

Women's Addiction and Mental Health (AMH)

Mental health impacts everyone



About **1 in 3** Canadians will have a mental illness during their lifetime.

Why focus on women*?

Women may experience factors that increase their risk of AMH concerns. Some of these factors include:

Childhood Trauma

Women who have experienced childhood trauma, such as sexual abuse and physical violence, are **3-4 times more likely** to experience depression as adults.

Barriers

Barriers such as discrimination, lack of perinatal or postnatal care, gender-based violence, expected gender roles, and stereotypes can influence mental wellness.

Women's AMH needs are unique

- Women are just as likely as men to **develop a substance use disorder** and may be **more susceptible to cravings and relapse**. This can have **unique obstacles to effective treatment** such as being prescribed treatment that has not been adequately tested on women.
- Women experience depression and anxiety **twice as often** as men and encounter barriers in getting care. Gender-diverse individuals face higher rates of mental health difficulties.
- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness and **impact women at a rate ten times that of men**.

In 2019



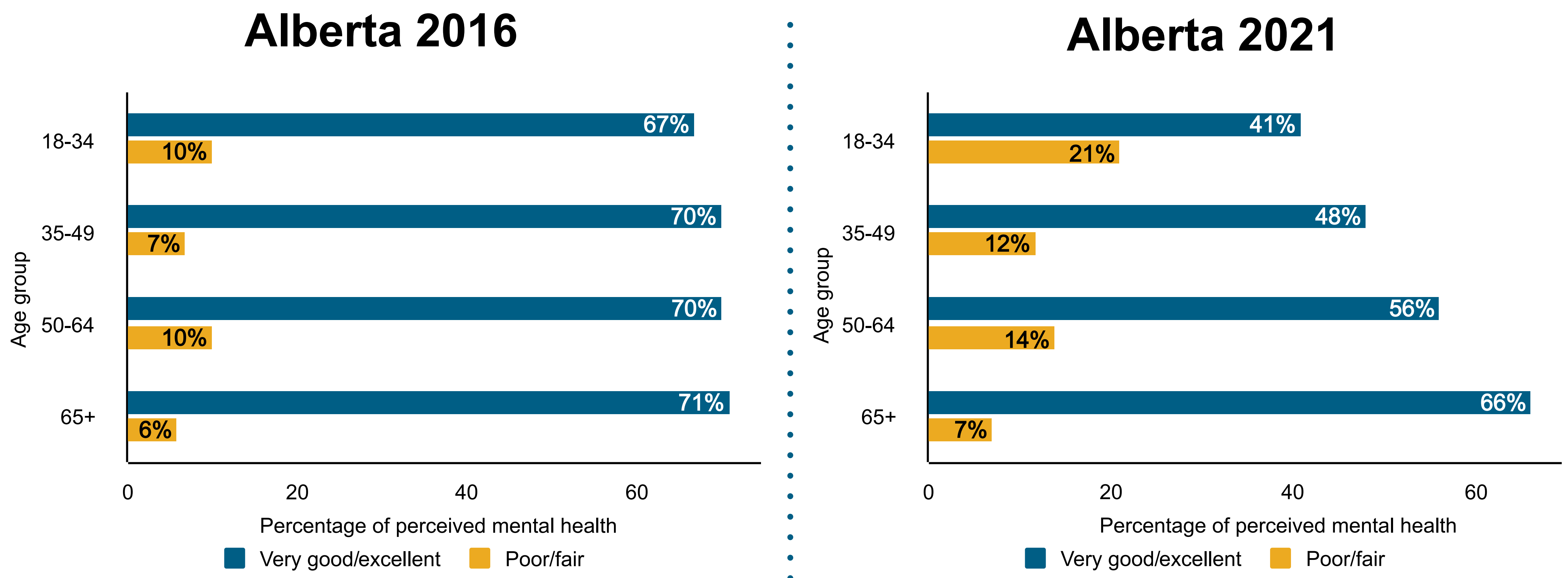
22% of **Alberta mothers** reported feelings consistent with postpartum depression or an anxiety disorder.



53% of **caregivers** in Alberta are women and can experience stress balancing their multiple roles: mother, employee, etc.

*The term "women" refers to all people who identify as women

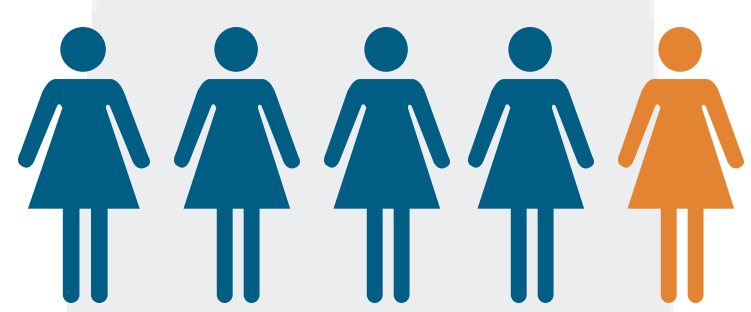
Perceived Mental Health Among Alberta Women by Age: 5 Year Comparison (2016 and 2021)



Since 2016, perceived mental health among Alberta women has declined in all age groups. In 2021, less than half of women in age groups 18-34 and 35-49 perceive their mental health as very good or excellent.

47% of Canadian women are considered at high risk of developing a mental health disorder.

The COVID-19 pandemic impact on women's mental health



4 out of 5

Alberta women feel more stressed than usual during or as a result of the pandemic.

7 out of 10

Alberta women reported that added stress of the pandemic negatively impacted their mental health.

11%

of Alberta women experienced thoughts of harming themselves during the pandemic.

8%

of Alberta mothers reported feelings consistent with postpartum depression or an anxiety disorder.

In 2021

17% of employed women aged 16 to 24 years in Canada had a mental health-related disability.

13% of employed women aged 25 to 54 years in Canada had a mental health-related disability.



1 in 7 Canadians used health services for a mental illness.

- **57%** were female.
- **70% of Alberta women** do not mention their mental health concerns to their doctor out of fear of judgement.
- **97% of Alberta women** would talk about mental health issues if asked by a healthcare provider.



Barriers to speaking out:

- Tendency to focus on physical health instead of mental health.
- Incorrect assumptions that symptoms are due to hormones.
- Time constraints of appointment times.
- Stigma.

Resources

[AHS Addiction and Mental Health](#) provides access to various AMH supports across Alberta.

[211](#) call or text to be connected to a wide variety of supports within Alberta including counselling, community and social services, support groups, and crisis supports.

[Mini-Guide](#) for women sidelined from the workforce offering information on how to improve mental, financial and professional well-being.

Free Services

[Crisis Text Line](#) Text HOME to 741741 via cell phone or WhatsApp for mental health support and crisis intervention.

[Wellness Together Canada](#) offers immediate crisis support and free counselling, e-courses and educational resources.

Zone-specific Resources

Edmonton Zone

[Access 24/7](#) Call **780-424-2424** for a range of free urgent and non-urgent addiction and mental health services including service navigation, screening, assessment, referral, consultation, crisis intervention, outreach and short term stabilization.

Calgary Zone

[Access Mental Health](#) Call **780-424-2424** for a free non-urgent service providing information, consultation, and referrals for individuals with addiction and/or mental health concerns.

Central, North and South Zones

Access Addiction and Mental Health (AAMH). Call **1-888-594-0211** for a free telephone screening/referral service that will ensure individuals receive appropriate services/resources in their area based on their needs, including booking an appointment if required.

References

- Alberta Women's Health Foundation. (2021) *Finding the fractures: The pandemic, women's health disparities, and the path to equity*. <https://www.albertawomenshealthfoundation.org/public/download/files/195790>
- Canadian Mental Health Association. (2021). *Fast Facts about mental health and mental illness* <https://cmha.ca/brochure/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/>
- Canadian Women's Foundation. (2021). *The abysmal state of mothers' mental health*. <https://canadianwomen.org/blog/the-abysmal-state-of-mothers-mental-health/>
- Government of Canada. (2020). *Mental illness in Canada - Infographic*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/mental-illness-canada-infographic.html>
- Homewood Health. (n.d.) *Women's mental health*. <https://homewoodhealth.com/corporate/blog/womens-mental-health>
- Homewood Health. (2021). *Women's mental health*. <https://sli.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-03-Life-Lines-Womens-Mental-Health.pdf>
- Law Society of Ontario. (2019). *Women's mental health*. <https://lso.ca/gazette/featured-stories/women%E2%80%99s-mental-health>
- NIDA. (2022). *Sex and gender differences in substance use*. <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/substance-use-in-women/sex-gender-differences-in-substance-use>
- Statistics Canada. (2019). *Maternal mental health in Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019041-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2022). *Mental health-related disability rises among employed Canadians during pandemic, 2021*. The Daily — Mental health-related disability rises among employed Canadians during pandemic, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220304/dq220304b-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2022). *Perceived mental health, by age group*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310009603>
- University of Alberta. (2019). *Caregivers in Alberta: Impact of caregiving on well-being*. https://rapp.ualberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/49/2019/05/Alberta-Caregivers-Impact-on-Wellbeing-infographic_2019-05-08.pdf
- Women's College Hospital. (n.d.). *Mental health*. <https://www.womenshealthmatters.ca/health-centres/mental-health.html>

