



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Anti-Stigma Research Backgrounder



This backgrounder highlights emerging data on structural and self-stigma experienced by individuals with mental health or substance use disorder in Canada. The backgrounder provides an overview of purpose, key findings, and recommendations for change. It also discusses the importance of addressing stigma to promote recovery and improve access to care, as well as defining self stigma and structural stigma.

Methods

The survey analyzed data from a Leger poll conducted in the summer of 2022, which included 4029 respondents in Canada. 2,005 individuals identified living with a mental health or substance use disorder. The results were weighted to give representative samples.

Key findings

- Stigma is a pervasive problem for individuals with mental or substance use disorders in Canada, with 95% of those surveyed reporting experiencing stigma in the past five years.
- Canadians expect individuals with mental health or substance use disorders to be devalued and discriminated against in their day-to-day lives.
- 72% of those with mental health or substance use disorders reported serious self-stigma, which had negative impacts on their self-perceptions, including self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- Healthcare settings were particularly stigmatizing for individuals with mental health or substance use disorder, with 40% reporting experiencing stigma when receiving healthcare.
- Priorities for change identified by study participants include greater access to services, preventive mental health services, and stigma reduction.
- Addressing structural stigma is important for promoting recovery and improving access to care for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders.

Recommendations from respondents

People living with a mental health or substance use disorder identified the following priorities for change:



greater access to services,



preventive mental health services,



stigma reduction.

The survey results emphasized the importance of addressing structural stigma in healthcare settings and other areas of society, including the need for more person-centered and recovery-oriented approaches.

Addressing stigma is critical to promoting recovery and improving access to care for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders in Canada. Although we have come a long way in the war against stigma, there is still work to be done

These findings call for a collaborative effort from policy makers, healthcare providers, and the general public to work together to eliminate stigma and promote recovery.

By focusing on reducing self and structural stigma, we can help ensure that people with mental health or substance use disorders are able to live full and meaningful lives.

These data are part of broader research being analyzed and released over the coming months.



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