

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2020 Budget

By the:

CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
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DE PSYCHOLOGIE

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice, and education of psychology in Canada. With over 7,000 members and affiliates, the CPA is Canada's largest association of psychologists. For more information about the CPA please visit www.cpa.ca.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Government:

1) **Environmental Research**

- a) Increase incentives for industry, and funding for non-governmental organizations and non-profits, to engage in environmental research.
- b) Establish a Canada Research Chair in Human Behaviour and Climate Change, at \$300K per year, to support and leverage the expertise of environmental psychologists, and their research, so that policies and programs to successfully reduce Canada's carbon footprint can be implemented.

2) **Mental Health Services**

- a) Ensure that the ongoing money for mental health services, transferred to the provinces through the Health Accord agreements, delivers access to evidence-based care, and that provinces and territories live up to their obligations to match or commit to new mental health spending without cutting back on existing publicly funded mental health services.
- b) Work with provincial and territorial governmental partners to ensure current and future investments in mental health, in both the private and public sectors, deliver services in parity with those delivered for physical health conditions, and ensure that services are sustainable.
- c) Review and harmonize how the federal government funds psychological services through the programs and policies under its purview.
 - o These include health services provided to First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada, members of the military and veterans, and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed by the federal government.

3) **Strengthen Canada's Research Ecosystem**

- a) Implement the remaining recommendations from the 2017 Fundamental Science Review's (FSR) report to strengthen Canada's research ecosystem by:
 - o Investing \$85M, phased in for the next two years, for open competitions within the tri-councils to reach the steady-state target identified by the FSR panel;
 - o Implementing a total base increase of \$140M per year, with additional equal increments of \$40M per year, phased in over three years for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows;
 - o Providing an additional \$100M per year for the next three years to reach the FSR-recommended steady-state target.

The CPA is pleased to provide this 2020 pre-budget consultation submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. Psychology is a profession and discipline that studies how we think, feel, and behave, and applies this knowledge to help individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations understand, explain and change their behavior.

The inter-relationship between climate change, health, and the behaviour of individuals and the economy must be understood and addressed as noted by the:

- 1) Bank of Canada's 2019 Financial System Review which lists climate change as one of the main vulnerabilities facing Canada's economy.
- 2) 2019 *Final Report of the Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance* when it states that "The relationship between the economy and the environment is at a vital inflection point. As more climate change impacts materialize and international activity to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mounts, Canada's aspirations for a thriving economy, workforce and environment must become one and the same."
- 3) 2016 *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* acceptance that "Adaptation actions with an inclusive view of well-being (e.g. social and cultural determinants of health and mental health) will keep Canadians healthy and reduce pressures on the health system."
- 4) 2019 report by the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), *Canada's Top Climate Change Risks*, highlights the clear links and impacts of climate change to physical and mental health and well-being. The themes highlighted in this regard included: community well-being; amplification of mental health risk factors; knowledge gaps between physical and mental health research; trauma and psychological distress caused by climate change; and human impact of economic losses.

Canadian climate action commitments demonstrate that both the federal government and the provinces/territories are failing to: effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions, assess climate risks, coordinate effectively, and develop/implement climate adaptation action plans. This was made clear in the 2018 collective report by Canada's auditors general on climate efforts and, as evidenced by the CCA's report, little has since changed.

The CPA contends that the knowledge and expertise of psychology as a profession has not been adequately leveraged when it comes to the government of Canada's decision-making process on climate change, nor has the impact of climate change to the mental health of Canadians been sufficiently addressed.

Psychology's Contribution to Climate Change

Climate change, and how Canadians respond to it, is largely driven by human behaviour. The economy is affected by a multiplicity of factors, among which climate change and human behaviour must become more central considerations. Effective responses to climate change will require understanding and promoting effective behavioural change at the individual and group levels. Environmental psychologists can assist government in developing public policy that overcomes the discrepancies between what Canadians understand about climate change, and their everyday behaviour and one-time choice related to the environment.

Psychological research can provide answers to emerging climate questions, including:

- 1) How do Canadians understand the risks imposed by climate change?
- 2) How does the behaviour of individuals contribute to climate change, and what are the psychological and contextual drivers of these contributions?
- 3) What are the psychosocial impacts of climate change?
- 4) How are Canadians adapting to, and coping with, the real and perceived threats and unfolding impacts of climate change?
- 5) What are the psychological factors that limit climate change or help Canadians effectively respond to it?¹

The government of Canada would benefit greatly by engaging psychological expertise in policy and decision-making on climate change and the economy. For example, funding could be made available to engage environmental psychologists in industry, non-governmental organizations, and non-profits, to assist them in using psychological principles and practices to reduce their organizational footprints. Consideration could also be given to establishing a Canada Research Chair on Human Behaviour and Climate.

Effectively changing how Canadians interact with the environment requires a sophisticated understanding of psychological principles. Environmental psychologists can assist in the development of legislation and policy that leads to positive changes to how Canadians impact the environment. This includes how best to incentivize change among individuals through programs and policies, how to communicate information in ways so that climate and environmental messages are effectively heard and acted upon, and how to build and change built environments to facilitate good environmental practice among individuals, families, and communities.

Mental Health, Addictions, and the Economy

Canada already faces a significant mental health and substance use/addictions challenge that is greatly impacting the economy. Compared to other countries (e.g., United Kingdom, Australia, Netherlands, Finland, Portugal) which have launched national mental health and substance use initiatives, Canada continues to lag in ensuring people get the care and services they need.

While one in five people face a mental health problem each year², a third of adults report that their mental health needs are not fully met³ and approximately three-quarters of children do not have access to specialized services⁴. According to findings by the Conference Board of Canada (2016), improved treatment for depression and anxiety alone for Canadian workers would boost the Canadian economy by nearly \$50 billion dollars/year. In 2014, the cost of substance use (SU) in Canada (excluding in-hospital services) was \$38.4 billion—or approximately \$1,100 spent for every Canadian regardless of age.⁵

¹ From the Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on the Interface Between Psychology and Global Climate Change, 2009. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/science/about/publications/climate-change-booklet.pdf>.

² Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041. Prepared for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Toronto: RiskAnalytica.

³ Sunderland & Findlay (2013). Perceived need for mental health care in Canada: Results from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health. Statistics Canada Catalogue no.82-003-X.

⁴ <https://www1.cpa-apc.org/Publications/Archives/CJP/2005/march2/cjp-mar2-05-Waddell-RP.pdf>.

⁵ Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction (2018) citing CIHI. Available at:

To promote Canada’s economic competitiveness, the CPA recommends that the federal government continue to make investments in both mental health research and mental health services.

- Mental health research is paramount to our nation’s success. How well people manage chronic disease, how employers optimize workplace satisfaction and productivity, how we understand the developmental issues and problems of childhood and aging, how we effectively treat mental health disorders, the impacts of developments in augmented intelligence are all informed and advanced by psychological science.
- Continued investments in mental health services are needed to ensure that funding provided within the recent Health Accord agreements delivers access to evidence-based care and holds all levels of government accountable to mental health spending. Provinces and territories must live up to their obligations to match or commit to new mental health spending without cutting back on existing publicly funded mental health services.
- All governments must work together to ensure sustainable investments in mental health and ensure that care is provided in parity to physical conditions.
- CPA’s 2019 pre-budget recommendations included a call for government to review and harmonize how it funds psychological services through the programs and policies under its purview⁶. This remains an imperative for mental health in Canada.

Psychological Science, Canada’s Research Ecosystem, and Climate Change

Public discussions and policymaking about Canadian society and the economy, including climate change, must be based on a healthy scientific ecosystem – one that recognizes the importance of funding the social sciences and humanities, as well as the health and natural sciences. Whether it is the effort to change destructive behaviors like minimizing our use of motor vehicles, or non-biodegradable products or embracing beneficial ones like recycling and using public transit, psychological research is key to understanding how people think and behave about the environment and economic issues.

A 2019 report, *Investing in Canadian Climate Science*, states that “fundamental climate research plays a crucial role in the models, data and evidence that underpin global decision-making on climate, energy, health and economic policy.” To foster more awareness of climate change, and thus promote more responsibility on the part of Canadians through policy and programs, governments need to understand how people process information and make decisions. How information is effectively presented can better inform how climate messaging will be received by different Canadian audiences. With more funding for Canada’s research ecosystem generally, and psychological science specifically, psychology can play a significant role in facilitating climate adaptation efforts.

Canadian researchers and students are at the forefront of discoveries and innovations, and their expertise and ability to inform discussions about the environment, society, and the economy – inclusive of the basic science underlying the climate emergency and the psychological research necessary to understand how to help individuals and communities make the behavioural changes necessary to limit and redress climate change – could be better leveraged by implementing the

<https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/CSUCH-Canadian-Substance-Use-Costs-Harms-Report-2018-en.pdf>.

⁶ <https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Government%20Relations/Final%20CPA%20pre-budget%20August%202018.pdf>.

unfulfilled recommendations in the 2017 FSR report, *Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research*.

The FSR report offers a comprehensive plan to improve Canada's research ecosystem and, in so doing, restore the position of Canadians as research leaders, internationally. Through Budgets 2018 and 2019, the Government has acted on some of the report's recommendations. More can and must be done to further support the advancement of Canada's global competitiveness and prosperity.

- Full implementation of the FSR's recommendation would see the government provide \$85M, phased in for the next two years, for open competitions to reach the steady-state target. This investment in open grant competitions, coupled with a more balanced approach to research funding as a foundational principle, would allow researchers in environmental psychology and behavioural change programs – typically found in the social sciences and humanities – to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to reduce the carbon footprint and climate impacts of Canadians.
- Students represent the next generation of researchers who will make ground-breaking discoveries and tackle the many economic, environmental, social, and cultural challenges facing Canadians; as such there is continued need for harmonizing, upgrading, and bringing strategic focus to the graduate student and post-doctoral fellow support systems. The CPA supports the implementation of a total base increase of \$140M/year, with additional equal increments of \$40M/year, phased in over three years, to support both graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.
- Additional funding is needed to enhance the environment for science and scholarship by improved coverage of the facilities and administrative costs of research to institutions, while targeted spending is required for infrastructure-related start-up costs, ongoing costs to support major science facilities, and replacement costs for research tools and instruments that are outdated. The CPA supports the FSR's recommendation that an additional \$100M/year for the next three years be provided for facilities and administrative costs to reach the steady-state target.

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