

Mental Health (equated with positive mental health):

- Necessary for a life that is healthy, fulfilling, and productive.
- More than the absence of mental illness.
- Begins before birth and continues through the lifespan.
- Shaped by life circumstances, life settings and the events throughout our lives.
- Can fluctuate throughout life from a state of languishing to a state of flourishing.
- Fluctuations in mental health affect the community as well as the individual's quality of life and general health.
- Modifiable by addressing risk and protective factors from individual to societal levels.

Who is involved? Everyone

- Mental health is everybody's business: It can only be achieved through an intersectoral approach, an all of government approach, as well as good engagement of the public through an all-of-society approach.
- Other sectors (education, housing, justice etc.) may not have mental health promotion as their core activity, yet their actions and interventions deeply impact population mental health and wellness.
- Public health actors are increasingly called upon to play a leading role – as a "specialist workforce" for PMHWP as well as to establish partnerships with the overall workforce engaged in physical and mental health care, social services, community support, and other sectors.

How is PMHWP done?

By addressing the social determinants of mental health and wellness at societal, environmental, community, family and individual levels, throughout the life course.

- Access to essential resources and opportunities; social inclusion; tolerance; cultural diversity, continuity and identity; freedom from discrimination and violence are key.

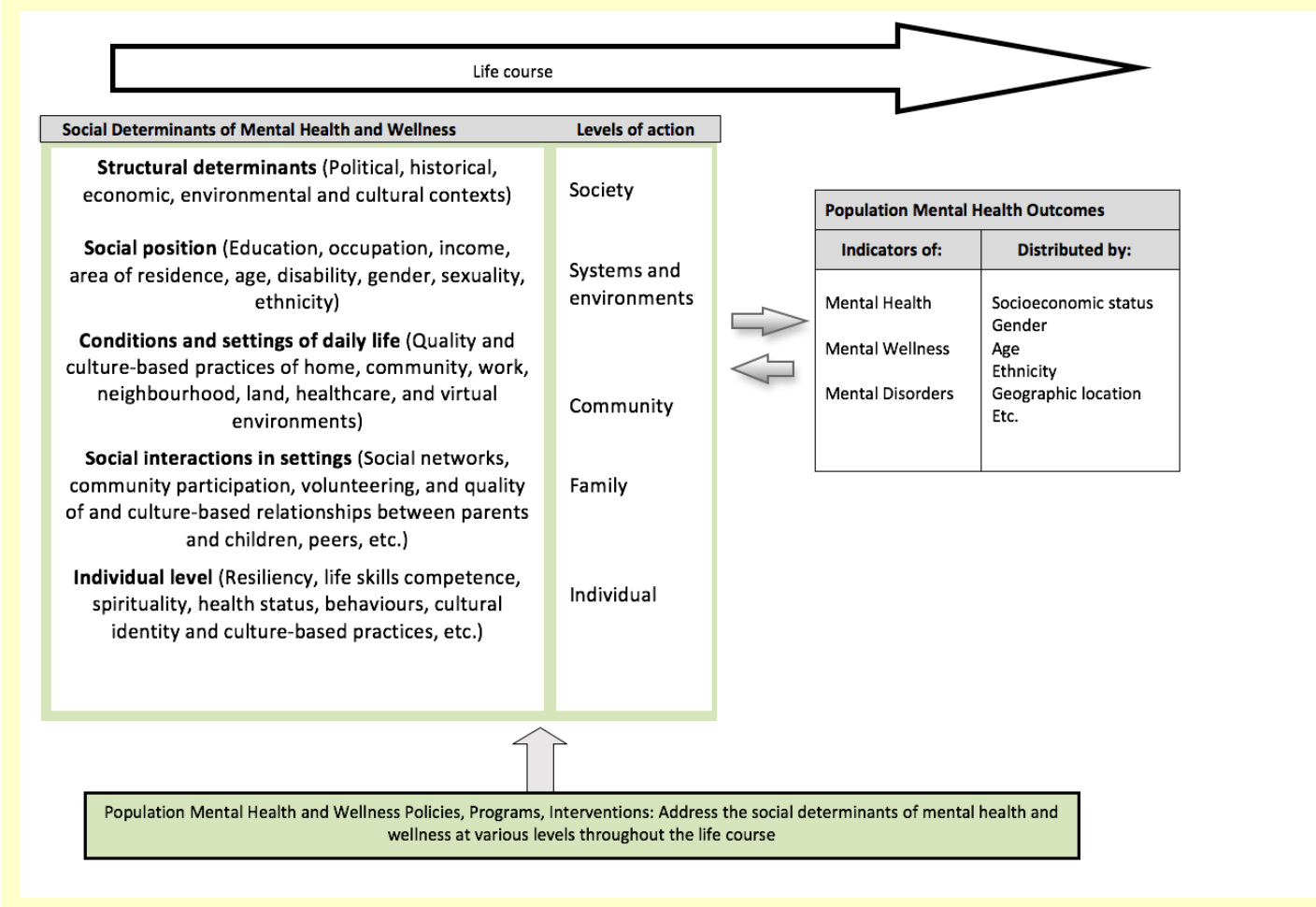
Through multiple simultaneous strategies combining:

- Healthy public policies
- Creating supportive environments
- Strengthening community action
- Reinforcing personal skills
- Reorienting health services

Using:

- Proportionate universalism
- Cultural and gendered approach
- Participation and empowerment
- Strength and competence enhancement

What is Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion (PMHWP)? Improve mental health and wellness for all and reduce inequalities in mental health and wellness



Why is it important to promote mental health?

- Improved mental health is associated with improvements in physical health, longevity, healthy behaviours, healthy child development, school readiness and success, productivity & employment, participation, social capital, social relations, community safety & efficacy, quality of life, recovery (mental illness and addictions), etc.
- These improvements affect everyone: those who are living with mental illnesses, and those who are not.
- Improved mental health is associated with reduced incidence and prevalence of mental illness, and can support reduced burden of substance use problems.
- Populations and systems benefit from mental health promotion.
- There is a return on investment for mental health promotion and mental illness prevention. A long term view is necessary.

Event Document: Why we are here together?

You have been invited to this event because of your expertise and leadership in the field of population mental health and wellness promotion (PMHWP) and your potential to influence public health practice in your jurisdiction. During this forum we will be engaging in discussions about who comprises the public health workforce involved in PMHWP, what this workforce does or could do, and what knowledge, skills and system-level support this workforce needs to integrate and implement a PMHWP perspective into mainstream public health practice.

These discussions will form the basis of a guidance document on the roles and practices of public health in population mental health and wellness promotion across Canada.

WHY the Forum?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about community well-being, mental health, and how varying levels of mental health affect entire communities as well as individuals has led to a shift in paradigms – away from an individualized and clinical perspective of mental illness to consider mental health as an outcome of the ways in which we live throughout our lives: in the places where we are born, play, grow up, live, work, age, pray and love. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recent years, those working in the field of Canadian public health have identified many needs to advance PMHWP, including increased clarity and support regarding practitioners’ roles and mandates in this field as well as expanded knowledge, skills and networking supports to improve and facilitate PMHWP policies and programs. Developing a specialized workforce with sufficient knowledge, capacity and skills is critical for driving PMHWP work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated population mental health promotion perspective is needed to look upstream to the conditions that foster and support mental health, promote overall community well-being, and encourage equity in the distribution of population mental health and wellness outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public health workforce is well positioned to collaborate and build partnerships with other key actors (from political, health and social care services, community, and other sectors), to assess community needs as well as to implement, embed, support, advocate for and evaluate policies, programs and initiatives that address the social determinants of mental health at many levels throughout the course of life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health can focus on health as it is actually experienced by people themselves, holistically, with an aim to address mental and physical health equally. • By focusing upstream on the social determinants of mental health and wellness, public health can do more, to tackle many of its priorities: numerous physical and mental health issues, as well as inequalities in physical and mental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need and an opportunity to learn from expertise and knowledge in Indigenous frameworks on mental wellness promotion as well as to integrate Indigenous knowledge, skills and processes into public health practices aimed at PMHWP.

In the field of public health, **WHO** and **WHAT** is involved in Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion?

HOW do we support public health efforts to address Population Mental Health and Wellness Promotion?

This resource is based on previous work by the National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (http://www.ncchpp.ca/550/Population_Mental_Health.ccnpps) and by the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health (<http://nccph.ca/projects/mentalhealth?/mentalhealth>). We thank the Forum Advisory Committee for their contributions: S. Priest, P. Smith, F. Knoop, T. Meyer, S. Jackson, B. Leikin, M.C. Roberge, D. Ramsay, S. Smith, C. Hopkins, as well as P. Mantoura & C. Howarth of the National Collaborating Centres.

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