



**Written Submission for Pre-Budget Consultations  
of the Upcoming 2025 Federal Budget**

***Office of Joshua Bell***



## Recommendations

The mental health and well-being of youth remain at a tipping point in Canada.

The following recommendations are being made to the federal Government of Canada (herein after referred to as “federal government” or “government”) to ensure that youth and Canadians are supported in their mental health and well-being in the 2025 budget.

*Recommendation 1:* The federal government invest and immediately implement the Canada Mental Health Transfer in the amount of \$5.2 billion over 5 years.

*Recommendation 2:* The federal government invest in a community mental health fund to support community-based care, including for marginalized and LGBTQ youth, to the amount of \$2.34 billion over 5 years.

*Recommendation 3:* The federal government provide funding to Health Canada to continue to develop and implement a strategic framework for youth mental health and well-being.

*Recommendation 4:* The federal government continues to invest in the National 988 to prevent suicide and provide support in the amount as needed to sustain and expand services.



## Background

*Recommendation 1: The federal government invest and immediately implement the Canada Mental Health Transfer in the amount of \$5.2 billion over 5 years.*

In 2021, the federal government made a commitment of \$4.5 billion (\$5.2 billion in 2025 to account for inflation) to assist with the mental health and well-being of Canadians. While there has been progress since this commitment was made, there has been no action in fulfilling a stand-alone Canada Mental Health Transfer.

Such a transfer will assist the provinces and territories with the desperate need to:

- Expand services for mental health and well-being;
- Reduce wait times for people seeking the support that they need;
- Greater support organizations within their province that are providing critical day or inpatient programs; and,
- Ensure that culturally and linguistically sensitive care can be provided properly and accurately by properly trained individuals.

Such funding received by the provinces and territories in this new Canadian Mental Health Transfer should:

- be received based on the continued needs of the Province or Territory to improve mental health and mental health services and care;
- be adjusted to the rate of inflation on a yearly basis so as not to have unintended inflictions;
- be reviewed on a yearly basis, as determined by the federal budget fiscal period, to ensure that the funds being received by the Provinces and Territories are meeting the needs of that Province or Territory, and the people in it; and
- have set funding within dedicated to funding and supporting community support services and programs.

*Recommendation 2: The federal government invest in a community mental health fund to support community-based care, including for marginalized youth, in the amount of \$2.34 billion over 5 years.*

Community-based care is key to ensuring that people across Canada have the support that they need, when they need it, how they wish to get it, and where they are. Community-based care plays a key role in early intervention and prevention of



mental health challenges and mental illnesses, supporting individuals through the referral and support/program process, and much more.

The federal government should provide funding for community-based care across the country. The amount should be about 45% of what the government's commitment was in the Canada Mental Health Transfer, totalling \$2.34 billion over 5 years.

Such funding should be directed to, but not limited to, community-based care areas, organizations and supports that:

- Provide easy access to care for mental health services and referral services;
- Support early intervention and prevention efforts;
- Support the well-being and mental health of LGBTQ and other marginalized youth;
- Assist with and provide care that is culturally sensitive and that adapts and changes to people's needs, and
- Provide care to individuals in rural and northern communities.

As the mental health and substance use challenges continue to increase, and an increasingly high number of people are affected, community-based organizations across Canada will be key in ensuring early intervention, prevention, sector research, and care for the people who need it most.

*Recommendation 3: The federal government provide funding to Health Canada to continue to develop and implement a strategic framework for youth mental health and well-being.*

Youth in Canada continue to face the challenges of poor mental health and well-being, with youth ages 15-24 experiencing mental illness and/or substance use disorders more than any other age group.

Youth are increasingly experiencing anxiety disorders and mood disorders, Indigenous youth face rates of suicide 5-6 times higher than non-Indigenous youth, and LGBTQ youth are 7 times more likely to attempt suicide than non-LGBTQ peers. In addition to this, eating disorders within youth have increased significantly in recent years, with many programs and support services being overwhelmed with long wait times and delays that could be life-saving.



The federal government must provide funding, as needed, to Health Canada to continue to fully develop, support, and implement a youth mental health framework that, but is not limited to:

- Improves navigational and informational support systems and resources for youth and young adults;
- Better improves referral services;
- Supports the access to support resources where youth are (ex. online or in-person); and
- Improving the mental health and well-being, access to care, and quality of care for LGBTQ and other marginalized youth.

*Recommendation 4: The federal government continues to invest in the National 988 to prevent suicide and provide support in the amount as needed to sustain and expand services.*

Since the implementation of the National 988 Suicide and Crisis Line in November 2023, it has helped over 500,000 Canadians from across the country get the immediate life-saving support that they needed.

With the high demand and proven success record, continued action is needed to ensure proper funding, accessibility, reliability, and to ensure that the services that are provided are fit for everyone's needs, including an individual's culture, values, and language(s).

The federal government must provide funding, as needed, to:

- Support and sustain the work and operations of the National 988;
- Promote and expand public knowledge of the National 988; and
- Work to provide funding to assist with expanding the operations and services of the National 988 as required by service demands.



## Notes and References

The Office of Joshua Bell (OJB) is a federally incorporated non-profit, governed by the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act, that works to support the mental health advocacy and greater community work of Joshua Bell across Canada. Through a unified and collaborative approach, the OJB aims to raise awareness around the mental health advocacy and policy work of Joshua Bell while continuing to educate the public on what resources are available to them. For more, visit [ojb-bjb.ca/aboutojb](https://ojb-bjb.ca/aboutojb).

The following, in full or in part, were used throughout the creation of this Pre-Budget Submission:

Bell, J. (15 December 2022). 2023 Mental Health Calls of Action: Federal. Hamilton, ON. <https://www.joshuamjbell.ca/calls>

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Canadian Institute for Health Information. (n.d.). Child and youth mental health. CIHI. <https://www.cihi.ca/en/child-and-youth-mental-health>

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Mental illness and addiction: Facts and statistics. CAMH. (n.d.-a). <https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real/mental-health-statistics>

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