**Chapter 2**

**A Policy Framework for Mental Health Practice in Canada**

## Learning Objectives

* To provide an overview of the legislative framework for developing mental health policy in Canada, including federal/provincial responsibilities.
* To provide an overview of health policy in Canada.
* To describe the history and development of mental health policy in Canada.

# Lecture Outline

## Background

* The Constitution Act
* The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
* The challenges of a health care system that is federally administered and provincially delivered
  + The *Auton* case
    - Funding for ABA therapy
  + The Jordan River Anderson case
    - Led to the creation of Jordan’s Principle
  + COVID-19 pandemic
    - Disparities in care across provinces

## Health Policy in Canada

* Canadian values related to health care and mental health care
* The emergence of universal health care
* The Canada Health Act
  + Five criteria to qualify for federal health-care funding
* The Kirby Report
* The Romanow Report
* Social determinants of health

## Mental Health Policy in Canada: History and Reform

* 1800s: From jails to asylums
  + Treatments were focused on containment and moral interventions such as manual labour
* 1900s: Two divergent models for understanding and treating mental illness emerged

1. Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud)
2. Biological model of neuropsychiatry
   * Treatment modalities included:
     + Insulin shock therapy
     + Electroconvulsive shock therapy (ECT)
     + Prefrontal lobotomies
     + Phenothiazines and lithium

* Deinstitutionalization
  + A global movement beginning in the 1960s
* Focused on the reduction of beds in psychiatric hospitals, with most patients being moved into the community
* From community care to community neglect
  + - Insufficient community resources resulted in the revolving door of hospital care
    - The move to non-institutionalized care was not a comprehensive plan
* In the 1980s, a new era of mental health reform across Canada began
  + Increased investment in community-based services, with a focus on individuals with serious mental illness
  + Consumer partnerships for the planning and administration of programs
  + Consumer self-help groups
  + Transinstitutionalization
    - People with mental illness in jails in the absence of care
  + Ontario’s *The Time Is Now* (2002)
  + Canada’s first national report on mental health, *Out of the Shadows at Last* (2006)
* The first Mental Health Commission of Canada developed three strategic initiatives:

1. Develop a national mental health strategy
2. Conduct a ten-year anti-stigma campaign
3. Build a national knowledge exchange centre

* Building from previous reforms, the Mental Health Commission of Canada released *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: A Mental Health Strategy for Canada* in 2012

# Ideas for the Classroom

1. Present a summary of provincial health policy to students. Ask them to examine their provincial policy in light of the six strategic initiatives presented in the Mental Health Commission of Canada plan *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: A Mental Health Strategy for Canada*.
2. The following websites will provide students with the opportunity to explore different models of consumer self-help and mutual aid. Have students explore the websites on their own time, and then discuss them as a class.
   * Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://www.cmha.ca/>
   * Fireweed Collective: <https://fireweedcollective.org/>
   * Partners for Mental Health: <http://www.partnersformh.ca/>
3. Have students read a recent media article or report regarding a person with mental illness. Ask them to form small groups and have a 5–10 minute discussion about the report. Then, ask them to identify any types of stigma—public or self-stigma—that apply.
4. Mental health has been referred to as the poor cousin of the health system, yet “there is no health without mental health” (World Health Organization, 2018). Discuss this statement as a class, using the following article as a resource.

* World Health Organization. 2018. “Mental health: strengthening our response.” <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>

# Ideas for Discussion and Debate

1. How do the prevalence rates of mental health issues and the funding rates for mental health care compare?
2. Who is responsible for mental health policy in your region, your province, and nationally? Which laws and policies apply to your work as a social worker in mental health?
3. The text states that up to 70 per cent of new male inmates meet the criteria for a mental disorder. There is also a link between homelessness and deinstitutionalization. What do you think is needed to counteract the issue of transinstitutionalization?
4. Look at the six key recommendations of the Mental Health Commission of Canada’s mental health strategy. Are these consistent with some of the areas that need improvement in your region (and in the country)?
5. Can you identify a situation or experience that represents an example of stigma towards mental illness?
6. Can you identify any organizations in your region that have programs for mental health in the workplace?
7. How can you, as a service provider, practice in a way that eliminates the barriers of stigma?
8. List the five principles of the Canada Health Act and reflect on mental health service needs. Which are considered essential? Which are not?
9. How does Jordan’s Principle apply to mental health care for Indigenous youth? Review issues for those who live in urban centres and those who live in rural and remote communities.
10. Identify the social determinants of health and review how social workers who work in mental health can provide information, intervention, and advocacy in these areas.

# Supplemental Resources

1. Mental Health Commission of Canada. 2012. *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada*. Calgary, AB: Mental Health Commission of Canada. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHStrategy_Strategy_ENG.pdf>
2. Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. 2002. “Volume Six: Recommendations for Reform.” *The Health of Canadians: The Federal Role.* Ottawa, ON: Senate of Canada. <https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/372/soci/rep/repoct02vol6-e.htm>
3. Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. 2006. *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada.* Ottawa, ON: Senate of Canada*.* <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/391/soci/rep/pdf/rep02may06part1-e.pdf>
4. Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health. 2016. *Mental Health Now! Advancing the Mental Health of Canadians: The Federal Role.*  <https://www.cpa-apc.org/wp-content/uploads/CAMIMH_MHN_EN_Final_small.pdf>
5. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. 2016. *Mental Health and Primary Care Policy Framework.* Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. <https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---public-policy-submissions/primarycarepolicyframework_march2016-pdf.pdf>
6. Corrigan, P. 2004. “How stigma interferes with mental health care.” *American Psychologist, 59*(7), 614-625.
7. Knaak, S., E. Mantler, and A. Szeto. 2017. “Mental illness-related stigma in healthcare: Barriers to access and care and evidence-based solutions.” *Healthcare Management Forum, 30*(2), 111-116. <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/media/3859>
8. Anderssen, E. 2015. “How to fix Canada’s mental health system.” *The Globe and Mail.* <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/how-to-fix-canadas-mental-health-system/article24733006/>
9. The Agenda with Steve Paikin. 2016. “Canada’s Mental Health.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgI-pPkPphk>
10. Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health. “Faces Campaign.” <https://www.camimh.ca/faces-campaign>
11. McPhail, B. 2017. “The Current State of Mental Health in Canada.” Canadian Civil Liberties Association. <https://ccla.org/current-state-mental-health-canada/>
12. Canadian Mental Health Association. “Public Policy.” <https://cmha.ca/document-category/public-policy>
13. World Health Organization. 2018. “Mental health: strengthening our response.” <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>