

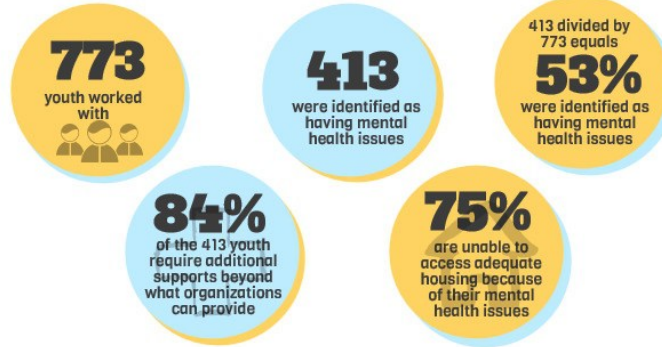
Mental Health of Homeless Youth In Canada

Homeless youth in Canada continue to cope with mental health issues at a rate of 2.5-5 times higher than the national average for youth.

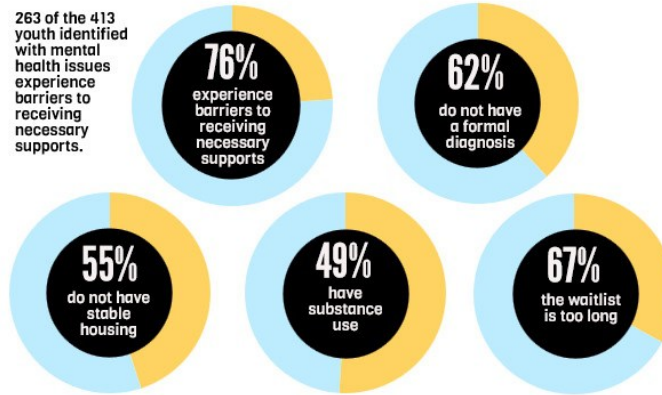
Many existing services do not meet the complex needs of homeless youth.

Communities continue to struggle in their efforts to support these homeless young people who need mental health programs and services.

Statistics: On Thursday, February 28, 2013, 10 organizations in 8 Canadian cities completed a snapshot survey of the homeless young people they worked with that day.



Barriers to services: There are a number of barriers being faced by homeless youth to accessing mental health services



More information:

We know homeless youth with unmet mental health needs will be homeless longer as unmet mental health issues are a barrier to finding appropriate housing.

The lack of appropriate mental health resources affects more than just those youth needing additional services. Of the programs surveyed, 84% indicated the number of youth with unmet mental health needs had an impact on other youth in the program, as staff would have to focus on crisis situations caused by youth with unmet mental health needs.

Suicide is the second highest cause of death in Canada for people aged 15-24, accounting for 24% of all deaths for people in that age group. For homeless youth, suicide, overdose and unintentional injury were the leading causes of death. In another survey of 208 homeless youth, 46% had attempted suicide at some point. This same study found the social stigma associated with being homeless was linked to low self-esteem, loneliness and suicidal ideation.

Sources:

Canadian Mental Health Association "Mental Health for All", April 2012

Roy, E., Haley, N., Leclerc, P., Sochanski, B., Bourdreau, J. & Boivin, J. "Mortality in a cohort of street youth in Montreal". Journal of the American Medical Association, 292(5) (2004): 569-574.

Kidd, S. A. "Youth homelessness and social stigma". Journal of Youth Adolescence 36, 2007: 291-299.

Participating Organizations and Cities:

- Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Vancouver BC
- The Doorway, Calgary AB
- Boys and Girls Club, Calgary, AB
- Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Inc., Saskatoon, SK
- Resource Assistance for Youth, Winnipeg, MB
- YMCA of Greater Toronto, Toronto ON
- Eva's Initiatives, Toronto, ON
- Dans la Rue, Montreal, QC
- Phoenix Youth Programs, Halifax NS
- Choices for Youth, St. John's NL

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