

PROFILE 5

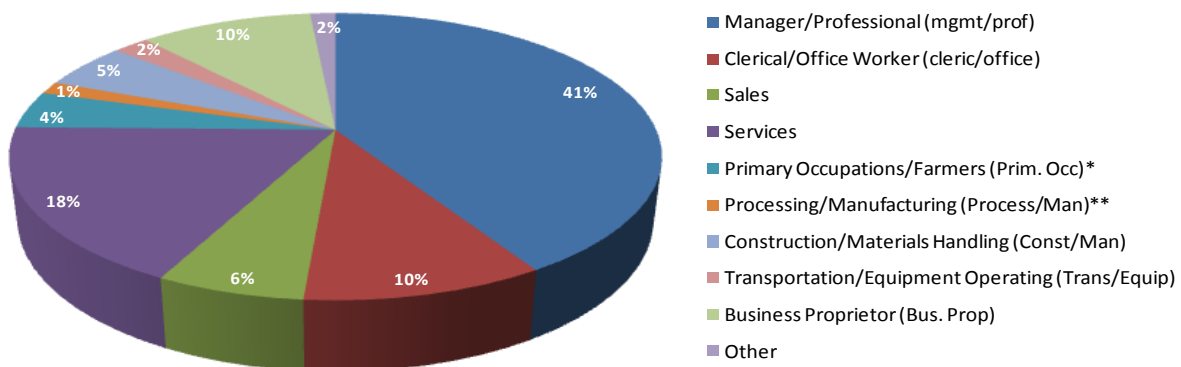
Mental Health Problems by Type of Industry and Occupation

The Alberta Survey of Addictive Behaviours and Mental Health in the Workforce: 2009 assessed addictive behaviours and mental health in 2817 employed adults. This profile highlights the impact of occupation and industry type on the prevalence of mental health problems, which includes both diagnosable mental illnesses as well as related issues such as hopelessness and suicidal behaviours.

Distribution of Occupations

Respondents' occupations were categorized using the National Occupational Classification system produced by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada in 2006 (see Figure 1). The majority of participants were managers or professionals (41%), followed by service personnel (18%), clerical/office staff (10%) and business proprietors (10%).

Figure 1: Distribution of Occupational Categories



* **Primary Occupations/Farmers** = oil and gas; fishing/hunting/trapping; forestry/logging; mining; and farming/ranching.

****Processing/Manufacturing** = treat material for use; produce unfinished material for tile, food, newsprint, lumber, cloth etc.

Does occupation influence the prevalence of mental health problems?

Table 1 shows the lifetime prevalence of mental health related conditions by occupational grouping. Outside of antisocial personality disorder, clerical/office staff had the highest rates of mental health problems while processing/manufacturing workers had the lowest rates. Phobias and antisocial personality disorder differed considerably as a function of occupational type. Clerical/office staff and those in primary occupations were most afflicted by phobias and least likely to suffer from antisocial personality disorder, whereas individuals in construction/materials and transportation/equipment sectors were at greater risk for antisocial traits. With the exception of processing/manufacturing, the prevalence of anxiety and major depression was relatively consistent across occupations. Although the gender of employees was not uniform across occupations, there was no significant impact of gender on occupational rates of mental health problems. Despite being most afflicted by mental health issues, only 7% of clerical/office workers sought help for their condition. Instead, sales (11%) and service (10%) representatives were most likely to have seen a clinician for their problems in the past year.

Table 1: Lifetime Prevalence (%) for Mental Health Problems by Occupation Type

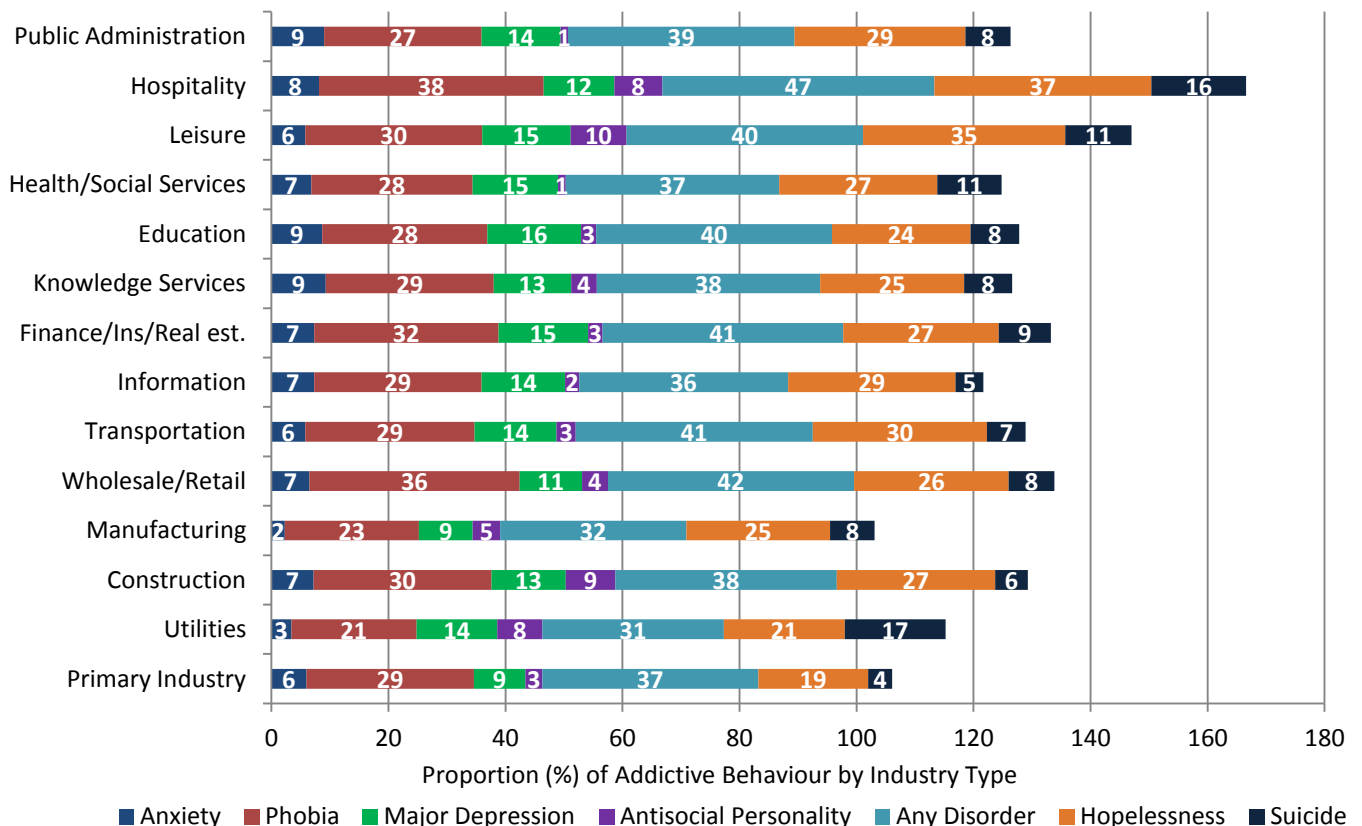
	Mgmt /Prof	Cleric/ Office	Sales	Services	Prim. Occ	Process /Man	Const /Mat	Trans/ Equip	Bus. Prop	Total
Anxiety	7%	10%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	5%	7%	7%
Phobia	25%	36%	32%	34%	38%	26%	30%	34%	28%	30%
Major Depression	14%	15%	10%	14%	10%	3%	11%	9%	13%	13%
Antisocial Personality	2%	1%	4%	6%	1%	5%	10%	12%	4%	4%
Any Diagnosis	35%	44%	40%	44%	42%	30%	39%	38%	38%	39%
Hopelessness	24%	30%	24%	29%	21%	18%	30%	28%	25%	26%
Suicidal Behaviour	14%	20%	13%	19%	12%	5%	12%	12%	18%	16%

Highlighted cells reflect occupations with the highest lifetime prevalence of each mental health problem.

Does type of industry influence rates of mental health problems?

Figure 2 displays mental health problems by industry. Only antisocial personality disorder and suicidal behaviours varied significantly by industry type. Construction, leisure and hospitality industries seemed to attract individuals with antisocial personalities more so than health/social services, information, and public administration. Suicidal behaviours were most frequent in hospitality and utilities, but least common to primary and information industries. In terms of seeking professional help, 16% of those in hospitality and 17% of those in utilities had seen a clinician in the previous year.

Figure 2: The Proportion (%) of Individuals with a Mental Health Disorder by Type of Industry



Note: Response categories were not mutually exclusive; therefore more than one mental health problem could be selected by employees.

Summary

- Clerical/office workers were most vulnerable to mental health problems, while employees in processing/manufacturing were at the lowest risk for these problems.
- On the whole, persons employed in the hospitality and leisure industry experienced the most mental health problems overall.
- Sales and service representatives were most likely to have seen a clinician for their problems in the past year, while the hospitality and utilities industry showed the highest utilization rates for mental health professionals.

When prevalence estimates were grouped by occupation and industry certain lines of work seemed to be at greater risk for mental health problems. This information may be useful for the identification of and intervention for employees struggling with mental health problems. Furthermore, this data may be used to shape the types of programming and funding invested into targeted workforce prevention and health promotion initiatives, as well as treatment-related service planning. Although occupation and industry type may impact mental health, they are not the only contributors; other job factors (see Profile 6) and addictive behaviours (see Profile 3) also influence workplace mental health.

For a link to the full report, *The Alberta Survey of Addictive Behaviours and Mental Health in the Workforce: 2009*, visit: <http://ihe.ca/publications/library/2011/the-alberta-survey-of-addictive-behaviours-and-mental-health-in-the-workforce-2009/>

For more information contact the Alberta Addiction & Mental Health Research Partnership Program at: researchpartnership@albertahealthservices.ca