

the time is
NOW



LONDON'S

VitalSigns[®]



mental health
is the single
greatest issue
facing our community

(Mental Health Association Middlesex)

IT'S TIME

Repeated visits to the emergency room, endless waitlists, incorrect diagnoses, lack of post-care support, bouncing from one service provider to the next: this is the state of our mental health care system, and a reality that many individuals face every day.

Mental illness affects us all, whether it be through a family member, friend, colleague, acquaintance or ourselves. Although we've made progress when it comes to tackling the stigma, the system of care delivery is failing our community.

There are 147 mental health and 36 addictions programs located in London and Middlesex alone. Despite the many services, significant gaps and barriers remain.

For the past several years, London Community Foundation has observed an influx of grant requests targeted at tackling the issue of mental health, specifically regarding systems coordination in our local community. It is clear that this is one of the most pressing issues facing London and Middlesex

region. Crisis response, wait times, and coordination between service providers to address the gaps for individuals who are at-risk or in transition, are just a few of the most critical needs.

As leaders, mobilizers and drivers of social change, London Community Foundation is taking a stand. In this year's *Vital Signs* report we are exploring concerning issues such as housing, health, work, learning, leadership and belonging – through the lens of mental health. Through this lens, the report will tell the story of how mental health affects our community and everyone in it.

It's time. It's time for our community to come together and tackle this issue head on. Our system is in crisis and we are failing to help the people in our community who are most at risk. We need a transformative change in the way mental health services are delivered. The system is broken, and it is time to make a change.

The time is now. And it starts here, in our community.



suicide is the
Second
leading
cause of death
IN CANADIAN YOUTH

(Mental Health Commission of Canada)

LEARNING

Prevention and early intervention with mental health and addictions are essential for youth to thrive academically. Poor mental health can have a direct impact on the ability, desire and motivation to learn. This can have a significant impact on the educational attainment of our children and youth, and consequently, their future.

1.2 million young Canadians have a mental illness. Only 20% will receive help

(Mental Health Commission of Canada)

The number of youth reaching out for help has increased by 56% since 2013 with wait times increasing up to 9 months

(First Episode Mood and Anxiety Program)

“ We need a transformational change. Coordinated access to care will ensure that youth get the help they need when they need it.”

Dr. Javeed Sukhera, Senior Designate Physician Lead Child & Adolescent Psychiatry,
London Health Sciences Centre

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a maroon shirt, is sitting on the ground against a wall at night, looking down with a sad expression. In the background, two police officers in dark uniforms and caps stand in a dimly lit area. The scene is dark, with some light coming from the left, possibly a doorway or window.

9 out of 10
women
seeking shelter
IN LONDON
have a mental illness.
ALMOST HALF
have an addiction

(A Place to Call Home, Ministry of Municipal Affairs)

HOUSING

The relationship between mental health and homelessness is complex and can be characterized by a circular, vicious cycle. Issues with mental health and addictions can lead to homelessness and vice versa. London and Middlesex County have been struggling to meet the housing needs of our community and it is increasingly obvious that the ability and resources are lacking for those who have challenges with mental health and addiction.

People with mental illness remain homeless for longer periods of time

(Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

They face more barriers to employment and health care than other homeless people

(Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

“Our community is only as strong as our most vulnerable person. Housing is essential to tackling mental health and addictions challenges.”

Susan Macphail, My Sisters' Place, Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex

more than
20%
of children
IN LONDON
don't feel like they
belong at school

(Thames Valley District School Board,
London District Catholic School Board)



LEADERSHIP & BELONGING

Connection to peers, home, community, school, resiliency and positive parenting are key to mental health and wellness. Individuals that are trying to cope with mental health and addiction issues can often find themselves isolated, feeling as though they have nowhere to turn. Although stigma reduction is occurring, we need to make a greater effort to ensure all members of our community have a sense of belonging.

The outpatient department accepts approximately 364 referrals a year. The majority are youth presenting with anxiety symptoms

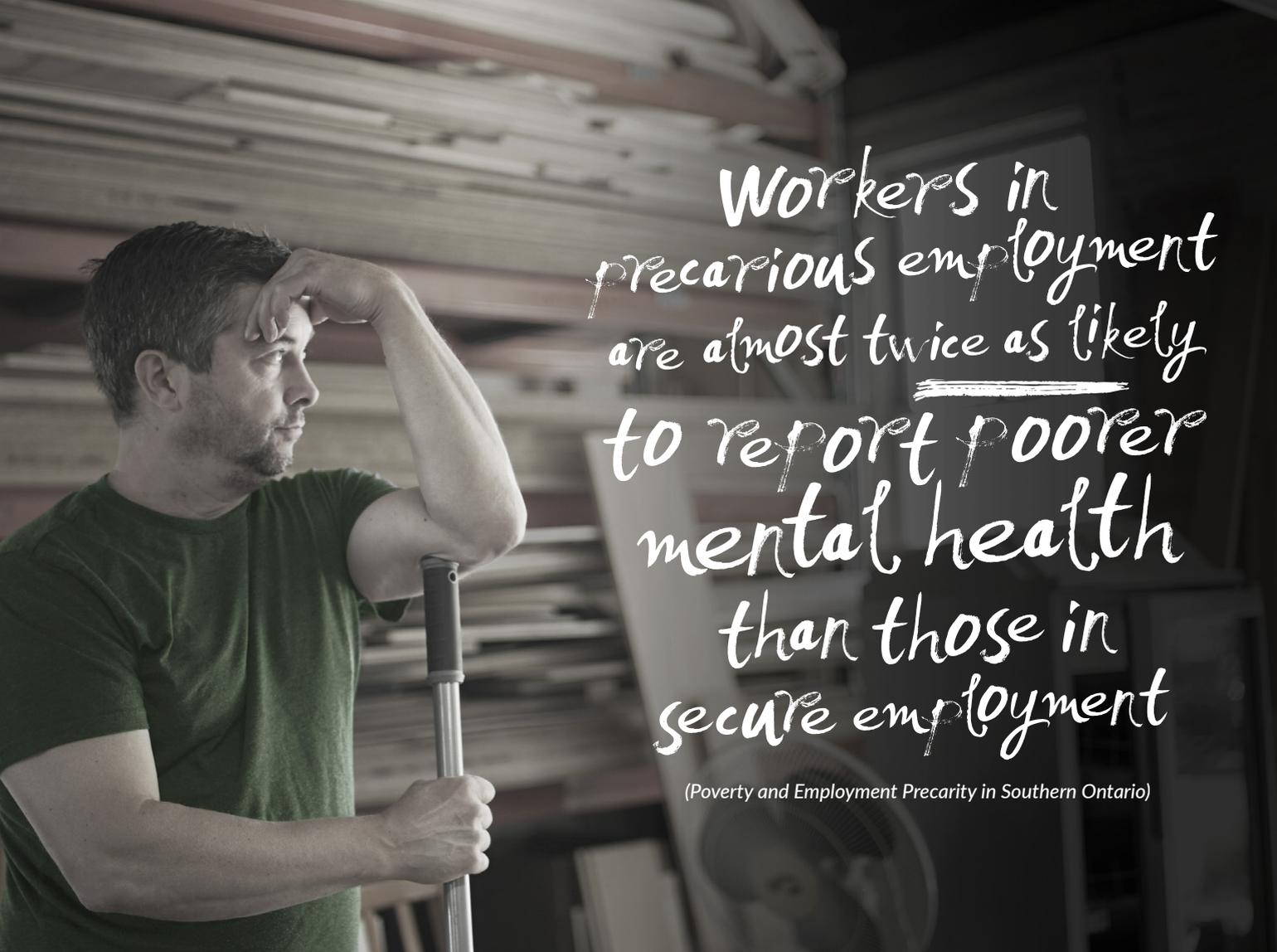
(Children's Health Foundation)

Close to a third of girls and nearly half of boys are keeping mental health concerns to themselves

(RBC Children's Mental Health Project)

“ Having a supportive home, school and peer environment is key to fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating positive mental health outcomes.”

Chris Harvey, Chief Executive Officer, Boys and Girls Club of London



Workers in
precarious employment
are almost twice as likely
to report poorer
mental health
than those in
secure employment

(Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario)

WORK

Mental health can have a profound impact on one's ability to secure and maintain employment. We have come to expect work to be stressful at times – it is viewed as normal. However, with more individuals finding themselves in precarious work situations, work has become increasingly stressful, putting additional strain on individuals and their families. As a result, many find themselves facing financial challenges and additional barriers to accessing mental health care.

Of all persons with disabilities, those with a mental illness face the highest degree of stigmatization and barriers to employment.

(Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)

People with precarious employment, particularly those in middle and low income households experience higher levels of income stress

(Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario, 2015)

“Secure and meaningful employment enables everyone to contribute to the community in a personally significant way.”

Wilma de Rond, Executive Director, WIL Employment Connections



11%
of people
whose hospital stay
was related to a mental illness
are readmitted
WITHIN 1 MONTH
after being discharged

(Canadian Institute for Health Information)

HEALTH

Our mental wellbeing can have a significant impact on our physical health. After years of being told to “just get over it”, mental health is starting to be recognized as a vital piece of our long-term wellbeing. Unfortunately, the gaps in our mental health care system present barriers for those who need help the most, causing them to fall through the cracks.

Almost 30% of seniors rated their mental health as poor

(Canadian Socioeconomic Database from Statistics)

Seniors can have mental illness related to poor physical health and addiction

(Canadian Mental Health Association)

“Mental health for seniors is a priority. Supporting seniors’ mental health has the power to positively impact their overall quality of life.”

Chris Babcock, Director of Supportive Housing, Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex

OUR SINCEREST THANKS

London Community Foundation's *Vital Signs 2016* report would not be possible if it were not for the support and guidance from key players. Not only has the Advisory Committee stepped up to provide their time, effort and valuable insights, but so have the countless contributing agencies and professionals in the community. Time and time again we are inspired by the energy, enthusiasm and collaboration this report and our Foundation receives. Thank you for making this report truly about the community.

**Advisory Committee includes: Donna Bourne, Brad Duncan, Steven Harrison, and Glen Pearson.*



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA
all for community.

VitalSigns[®]

Community foundations taking the pulse of Canadian communities.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. The Vital Signs trademark is used with permission from Community Foundations of Canada.

the time is NOW

Vital Signs 2016 will not only challenge stigma that exists in our local London and Middlesex County communities, but will address system gaps, and call for a more inclusive, collaborative network of mental health organizations. The long-term goal? Unify resources and organizations to provide help to individuals that need it, in a comprehensive, all-encompassing, and unified system.

- Let's show our community where the gaps are and how we can improve.
- Let's empower those in our community to speak up, speak out, and seek help.
- Let's breakdown stigma.
- Let's change the system, for the better.

Collective, collaborative, hopeful, and full of support. Let's give our communities the tools they need to better themselves, and each other, together. Join us, as we transform London and Middlesex.

londonvitalsigns.ca

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