

Mental Health and Local Elected Leaders

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**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
British Columbia
Mental health for all

**Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale**
Colombie-Britannique
La santé mentale pour tous

CMHA BC

Mental Health and Local Government Leaders

Union of BC Municipalities Convention 2024

Kim Mackenzie, Director of Policy
September 19th, 2024

Overview


1. About CMHA BC and Local Leaders for Mental Health
2. Context on mental health and mental illness
3. What the research says about the mental health of local leaders and the impact
4. What local leaders can do to improve mental health
 - Reduce Stigma
 - Peer Support



About CMHA BC

CMHA Branches in BC

CARIBOO CHILCOTIN (WILLIAMS LAKE) 250-398-8220 www.cariboo.cmha.bc.ca	VANCOUVER-FRASER (VANCOUVER) 604-872-4902 www.vf.cmha.bc.ca
COWICHAN VALLEY (DUNCAN) 250-746-5521 www.cowichanvalley.cmha.bc.ca	VERNON 250-542-3114 www.cmhavernon.ca
KAMLOOPS 250-374-0440 www.kamloops.cmha.bc.ca	VICTORIA OFFICE (CMHA BC) 250-216-4228 www.victoria.cmha.bc.ca
KELOWNA 250-861-3644 www.cmhkelowna.com	
KOOTENAYS (CRANBROOK) 250-426-5222 www.kootenays.cmha.bc.ca	
MID-ISLAND (NANAIMO) 250-244-4042 www.mid-island.cmha.bc.ca	
NORTH AND WEST VANCOUVER 604-987-6959 www.northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca	
NORTHERN BC 250-564-8644 www.northernbc.cmha.ca	
PORT ALBERNI 250-724-7199 www.cmhaportalberni.ca	
SHUSWAP-REVELSTOKE (SALMON ARM) 250-832-8477 www.shuswap-revelstoke.cmha.bc.ca	
SOUTH CARIBOO (100 MILE HOUSE) 250-395-4883 www.southcariboo.cmha.bc.ca	
SOUTH OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN (PENTICTON) 250-493-8999 www.sos.cmha.bc.ca	



OUR SUPPORT

- Education & Training
- Service Delivery
- Policy & Advocacy

OUR REACH

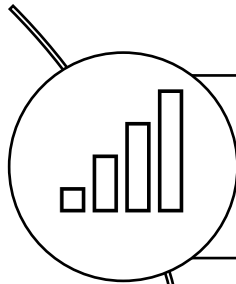
- CMHA operates in BC through the BC division and 14 branches that service over 100 communities to meet local needs.



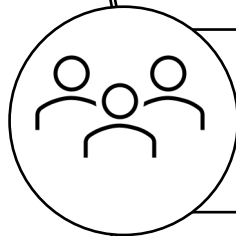
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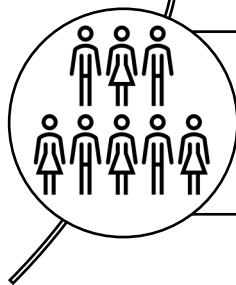
Global Context



Around 450 million people currently struggle with mental illness, making it the leading cause of disability worldwide



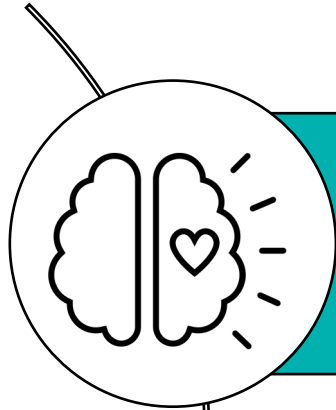
1 in 3 Canadians will experience mental illness or a substance use disorder in their lifetime



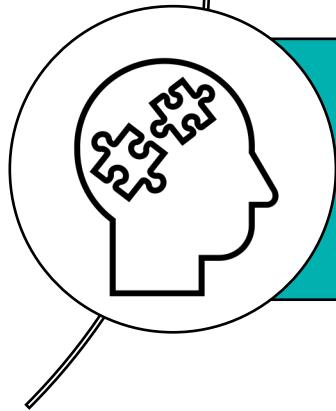
Almost a million people in BC today have a mental illness or substance use disorder



Mental Health or Mental Illness?



Mental Illness: Thoughts feelings disturbances perceptions that are severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning. Some examples are anxiety disorders or major depression.



Mental Health: A state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.



The Mental Health of Local Leaders

The inbuilt assumption by people and media that I am venal, self-interested and acting against their interests is very wearing.



Anonymous survey respondent

I live in a country where everybody's just calling you, texting you, looking for you, always on you...I don't like to leave my apartment.



Hon. Winnie Odinga, Member of Parliament for Kenya, East African Legislative Assembly, Kenya

My children are all grown up now, but I saw them victimized in school because of who I was. I saw the way they were treated by certain teachers who had a political persuasion.



Peter Fox MS, Member for Monmouth, Welsh Parliament (Senedd)

When people are racist to me, I can't block them... I have to be accessible to everyone, even if they're really harmful to me.



Victoria Pelletier, Portland City Councilor, 2nd District, Maine, U.S.

It would definitely help if the public didn't have this idea that the job is easy and we make a lot of money and everything's fun, because I would make a lot more money if I had never gone into politics.



Vincent Chriqui, Mayor of Bourgoin-Jallieu, France

We enter [politics] because we want a better country, because we want the best for people.



Patricia Mercado, Senator, Senate of the Republic of Mexico

Source: *Mere Mortals: the State of Politicians' Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters* A report from the Apolitical Foundation



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The Mental Health of Local Leaders

96% of politicians reported being harassed over social media

68% report daily or weekly harassment over social media

Source: Every-Palmer S, Hansby O and Barry-Walsh J (2024) Stalking, harassment, gendered abuse, and violence towards politicians in the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery era. Front. Psychiatry 15:1357907

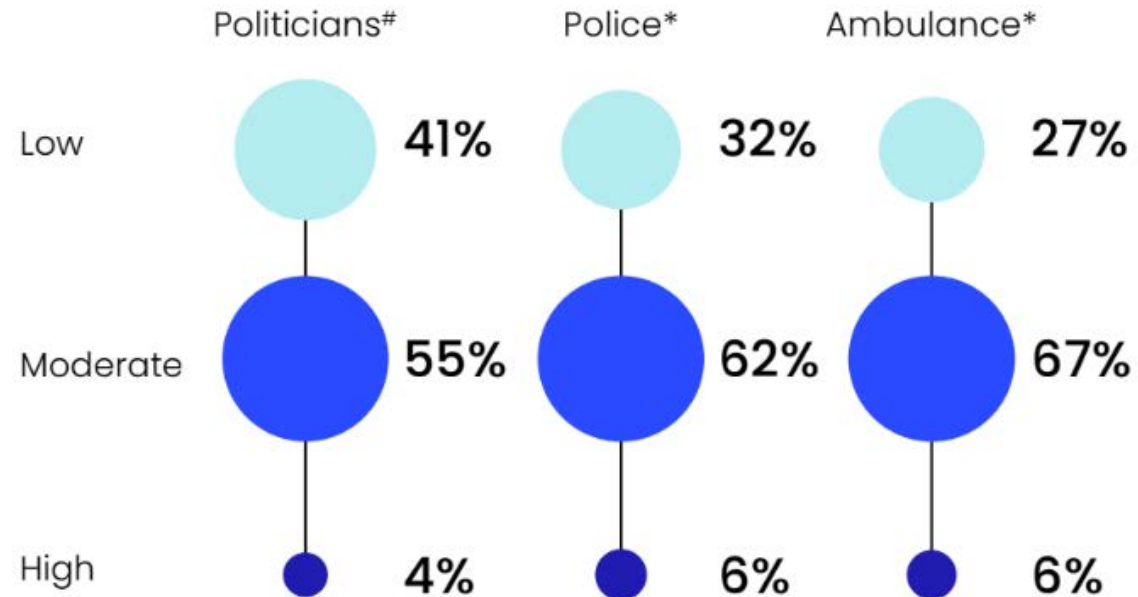


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The Mental Health of Local Leaders

State of mental wellbeing among respondents



Measured using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. #Survey respondents who were current politicians only. *Results from other research using the same scale.

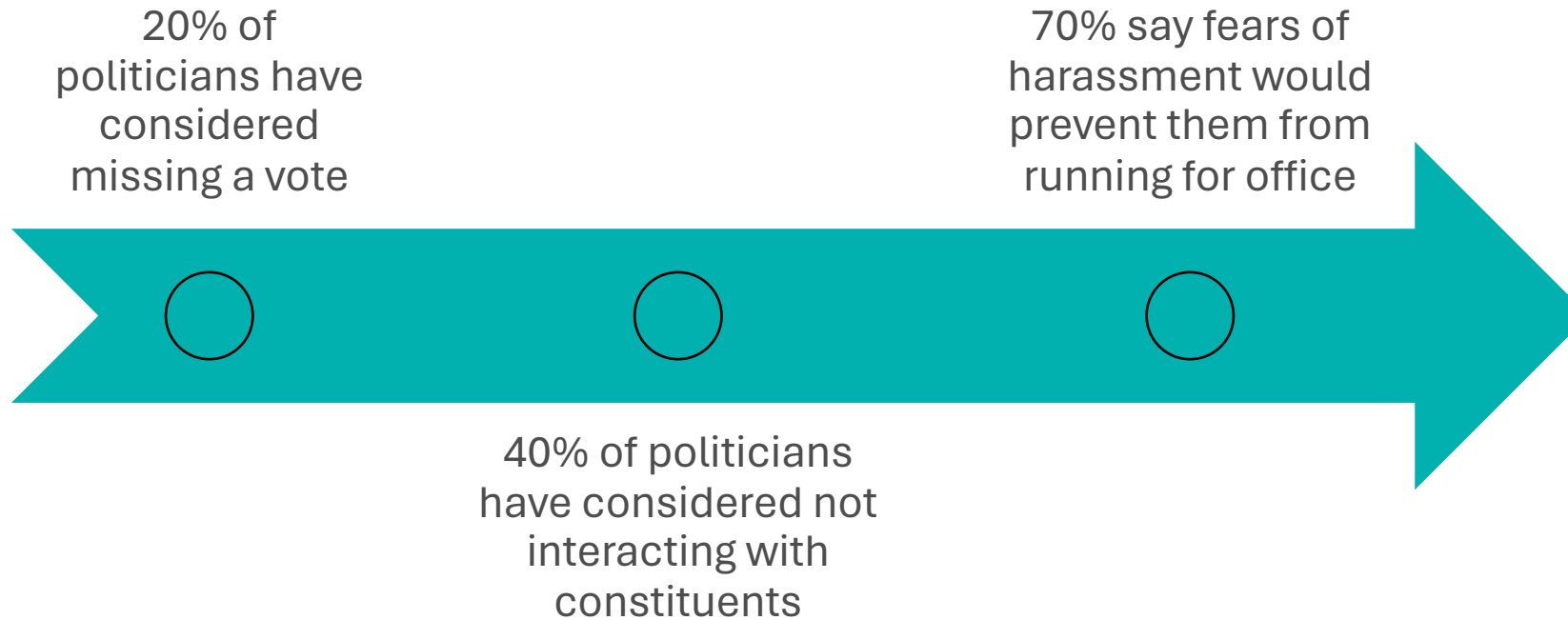
Source: *Mere Mortals: the State of Politicians' Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters* A report from the Apolitical Foundation



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The Impact



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The Impact

The Barriers Project: Retention of women and gender minorities in municipal elected offices in British Columbia and Alberta

This is a research project from **The Feminist Campaign School** in partnership with
the **Climate Caucus**



Authors:

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Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada



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The Impact

67% of respondents would like more resources to support their mental health

51% agreed or strongly agreed that there was stigma associated with politicians seeking help for their mental wellbeing

Source: Mere Mortals: the State of Politicians' Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters A report from the Apolitical Foundation



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The Impact

Wellbeing and Doing Good

When people make decisions from a place of health, you end up with better decisions. You have people who are not just catering to the squeakiest wheel, you have people who have the skills and capacities to look at things from a number of different perspectives and to balance people's immediate concerns with the need to look at the big picture and long-term consequences. Fundamentally, that's why we elect our political leaders, and that's what our political leaders should be doing.⁴⁴



Charishma Kaliyanda, Member for Liverpool,
Government of New South Wales

Source: *Mere Mortals: the State of Politicians' Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters* A report from the Apolitical Foundation



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Local Leaders Reduce Stigma

CAMH Mental Health and Addiction 101 Series | Stigma

What is stigma?



Negative attitudes (prejudice) and negative responses (discrimination) can make a person feel unwanted and shamed (stigmatized). Stigma can:

- seriously affect the well-being of those who experience it
- affect people while they are ill, while they are in treatment, while they are healing, and even when a substance use or mental health problem is a distant memory
- stop many people from seeking the treatment they need
- profoundly change how stigmatized people feel about themselves, and change the way others see them.

Language Matters

How to talk about mental health

Instead of...	Preferred language	Explanation
Suffering with, or victim of mental illness.	Experiencing, or being treated for, or has a diagnosis of, or a history of, mental illness.	Using the word "suffer" may be considered demeaning and disempowering.
Crazy/psycho/insane /schizo/nuts	Avoid using these words when describing a situation or a person.	These terms can be hurtful and have negative and inaccurate connotations associated with them.

Source: *Language Do's and Don'ts, Not Myself Today, v.8.0*



Peer Support

Positively impacts psychosocial and recovery outcomes

- White S, Foster R, Marks J, Morshead R, Goldsmith L, Barlow S, Sin J, Gillard S. The effectiveness of one-to-one peer support in mental health services: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Psychiatry*. 2020 Nov 11;20:534.

Can support community integration, sense of control, social functioning, and social support

- Ochocka J, Nelson G, Janzen R, Trainor J. A longitudinal study of mental health consumer/survivor initiatives: Part 3—A qualitative study of impacts of participation on new members. *J Community Psychol*. 2006 May;34(3):273–283.

Promotes feelings of empowerment and hope

- Corrigan PW. Impact of consumer-operated services on empowerment and recovery of people with psychiatric disabilities. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2006 Oct;57(10):1493–6.

Can improve self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-management of difficulties

- King AJ, Simmons MB. A systematic review of the attributes and outcomes of peer work and guidelines for reporting studies of peer interventions. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2018 Sep 01;69(9):961–97.

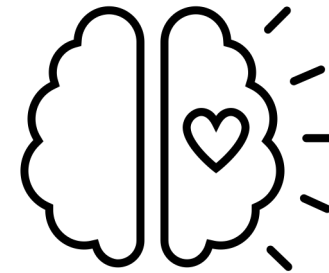


The Good News

75% of respondents said they would be **reluctant – or would refuse – to disclose a mental illness** to an employer or co-worker



76% of working Canadians reported that they would be **completely comfortable with and supportive of a colleague with a mental illness**



Source: Ipsos (2019). *Mental illnesses increasingly recognized as disability, but stigma persists*



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Best Practices for Local Leaders



Source: [CMHA BC Best Practices for Local Government toolkit](#)

Finding Support – Crisis Lines

- 9-8-8 (call or text) National Suicide Crisis Helpline
- BC Mental Health 24/7 Support Line: 310-6789 (no area code)
- Online Service for Adults: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (noon - 1 am)
- Online Service for Youth: www.YouthInBC.Com (noon - 1 am)
- Kids Help Phone 24/7: kidshelpphone.ca or 1-800-668-6868
- Seniors Distress 24/7 Line: 1-604-872-1234
- Visit www.cmha.bc.ca or call 1-800-555-8222 (toll-free in BC) or 604-688-3234 (in Greater Vancouver) for information and community resources on mental health or any mental illness



Finding Support - Peer Assisted Care Teams

North Shore

CMHA North and West
Vancouver



Call 1-888-261-7228 or
Text 778-839-1831
7 Days a Week, 8am -
12:30am

Kamloops

Kamloops Aboriginal
Friendship Society

In partnership with ASK
Wellness Society



New West

Purpose Society



Call 778-727-3909
7 Days a Week, 7am -
11:30pm

Prince George

Prince George Native
Friendship Centre



Victoria

AVI Health and Community
Services



Call/Text: 250-818-2454
Monday to Sunday, 7:30am -
12:30am

Comox Valley

AVI Health and Community
Services

In partnership with
K'ómoks First Nation





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Thank-you!

cmha.bc.ca

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada

In appreciation of our speakers today and with thanks for your contribution, UBCM has made a donation to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada has been championing the health and wellbeing of youth. They provide direct service to children by matching volunteers with youths in quality mentoring relationships to overcome adversities, helping them to do better in life.