

SOCIAL INCLUSION:

THE KEY DETERMINANT OF MENTAL WELLNESS

INCOME



Income shapes living conditions and affects mental health.



Income is more important when social services and benefits are not accessible.



Low income imposes isolation.



High levels of physiological and psychological stress arise from conditions of low income.



1 in 5 BC children live in poverty

HOUSING



People who are unstably housed report poor mental health and/or problem substance use.



Those who spend a large part of their income on housing are more likely to feel socially excluded.

520,700

Canadians living with mental illness are inadequately housed

As many as **119,800** people living with mental illness are homeless



LOW STATUS IN AN UNEQUAL SOCIETY

People who are assigned lower status due to relative poverty face pressure to prove their self-worth, anxiety and the threat of social rejection.



LIVING IN POVERTY TAKES ENERGY

The stress of not being able to meet basic needs deprioritizes social connection and increases vulnerability to mental illness or problematic substance use.



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CAN BE COSTLY

People with low incomes often do not have discretionary funds for time out with friends or participation in social, cultural or recreational activities.



SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORTS CAN BE DEMORALIZING

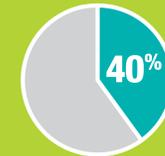
When a person does access public services, they often have to go through rigorous application procedures and may be turned away many times.



STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

People who are identified as different because of their race, gender, sexual orientation and/or ability experience exclusion because of prejudicial views and discriminatory policies.

The literature on the social determinants of health reveals a single, consistent theme in connection to mental health and substance use: **social inclusion**. Whether or not a person can meet their basic needs, cultivate friendships, secure a sense of place within a community and maintain a stable position in the social hierarchy determine their vulnerability to anxiety, depression and problem substance use; while the recovery potential of people living with mental illness or addiction is deeply impacted by the barriers they face obtaining and maintaining the resources and relationships necessary for social inclusion.



Percentage of people with mental health issues who experience stigma, almost 3X the rate of people with other health conditions

FOOD SECURITY



People who experience food insecurity are often excluded from the social practice of food sharing.



Adults who are food insecure are more likely to experience depression and social isolation.



The failures of BC's social safety net worsen food insecurity, e.g., having to provide multiple documents to access food banks.

A single person who receives basic welfare has an annual income that reaches **less than 40%** of the poverty line



UN/EMPLOYMENT



While employment provides income, purpose, social contacts and status, un- or under-employment leads to material and social deprivation.



People living with mental illness benefit from employment if it aligns with their recovery goals. Work can be a means for participating in community.