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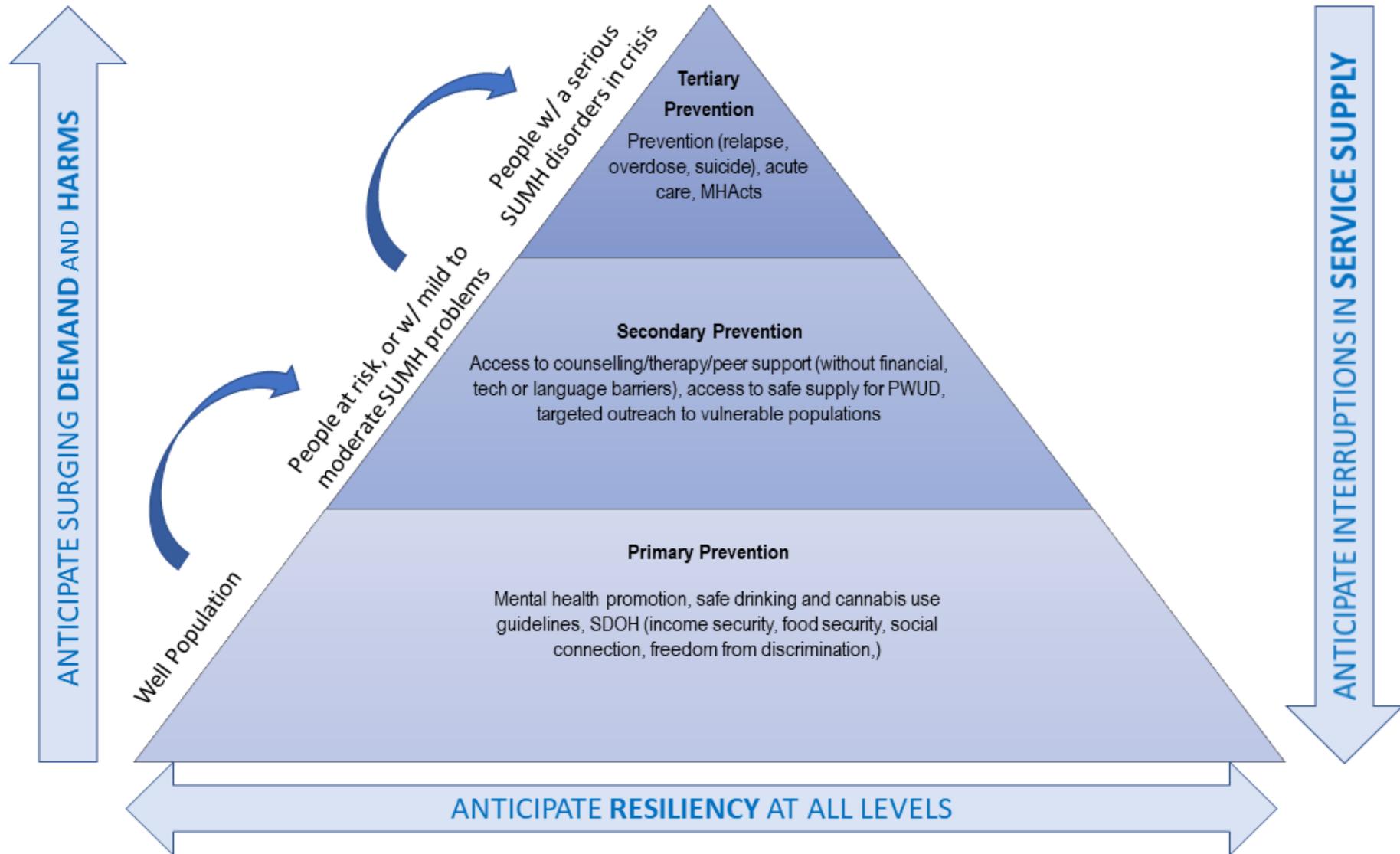
COVID-19 and Mental Health: Policy Lens

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June 5 2020



COVID19, Mental Health and Substance Use



Preliminary Policy Scan

A rapid environmental scan was conducted (March 28 and April 14)

- to identify policy considerations and emerging issues amidst the first wave of COVID-19
- with a focus on the unmet and anticipated needs of vulnerable populations, healthcare providers, and the mental health system

The components of the scan included:

- rapid review of the academic literature
- analysis of media reports
- international scan of COVID-19
- scan of key stakeholder perspectives and experiences in Canada

Key Finding

Tremendous response leaving some behind, globally

- Tremendously rapid and innovative response mounted to meet the needs of the general population.
- Dissemination of wellness information and a quick pivoting to virtual services and supports.
- But the needs of some key vulnerable populations are not being met by these offerings.





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Key Finding

Opportunity to prepare and transform system

- The most significant impacts on mental health, substance use and service systems are likely to be felt in the aftermath of pandemic.
- Window of opportunity to ramp up planning now.

There is an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with service users, providers and mental health services, to create a post- pandemic system that incorporate innovations in virtual care while not leaving behind the transformations that were underway.

(Key informant, Canada)

Key Finding

Focused attention on health and mental healthcare providers is critical

- Supporting and building upon mental health supports being offered to frontline healthcare providers and identifying the mental health needs of mental health professionals are key to meeting their needs during and after the crisis.
- Focused attention on MH workforce planning for the post-pandemic period is needed in order to better align workforce capacity (public and private sector) with the mental health needs of the population.

PPE has been the priority, it has swamped the possibility of prioritizing the mental health workforce. (Key informant, Europe)



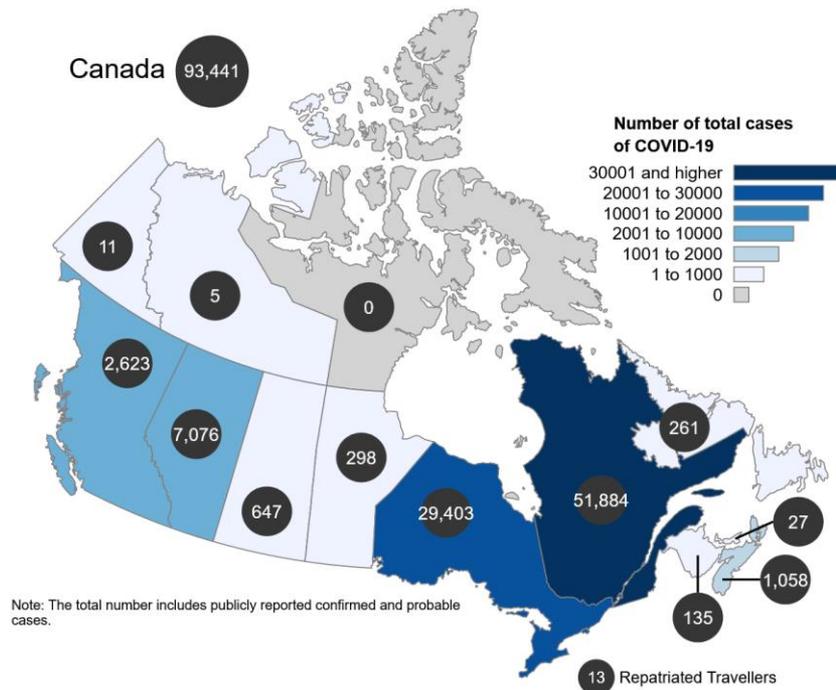
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Key Finding

Mental health impacts are delayed, complex and long-term

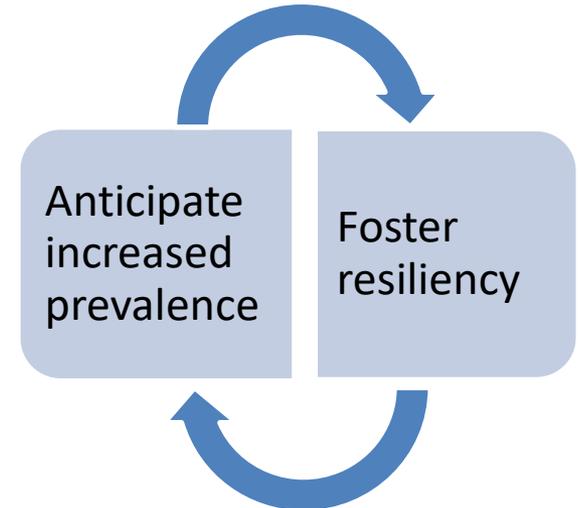
- Lessons learned internationally from COVID-19 and earlier disasters and epidemics suggest that:
 - planning and reforms are needed to stay ahead of the mental health impacts
 - these impacts will be long-term, complex, and may take time to fully emerge
- But caution against a one size fits all approach



Key Finding

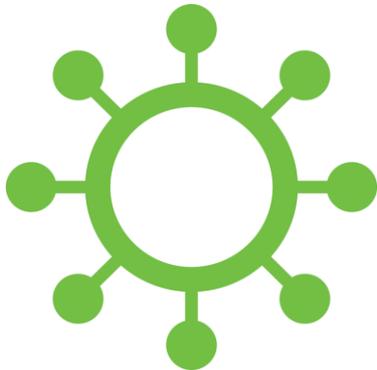
Importance of fostering resiliency

- Anticipation of increased prevalence of mental health problems and illnesses due to COVID-19 in Canada must be balanced against the risk of pathologizing normal emotional responses to an unprecedented and highly stressful situation.
- Mental health services as well as interventions that support meaning-making and post-traumatic growth and resilience will need to be available as early as possible in order to buffer and protect the psychological health of people in Canada.



NEXT STEPS

- Over the coming months, the MHCC will work in collaboration with key partners to provide additional policy advice in response to COVID-19, in keeping with its mission to support the mental health of people in Canada.



Visit our Mental Health Resource Hub to access information, resources, and tools related to mental health and wellness during COVID-19.

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19>

Visitez notre Carrefour de ressources pour accéder aux ressources et outils en santé mentale et bien-être durant la pandémie de COVID-19

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/Francais/covid19>