

# THE PROMISE OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

## Strong Returns on Upstream Investment

### MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS...

**BEGIN  
EARLY**



70% of adults living with mental health disorders report that these difficulties started before the age of 18

**ARE  
PREVALENT**



1 in 5 Canadian students struggles with a mental health disorder

**CAN BE  
COSTLY**



Limits personal, educational and occupational success, and places high burden on emergency and tertiary health care systems

**CAN BE  
PREVENTED!**



Early identification and early evidence-based intervention, can prevent or reduce the impact of mental health disorders

**UP TO 80% OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM WILL NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS WITH STIGMA, HELP-SEEKING, AND ACCESS TO SERVICES**

**WE HAVE A  
ROLE TO PLAY  
AT SCHOOL**



Schools are uniquely positioned to provide mental health promotion and prevention services to build resiliency and minimize the social and economic burden of mental illness.

### THE POTENTIAL OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH:

Economic models show that mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention services at school yields significant return on investment, for example:

- Social Emotional Learning (83.73 £ Return/£ Invested)
- Anti-Bullying Programming (14.35 £ Return/£ Invested)
- Early Years Mental Health Promotion (\$6-16 Return/\$ Invested)

Investments in school mental health yield cost savings in other sectors like health and justice.

### SCHOOLS ARE OPTIMAL SETTINGS FOR:

- Encouraging hope, purpose, and belonging, every day, for all students
- Enhancing social-emotional skills and good self-care strategies
- Building student mental health literacy
- Reducing stigma
- Supporting youth voice and leadership
- Partnering with parents/guardians/caregivers to enhance well-being
- Identifying mental health problems early
- Providing evidence-based prevention services
- Supporting students to access more intensive services when needed

Sources: Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, 2016; Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2011; Garcia, Heckman, Leaf & Prados, 2017; Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, 2013; Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2011, 2012; Opening Eyes Report, 2012; SBMHSA School-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium, 2012; Waddell, 2002

School Mental Health ASSIST is a provincial implementation support team, working alongside the Ontario Ministry of Education to promote student mental health and well-being across all 72 district school boards.

Learn more at [www.smh-assist.ca](http://www.smh-assist.ca) and follow us @SMHASSIST. Contact us at [info@smh-assist.ca](mailto:info@smh-assist.ca).