



National Mental Health Datathon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





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The National Mental Health Datathon was a three-week, national-scale initiative led by [Converge Mental Health Coalition](#) and [Data for Good](#), bringing together over 600 volunteer data analysts in 100 teams from across Canada. The Datathon officially launched on April 5, 2025, with hybrid kickoff events in Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Waterloo, Ottawa, Montreal, Saskatchewan, and the Maritimes, complemented by a national virtual launch.

Nine leading organizations contributed data and expertise, providing a rich mix of sector-specific and cross-sector datasets. These include:

- [211 Canada](#)
- [Big Brothers Big Sisters - Calgary](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association – Alberta + Centre for Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association – National](#)
- [Distress Centre Calgary](#)
- [HelpSeeker Technologies](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Mental Health Research Canada](#)

This first-of-its-kind collaboration demonstrated that coordinated data sharing can generate actionable insights with the potential to transform mental health understanding, policy, and service delivery nationwide.





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Key findings revealed systemic patterns affecting mental health outcomes:

- **Persistent Access Gaps:** Rural, remote, and low-income communities experience significant service inequities.
- **Social Determinants:** Housing, income, education, and employment strongly influence mental health outcomes.
- **Crisis Triggers:** Events such as wildfires and economic downturns create spikes in demand, emphasizing the need for integrated crisis planning.
- **Youth Mental Health:** Demographic factors, social media, and early adversity shape young people's well-being.
- **Community Supports:** Peer and informal networks play a vital role in resilience and early intervention.
- **Workplace Mental Health:** Organizational culture, management support, and role clarity affect employee wellbeing.
- **Data Integration:** Combining datasets and using modern analytic tools enhances evidence-based decision-making.
- **Service Experience:** Mode of delivery, satisfaction, and outcomes influence program effectiveness.



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For participating organizations, the Datathon provided practical opportunities: enhanced resource planning, tailored programs, data-informed research, and digital strategies, while creating a space for ongoing cross-sector collaboration. At the system level, it set a precedent for data governance, workforce planning, and policy innovation. At the community and individual levels, it pointed to more responsive, trauma-informed, and equitable services.

By demonstrating the high value of large-scale, multi-stakeholder collaboration, the Datathon laid the foundation for continued collective action and evidence-informed policies toward lasting improvements in mental health across Canada. Even as a rapid test and proof of concept, this time-limited, volunteer-driven initiative generated meaningful, actionable findings.

The challenge now is to make cross-sector collaboration a standard practice. That means investing as much in relationships, governance, and shared learning as in technology. We need clear, ethical rules for sharing data, stronger cross-sector partnerships, ongoing collaboration, and increased data skills and capacity. The event proved what is possible, but lasting change will require sustained investment, infrastructure, and ongoing collaboration.

Converge will lead this effort by convening a national Community of Practice, advocating for sector-wide priorities, and infrastructure to make mental health data collaboration a permanent driver of access, equity, and improved outcomes. The next phase focuses on securing investment and infrastructure to refine data-sharing processes, create shared standards, and integrate insights into ongoing service planning and policy.

With sustained commitment and resources, the cross-sector collaboration witnessed at the Datathon can be leveraged to become lasting mechanisms driving more responsive, trauma-informed, and equitable mental health services across Canada.

We are extremely grateful to Data for Good for their leadership, to the organizations that entrusted us with their data, the Data Ambassadors, and the volunteers across the country who contributed to this initiative. We thank our generous sponsors who are investing in a mental healthcare system that is evidence-based with the right supports at the right time.

Full Datathon Summary Report can be accessed [here](#).

Contact Us: info@convergence.mentalhealth.org