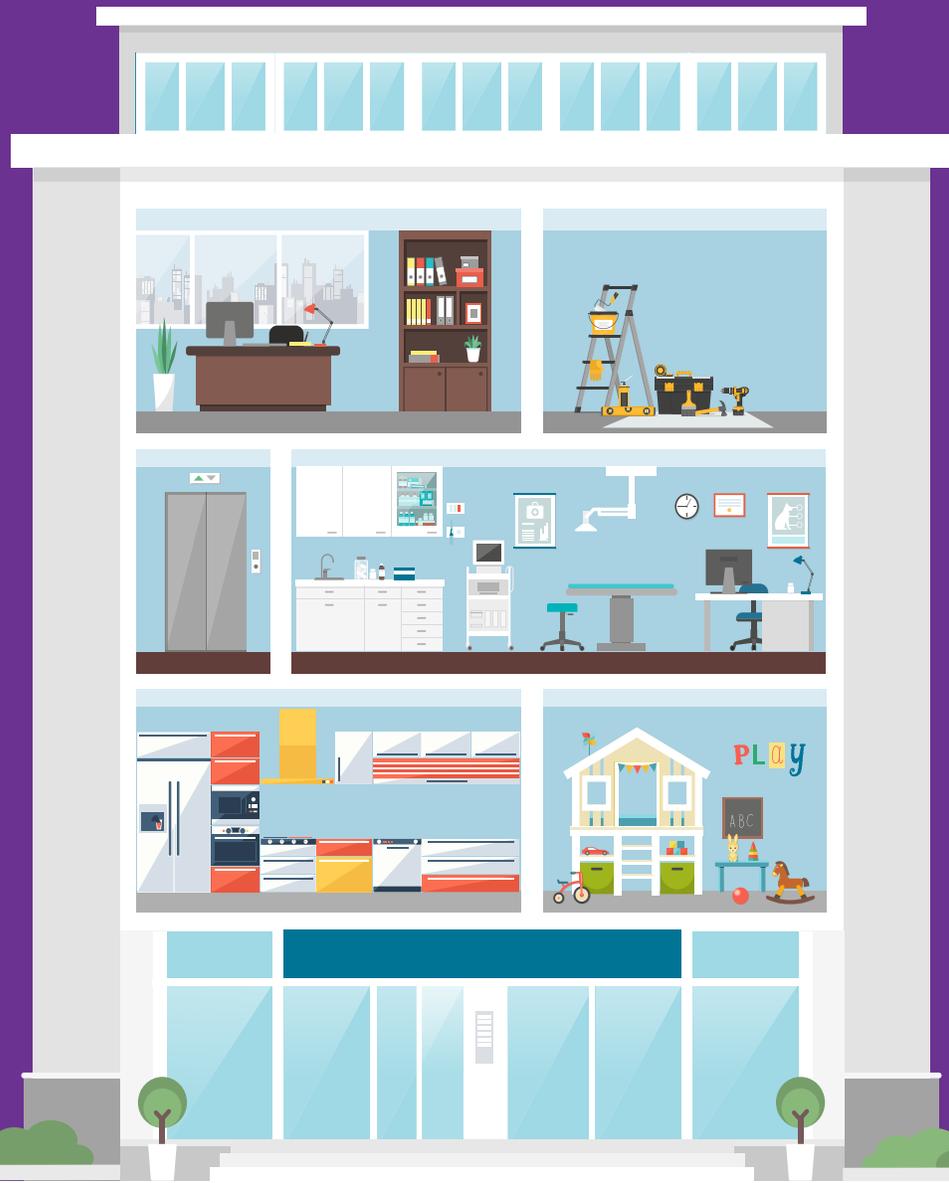
people in Canada in any given **week** are unable to work due to mental health problems or illnesses.<sup>23</sup>

Annual cost of lost productivity due to absenteeism and presenteeism related to mental health problems and illnesses is:<sup>26</sup>

**\$6B**

**\$32.3B;**  
**\$17.3B**

The annual costs of depression/anxiety, respectively, in lost GDP.<sup>30</sup>



# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH — INNOVATION OPTION:

## A focus on short-term treatment and reintegration

National and international experience suggest that a focus on access to short-term treatment for less severe mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression, as well as return-to-work strategies and prevention programs in the workplace, will help workers to maintain their attachment to their workplaces, reintegrate and return to health as fully productive members of society.



### CANADA

In Canada, the Mental Health Commission of Canada is working with workplaces, including the federal public service, to implement the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*. Some employers who have implemented the standard, and are moving towards psychologically safe workplaces, are reaping the rewards in terms of staff engagement and a reduction in absenteeism and medications for psychological disorders.<sup>32</sup>

### UNITED KINGDOM

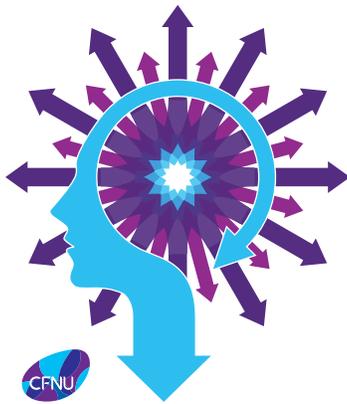
The government established the *Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)* program, focused on those with mild to moderate common mental health issues such as depression and anxiety to expand their access to psychological services.<sup>33</sup> Since 2008, Centres have opened across the country to provide assessment and therapy to adults specifically suffering from mild to moderate depression, with the goal of providing access to 15% of the adult population needing therapy for anxiety and depression, to encourage recovery.<sup>34</sup> Part of the impetus for the program, in addition to increasing access to mental health services, was to help individuals off from work for depression/anxiety to get the help they needed so they could return to work.<sup>35</sup>

### AUSTRALIA

In 2006, Australia established *The Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (Better Access)* initiative. Australians referred by their doctors can access up to six individual or six group allied mental health services, which may comprise either psychological assessment and therapy by a clinical psychologist or focussed psychological strategies by an allied mental health professional.<sup>36</sup>

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