



Collaborative influence-in-action

Case story: Promoting population mental health and wellness

NCC NETWORK COLLABORATES TO MEET KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR

Canadian Governments at every level cite mental health and well-being as a priority for public health. Increasingly, the public health workforce is being called on to protect and improve it. To support this work, the six National Collaborating Centres for Public Health (NCCs) combined their diverse and complementary perspectives to advance collective knowledge and action on population mental health promotion.

Identifying sector strengths through foundational research

When the six NCCs began this joint project, they built on existing foundational work. The NCC for Healthy Public Policy had recently assessed the public health **workforce's needs in both mental health and mental health promotion**. Key activities included an analysis of current strengths and gaps, including in-person consultations and an online bilingual questionnaire, completed by more than 450 public health practitioners from across Canada. This needs assessment showed that public health practitioners have an understanding of the important links between public health and mental health, but report they are not sufficiently trained or supported to intervene in the most effective ways.

Filling knowledge gaps through an all-NCC approach

Together, the NCCs developed a strategy to synthesize the best available evidence on population mental health promotion for children and youth. Each NCC developed one discussion paper, based on extensive literature searches and relevant resources from across the network. The goal was to provide numerous entry points for public health to collaborate with other sectors to support evidence-based action that addresses the determinants of mental well-being for all children and youth in Canada.

NCCS work together on cross-cutting mental health issues

The 2017 *Population mental health promotion for children and youth* collection includes:

- a foundational report that includes definitions, concepts, methods, and cross-cutting equity themes;
- topical papers on mental health and environmental health, Indigenous children and youth, infectious diseases, chronic diseases and healthy public policy;
- specific roles for public health, including proven and promising practices across disciplines and settings; and
- a scan of Canadian and international resources



Contributing to the knowledge base; increasing capacity for population mental health promotion

The NCC knowledge synthesis initiative is a major contribution to the public health literature in Canada, both for existing practitioners and for students of public health. Access to this integrated collection will build workforce competencies to support the integration of population mental health promotion into public health programs, policies, and practices.

Engaging national partners and action networks

Recently, a **national forum on the role of public health in population mental health and wellness**

promotion was hosted in collaboration with four partners, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. This event brought together key stakeholders from across Canada, including public health practitioners, researchers, Indigenous organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, sharing a common interest and involvement in this field. The forum generated resources as well as a shared list of people actively working to promote mental health and wellness in their jurisdictions. This emerging network has the potential to become a community of practice that supports a common agenda on this topic.

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Strengthening public health across Canada: The influence of the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health is available in its entirety in electronic format (PDF) at www.nccph.ca.

La version française est également disponible au www.ccnsp.ca sous le titre *Appuyer la santé publique partout au Canada - l'influence des Centres de collaboration nationale en santé publique*.

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