

Fact Sheet: Disability In Canada

Accessibility, Assistive Tech, & Inclusion Toolkit

This infosheet provides some background about disability in Canada.

Many Canadians live with a disability. A person's experience living with a disability is also shaped by their gender, financial status, race, or experience with colonialism. For example, a person with a disability may:



What do we mean when we say “disability”?

These resources use the definition of “disability” from the Accessible Canada Act. In this definition, disability means:

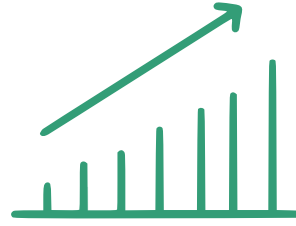
“any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society (handicap)”. [1]

This includes a range of disabilities, from traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and fetal alcohol syndrome (FASD), to visual impairment. You can learn more about the accessible Canada act on the [Employment and Social Development Canada website](#).

Many Canadians live with a disability.



- About **1 in 4** Canadians aged 15+ has at least one disability. [2]
- Out of this 27%, many have **more than one disability**. [3]



- **The rate of disability is rising**, and as our population ages, the disability rate increases. [4]
- In the last 5 years, the rates of **mental health, seeing, and pain** disabilities have increased the most. [5]

Rates of disability are higher in women, young people, and Indigenous people.



- Across age groups, women are more likely than men to have a disability. [6]
- Increases in the rate of disability are highest in Youth (15-24). [7]
- Compared to non-Indigenous people, rates of disability are higher in First Nations people living off reserve and Métis people. [8]

Many services and spaces are not accessible.

According to a report by Stats Canada, “In 2022, **6 in 10** persons with disabilities experienced barriers related to accessing indoor and outdoor public spaces”. [9]



In the anti-violence sector, there is growing attention to Traumatic Brain Injuries as a disability.

2% of the population in Canada lives with a TBI.

- One third of people living with a TBI are women
- Rates of TBI are high in women aged 15-24.

Intimate partner violence is a leading cause of TBI.

- Between 35 and 80% of women impacted by IPV experience symptoms of TBI, and women with TBIs are more likely than men to experience mental health problems post injury.
- Survivors and providers may mistake TBI symptoms with emotional distress related to abuse.

*Stats in this section are all from [10]

For the full toolkit, visit BCSTH's [Accessibility, Assistive Tech, & Inclusion page](#).

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Reference List:

- [1] *Accessible Canada Act*. Government of Canada. (2019). Retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153434>
- [2] *New Data on Disability in Canada, 2022*. Statistics Canada. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.htm>
- [3] *Measuring Disability in Canada*. Statistics Canada. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022062-eng.htm>
- [4] [5] [6] *New Data on Disability in Canada, 2022*. Statistics Canada. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.htm>
- [7] *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017-2022*. Statistics Canada. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm>
- [8] *Indigenous People with Disabilities in Canada: First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 15 years and older*. Government of Canada. Statistics Canada. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2019005-eng.htm>
- [9] *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017-2022*. Statistics Canada. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm>
- [10] Statistics. Brain Injury Canada. (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://braininjurycanada.ca/en/statistics/#:~:text=TBI%20occurs%20at%20an%20annual,minutes%20in%20Canada%20%5B3%5D>.