



# A SNAPSHOT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN ATLANTIC CANADA - update 2015

This product updates a sample of indicators originally published by the Public Health Agency of Canada in 2012 in the report entitled Mental Health in Atlantic Canada – A Snapshot. The full report may be accessed in English and in French online.

## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

*It is a state of well-being that allows a person to realise his or her abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to his or her community.<sup>i</sup>*

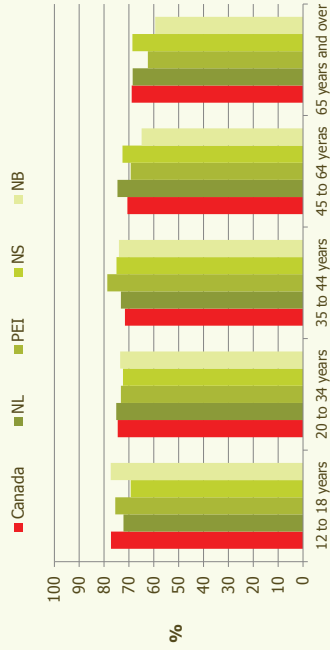
### Mental health is different from the absence of mental illness.

Mental health is influenced by many interacting social, environmental, psychological and biological factors. Perceived mental health appears to decline slightly in older years.

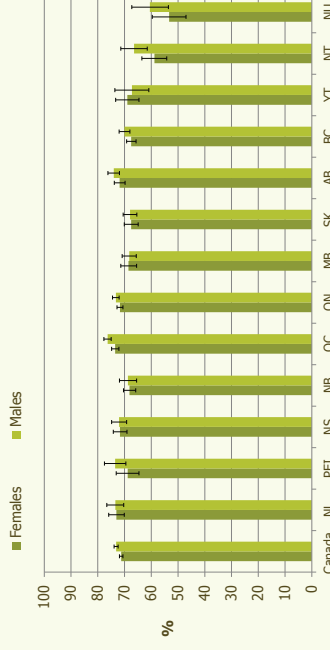
## PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTH, 2011-2012

Percentage of people age 12 years and over who rated their own mental health as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

### BY AGE



### BY SEX



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

### Early life experiences affect mental health over the course of a person's life.

Supporting mental health and resilience in children and families is important.

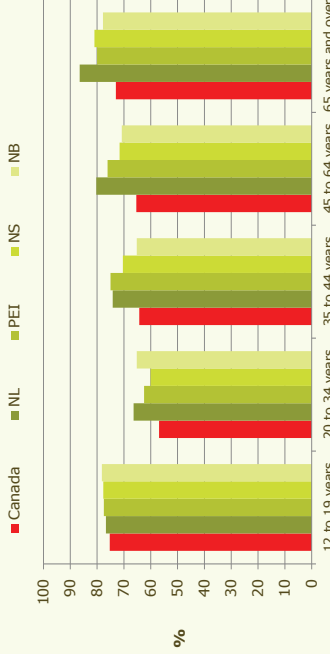
### Cultural values, such as a sense of place and community, protect the mental health and well-being of those living in Atlantic Canada.

People who live in Atlantic Canada are more likely to report a strong sense of community belonging compared with Canadians as a whole. This is true for all age groups.

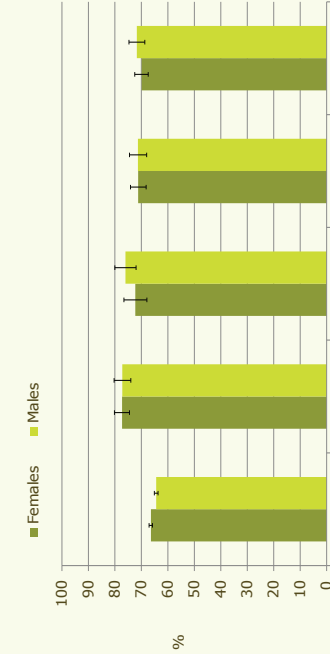
## SENSE OF BELONGING, 2011-2012

Percentage of people age 12 years and over who reported a 'somewhat strong' or 'very strong' sense of belonging to the local community.

### BY AGE



### BY SEX



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

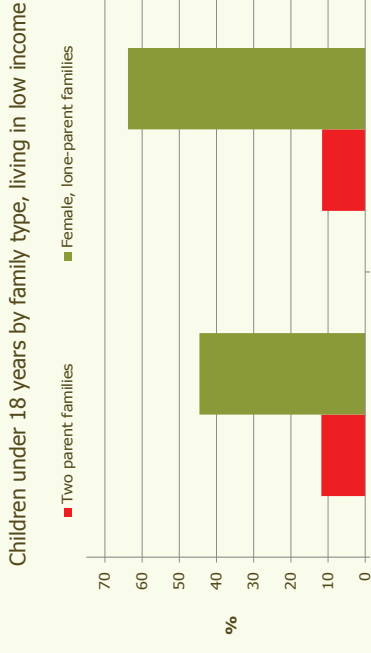
### Low income and financial security are among the strongest predictors of poor mental health.

Children in single-parent families are much more likely to live in low income than those in two-parent families in Atlantic Canada. Women are also more likely to live in low income than men.

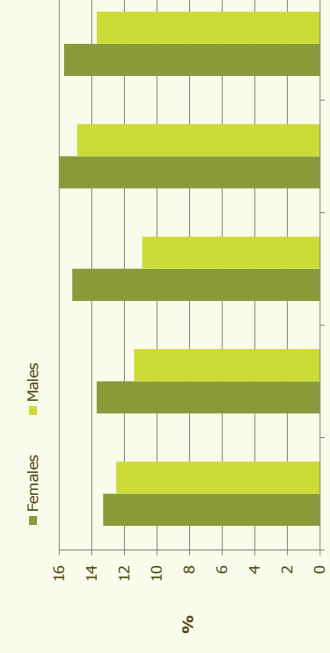
## LOW INCOME BY MARKET BASKET MEASURE, 2011

A person in low income (MBM) is someone whose disposable family income falls below the cost of the goods and services in the Market Basket for their community or community size.

### BY AGE



### BY SEX



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)



### DID YOU KNOW?

People who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, Aboriginal, recent immigrants, or homeless are more likely to experience discrimination and social isolation.

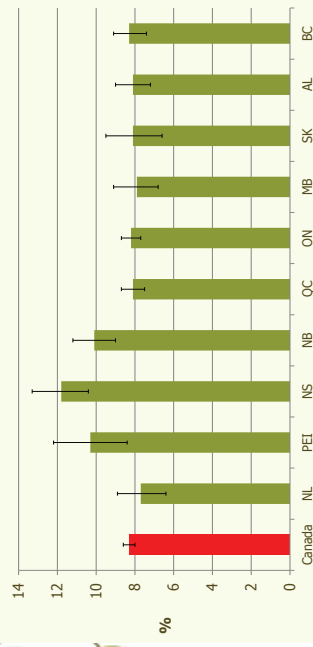
<sup>i</sup> World Health Organization: Mental health: strengthening our response—Fact sheet No. 220 [Internet]. Available at: [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en)

**Food insecurity is not having enough money to afford the variety or quantity of food that a person needs to be healthy.**

People who experience food insecurity are also likely to experience major depression.

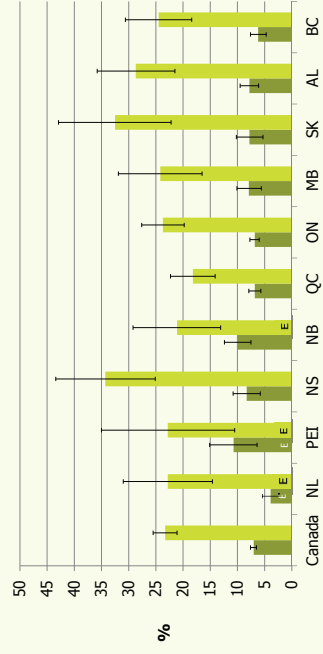
## FOOD INSECURITY, 2011

Percentage of people who live in 'moderately' or 'severely' food insecure households.



Food insecurity in families with children

■ Couples with child(ren) less than 18 years old  
■ Lone parent with child(ren) less than 18 years old



**Single parent families are particularly at risk of food insecurity.**

The percentage of food insecurity is at least double the rate of two parent homes.

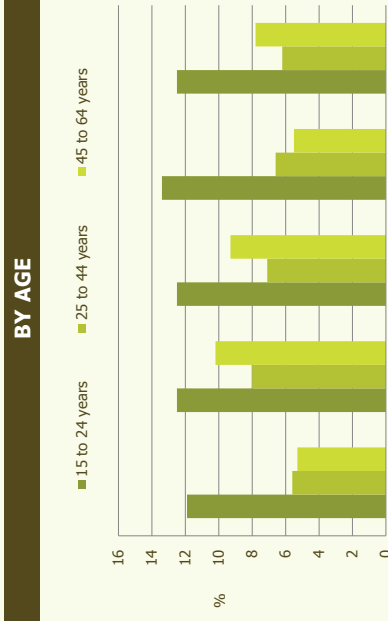
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

**The unemployment rate in the Atlantic Provinces is higher than the national rate, and is greater for men than women.**

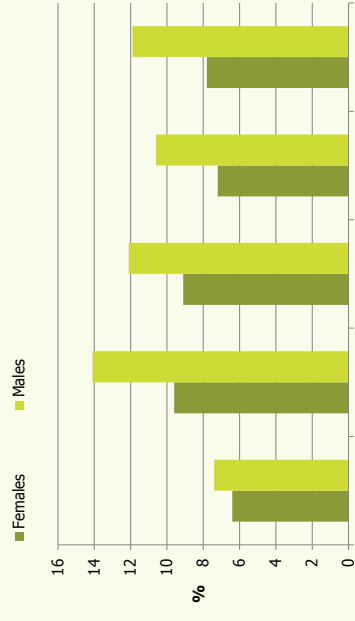
Youth unemployment is considerably higher than for all other age groups.

## UNEMPLOYMENT, 2011

Percentage of people age 15 years and over who are unemployed.



BY SEX

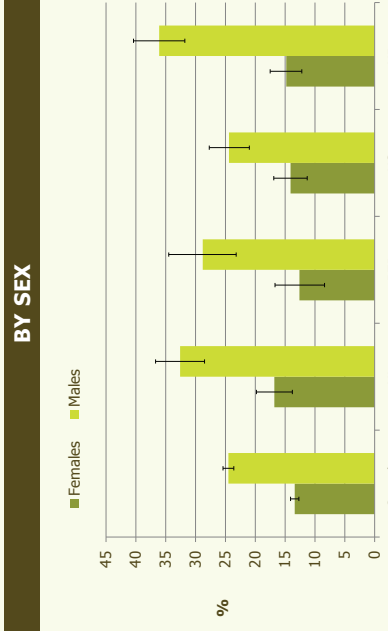


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

**Men are more likely to use and abuse alcohol compared with women. However, women are more likely to develop a substance use problem if they have experienced trauma, such as abuse or assault.**

## HEAVY DRINKING, 2013

Percentage of people aged 12 and older who reported heavy drinking.



For males, heavy drinking refers to having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, at least once per month, in the past year; for females, the limit is 4 or more drinks.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2013, Statistics Canada changed the definition of heavy drinking for girls/women to 4+ drinks (from 5+), following new Health Canada guidelines. While this makes it difficult to directly compare 2013 data with previous years (2001-2012), earlier data is still useful to monitor trends in heavy drinking among young women.

### DID YOU KNOW?

New national indicator data exists for setting a drink limit when college and university students socialize. According to 2013 data, 36% of students reported they set a drink limit.

## HEAVY DRINKING AMONG YOUTH

Note: Students surveyed include grades, 7, 9, 10, and 12.

- In NL, 31% of students reported heavy drinking (4+ drinks females and 5+ drinks males).<sup>1</sup>
- In NS, 27% male students and 26% female students reported drinking 5+ drinks in one sitting.<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol use continues to increase with each grade.<sup>2, 3, 5</sup>
- Alcohol use among male students appears to be decreasing slightly.<sup>2, 3</sup>

The Student Drug Use Survey is a standardised survey used in the Atlantic Provinces since 1996. The most recent survey data was collected in 2012 (NB, NL, NS). Each province continues to monitor and report drug use and depression among youth.

## DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG YOUTH

Note: Students surveyed include grades, 7, 9, 10, and 12.

- NL Student Drug Use Survey (2012) - 27% of girls and 14% of boys needed help for depression; fewer than half received help.<sup>1</sup>
- NS Drug Use Survey (2012) - 14% of girls and 4% of boys reported very elevated depressive symptoms.<sup>2</sup>
- NB Drug Use Survey (2012) - 39% of students reported feeling depressed at least sometimes, 20% felt they needed help for depression.<sup>3</sup>
- SHAPES-PEI (2012-2013) - 9% of students (grades 5-12) were considered to have 'low' mental fitness.<sup>4</sup>

### REFERENCES:

1. [http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/Drug\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/Drug_Survey.pdf)
2. <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Student-Drug-Use-Survey-Report.pdf>
3. <http://www.gnb.ca/0378/pdf/2013/9230e.pdf>
4. [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/eecd\\_shapes1213.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/eecd_shapes1213.pdf)
5. [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/dhw\\_cpho\\_sdu14.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/dhw_cpho_sdu14.pdf)