



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

# *Opening Minds In Canada*

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None**

# The basics...

- The Mental Health Commission of Canada was created by the Federal Government in 2007 with a 10 year mandate
- Opening Minds is the anti-stigma initiative of the MHCC, and began in October 2009, answerable to the MHCC board with a budget of around \$2 million per annum
- Involves identifying a large variety of pre-existing grassroots initiatives, and linking them with researchers for evaluation and possible scale-up

# Opening Minds Approach

- Four target groups for intervention
  1. Youth
  2. Health Care Providers
  3. Workforce
  4. Media
- Selected programs are evaluated for impact by university based researchers
- Most using local contact based education





## Evaluation

- Programs have been evaluated using mixed-methods
- This involves purposely created standardized instruments administered pre- and post- to measure social distance and stigma
- Impact also assessed through qualitative methods
- This allowed us to assess effective and ineffective programs
- Researchers feedback results to stakeholders
- As a consequence, some ineffective programs have been discontinued, others modified and others promoted
- As critical ingredients are distilled, fidelity scales are being created



## Youth

- Sought out existing anti-stigma initiatives through RFP
- 103 responded
- 20 were selected and more added
- So far 27 evaluations are complete
- Over 10 000 youth participated
- Some successful in reducing stigma by 30%
- See 'Headstrong' for good example



## Health Care Providers

- Again sought out existing anti-stigma initiatives
- 130 programs identified
- 17 selected and more added later
- Programs target students and practitioners
- 24 programs have completed evaluation
- See 'Understanding stigma' in Ontario





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## Workplace

- We partnered with various organizations
- Co-created programs specific to the organization
- These include
  - Call centres
  - Municipalities
  - Universities and Higher Education
  - Police Departments (over 30)
  - Department of National Defence
  - See R2MR/ The Working Mind



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Defence

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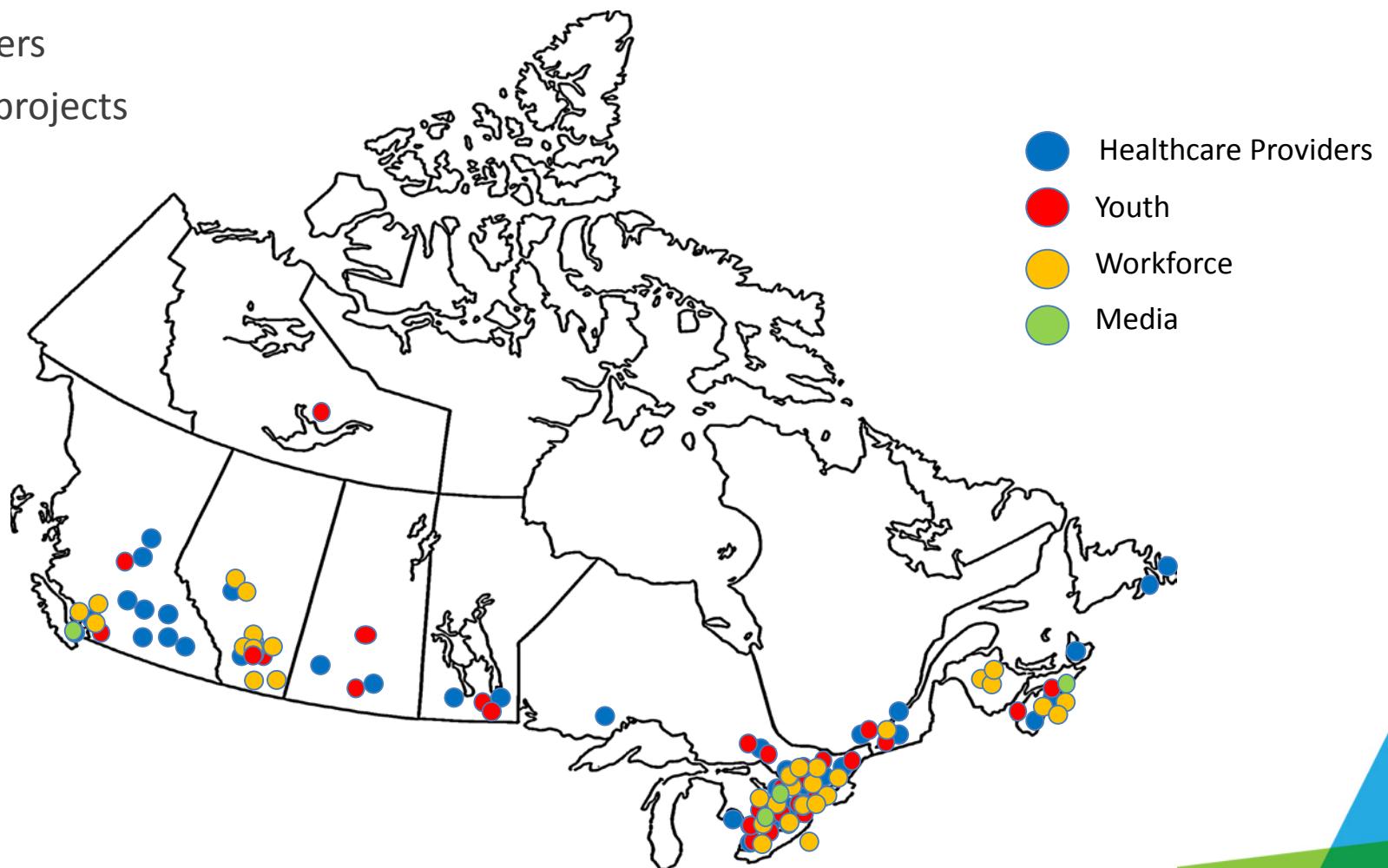


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# Opening Mind Projects

- 150+ partners
- 100 active projects





# Lessons Learned

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- Big media campaigns are not effective at changing attitudes
- One-off sessions do not work
- Booster sessions are needed
- Voluntary attendance is not effective
- Not all contact based education is effective
- Grassroots networks and champions are needed
- Difficulties engaging Aboriginal and minority communities

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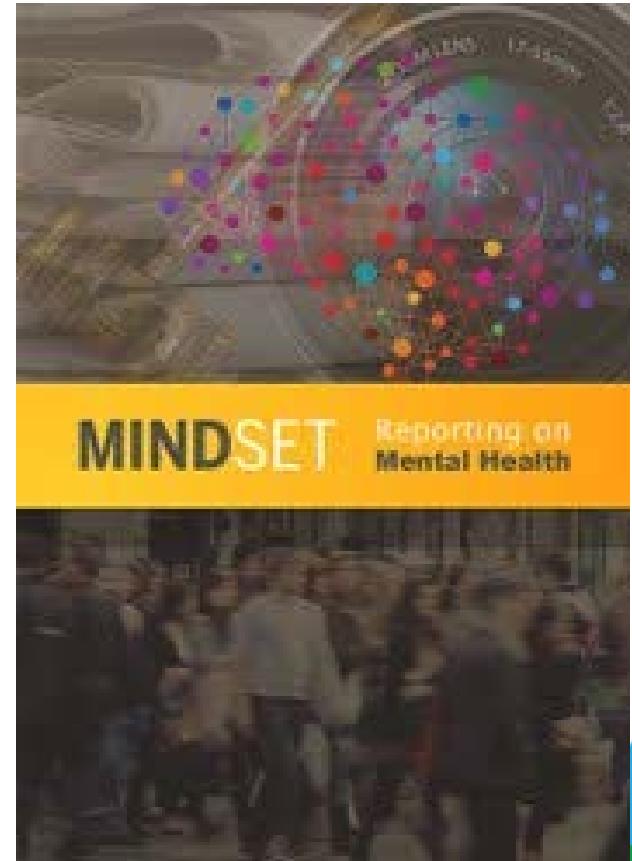
# News Media

- 20 000+ print articles analyzed from 2005-present in Canadian newspapers
- Over 1 300 television reports analyzed
- Results indicate around 40% of stories focus on crime and violence, and only 20% on recovery



## Changing practice

- Numerous presentations at Journalism schools across Canada
- Developing a new online curriculum for journalism students
- Developing and distributing short media guidelines for reporting on mental illness: “mindset” (5 000 distributed to date)





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Thank you  
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