

# Youth Mental Health in Canada

→ WHY WE NEED TO INVEST NOW ←



## KEY MESSAGES

- 1 Our current actions of sending youth to the emergency department is the least cost-effective and welcoming way to access help.
- 2 We need to improve access to mental health supports and services for youth and help reduce the burden of mental illness in the future.
- 3 We can do this by investing in early intervention, which has been shown to be both economical and successful in improving youth outcomes.
- 4 ACCESS Open Minds is developing evidence-based solutions that have been adopted by youth initiatives across Canada and can lead the change in youth mental health.

## OUR CURRENT REALITY

### Young people at risk

About 10-20% of Canadian children and youth are at risk for developing a mental disorder.<sup>1</sup>



The risk for suicide is alarmingly higher for Indigenous youth than for non-Indigenous youth.<sup>5</sup>

### Unmet needs

About 44% of Canadian youth have reported that their mental health care needs have not been met, particularly counselling.<sup>8</sup>



The pathway to mental health care is often complex, involving long delays before getting help<sup>2</sup> which can result in worse outcomes for youth.

### Frequent emergency visits

Emergency rooms are becoming the front door for mental health help for youth, with a 75% increase in visits by Canadian youth in the last 10 years.<sup>1</sup>



Emergency rooms and confrontations with police can be stressful and traumatic for young people<sup>2</sup> and is not an effective long-term solution.

### High cost of underfunding

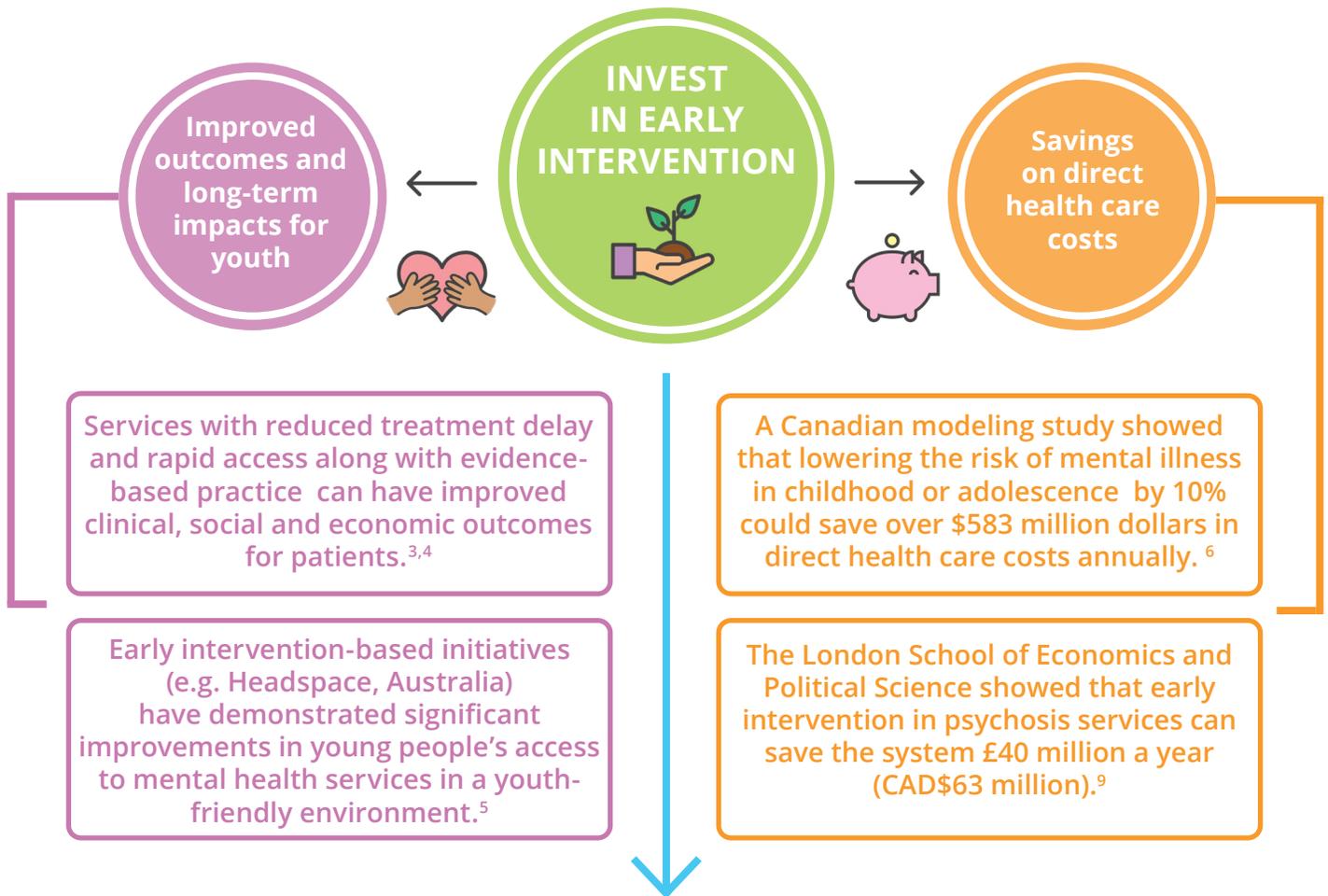
Public spending on mental health in Canada has decreased<sup>7</sup> and is not sufficient to address the current state of youth mental health.<sup>8</sup>



Given our current trajectory, direct costs from mental health illnesses in Canada are expected to climb upwards of **\$2.3 trillion (CAD)**.<sup>6</sup>

Note: All statistics, unless otherwise stated, are for Canada.

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO



## ACCESS OPEN MINDS CAN LEAD THE WAY

### DEVELOPING CANADIAN EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS



Since 2014, ACCESS Open Minds has been developing evidence-based approaches to improving youth mental health services through testing innovative approaches to care across Canada and meaningfully evaluating their impact and outcomes on youth, caregivers, communities and return on public investment.



Developed with diverse youth, families, service providers, researchers and policymakers, the ACCESS Open Minds approach builds on local strengths along with youth, family and community engagement to improve mental health services for youth.



Locally built, each ACCESS Open Minds site, while different in delivery are united by standard service and evaluation components that work together to ensure that services are best meeting the needs of youth in their community.

**ACCESS Open Minds Service and Evaluation Frameworks<sup>38</sup> and related benchmarks have been adopted by many other youth initiatives and are currently standard approaches that exist in services in diverse contexts across the country. [Learn more here.](#)**

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. (2019, October 7). Mental health care needs, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2019001/article/00011-eng.htm>