



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: November 30, 2024
FROM: Joline Belliveau, National Chairperson of Service
TO: Provincial Chairpersons of Service
THROUGH: Provincial Presidents and Secretaries
CC: National Executive
National Life Member Liaison

The focus for [Bell Let's Talk Day](#) (January 22, 2025) is youth mental health as the country faces a growing mental health crisis in Canadian youth.

Mental Health Research Canada ([MHRC](#)) reports that youth are particularly vulnerable as approximately 66-75% of mental health issues have an early onset before the age of 24. Additionally, MHRC reports:

- Suicide remains a leading cause of death in Canadian youth—21% of deaths, while 24% of youth (16-24) report suicidal ideation.
- Higher rates of poor mental health are reported in priority youth populations such as newcomers, Black and Indigenous youth and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. These same populations also experience higher barriers to accessing care.
- Youth, while willing to talk about mental health in general, self-stigmatize and are reluctant to discuss their own mental health.
- Approximately 1.25 million youth need mental health support annually; however, 57% of those youth are not receiving that help.
- Youth mental health issues have worsened since the pandemic, with contributing factors such as social disconnection, excessive screen time (more than six hours a day) and socio-economic challenges. Fifty per cent of young adults (18-34) feel climate change also negatively impacts their mental health.

A 2022 report from the [Canadian Institute for Health Information](#) about the mental health of children and youth in Canada looked at hospitalization rates related to mental health disorders. Some of the key findings include:

- A small decrease in emergency department visits and hospitalizations for children/youth with mental health disorders in 2020 was noted; however, the proportion of visits/hospitalizations for mental disorders increased.
- Females, and those in the 15-17- and 18-24-year-old age brackets had higher rates of emergency department visits/hospitalizations for mental health reasons.
- Despite an overall decrease in hospital care, there was an increase in youth emergency department visits and hospitalizations for eating disorders, particularly females ages 10-17. “Eating disorders are complex and potentially life-threatening conditions often associated with food, body weight and body shape.”
- The use of psychotropic medications rose over time, with female youth showing the highest rates of usage for mood and anxiety medications.
- Though youth living in less-affluent neighbourhoods had higher rates of overall emergency department visits/hospitalizations for mental health, youth from the most affluent areas had higher hospitalization rates for eating disorders.

Ways to Help Youth with Mental Health Issues

- Have resources and information about support groups, hotlines and professional service providers available to provide to those in need.
- Be patient.
- Check in from time to time.
- Educate yourself about mental health issues.
- Be there to listen.
- Fundraise for a mental health organization.