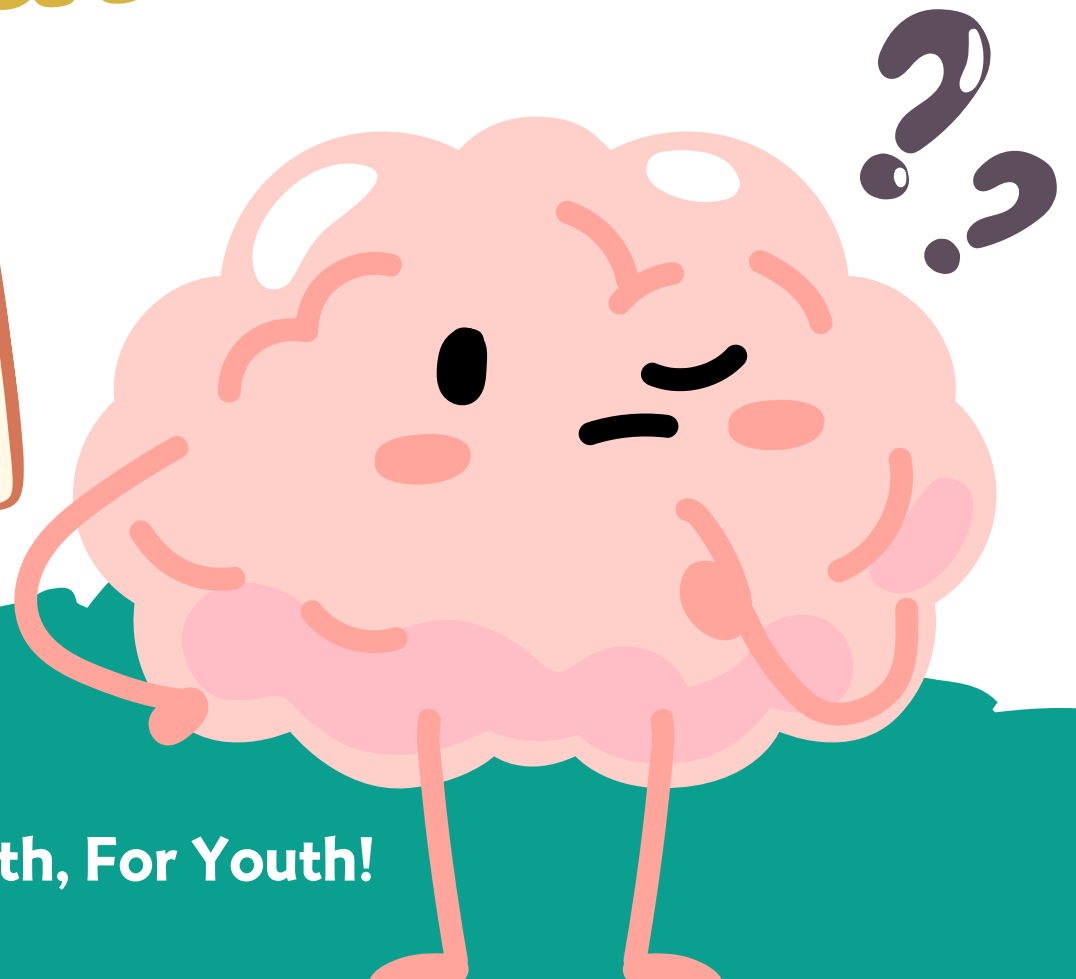


Living with

Multiple Mental Health Conditions

What does that
mean exactly?



Made By Youth, For Youth!

Multiple Mental Health Conditions (MMHC)

MMHC* = when someone has 2 or more mental health conditions at the same time.

For example, someone who experiences anxiety, depression and schizophrenia at the same time.

MMHC is very common among youth, but not enough research has been done about this to understand and treat this concept.

- Since this topic is still being explored, the concept of **MMHC is constantly evolving** as we learn more!



This booklet will explore what young people we spoke with currently have to say about MMHC!

*Researchers and clinicians sometimes call this term “mental health multimorbidity”

Did you know?

In a previous study,* youth reported an average of 3.5 mental health diagnoses each!



*Toronto Adolescent & Youth (TAY) Cohort Study, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. taycohort.ca.

How We Got Here

The Issue

- Even though MMHC is very common, **less than a quarter** of youth with MMHC receive the care that they need
- **More research is needed** to connect youth with MMHC with the best care possible

**More research =
better care for
youth!**

The Aim

- This work was developed as part of the CALM Project, funded by the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI)
- The goal of CALM is to understand the impacts of having MMHC so we can improve care and quality of life for youth



CALM stands for Cohort Network of Adolescents and youth with Multimorbidity

We Want to Know...



What can impact the development of MMHC?

How do we define MMHC?

How can we improve mental health and wellbeing for youth with MMHC?

To start, we held consultations with youth with lived and living experience of MMHC to better understand what MMHC means to them.

Here's what we found!

What does MMHC mean to YOUTH?

It was clear that MMHC meant
something different to everyone!

**Do any of these definitions
resonate with you?**

**"It's like Whack-a-
Mole"**



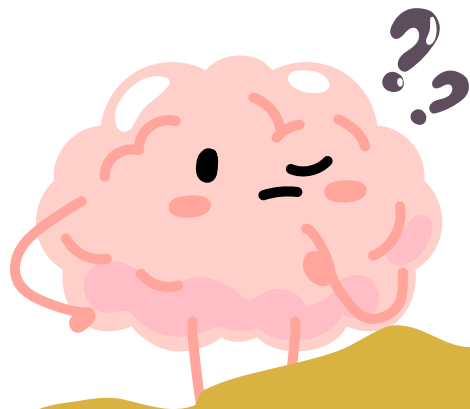
**"One more diagnosis-
guess I levelled up!"**

**"As if one
problem wasn't
enough!"**

**"A reality that is
constantly changing"**

"Wild card"

"Tunnel vision"



"Not knowing which mental health strategies work best"

"Not feeling connected to each condition"

"When my symptoms don't match any one specific disorder"

"When you're trying to drink water, but someone dumped the entire spice cabinet into it"

"Diagnosis criteria are constantly being updated"



Let's Talk Diagnoses



What implications do diagnoses have?

Youth highlighted that mental health diagnoses bring **many barriers** to young people.

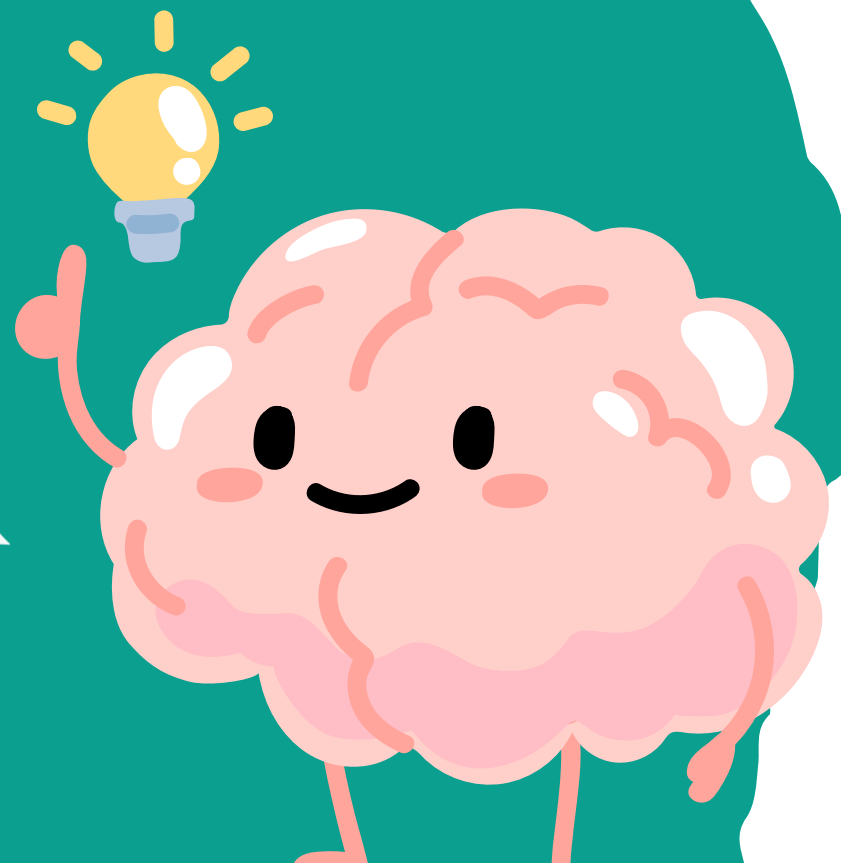
- **Diagnoses are not always accessible** (e.g., need access to a doctor, financial barriers), especially for equity-deserving youth
- **Diagnoses can be inaccurate**, on their own or due to biases and assumptions
- **Diagnoses can act as labels**, which can lead to stigma; but it can also help shape one's self-understanding and build community

What should care for MMHC look like?

Youth highlighted that care for MMHC must consider:

- How to address sub-diagnostic symptoms (i.e., don't meet criteria for a diagnosis)
- How to address mis-/dis-trust in the mental health care system
- How to manage cultural, financial and language barriers to care
- Care that is symptom-based, not diagnosis-based

"Symptoms can span across diagnoses too, which would help with a universal model"



Multimorbidity?!

Even though researchers often use the term **mental health multimorbidity**, young people we spoke to preferred calling it **multiple mental health conditions (MMHC)**.

“Mental health multimorbidity” sounds...

Scary

Sterile

Clinical

Rigid

Westernized

Science-y

Other challenges with the term multimorbidity...

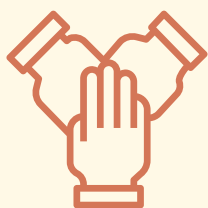
- “Morbidity” is confusing and has negative associations
- The term doesn’t translate well into other languages

What's Next?

CALM is a 5-year long project recruiting youth across 6 sites from all over Canada!

The first 3 years of the CALM project will involve:

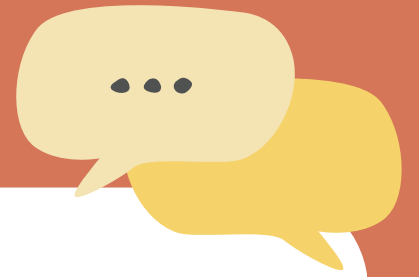
- **Establishing a Youth Advisory Group** to guide research decisions
- **Recruiting youth participants**
- **Surveying & interviewing youth participants** to gather info about their unique experiences with MMHC
- **Brain scans and cognitive assessments** for some youth participants



This booklet reflects youth perspectives as of April 2024, and may evolve and change as the project continues!



Resources



9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline

If you are in crisis or have suicide-related concerns, call or text **9-8-8** (24/7).

Kids Help Phone

Call **1-800-668-6868** or text **CONNECT** to **686868** (24/7).

LGBT Youthline

For 2SLGBTQ+ youth, text **647-694-4275** or use the chat box at youthline.ca (Sunday to Friday, 4:00pm to 9:30pm ET).

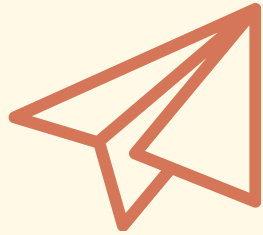
Hope for Wellness

For Indigenous people, call **1-855-242-3310** or use the chat box at hopeforwellness.ca (24/7).

mindyourmind

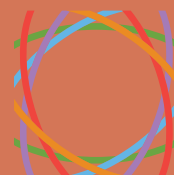
For more mental health resources, visit mindyourmind.ca.





Questions? Want to get involved? Email us at calm.project@camh.ca!

**This booklet was developed as part of the CALM Project,
funded by the Ontario Brain Institute.**



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