

Canadians with learning, developmental and memory disabilities, 2022

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According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), more than one in four (27%) Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8.0 million people, had one or more disabilities that limited them in their daily activities. This population includes persons with various disability types, and many with more than one type. Disaggregating data by disability type can provide information specific to the experiences of Canadians with different disability types.

Today, Statistics Canada is releasing three infographics highlighting learning, developmental, and memory disabilities, the first infographics in a series presenting findings from the 2022 CSD specific to various disability types. Infographics highlighting seven other disability types will be released in the coming months.

Learning, developmental, and memory disability types vary by age and gender

In 2022, 5.6% of Canadians aged 15 and older had a learning disability, 1.5% had a developmental disability, and 4.9% had a memory disability. Consistent with the [trend in the overall disability rate](#), all three of these disability types increased in prevalence from 2017 to 2022.

The prevalence of learning disabilities was slightly higher in women (5.9%) than in men (5.2%), and the same was true for memory disabilities (5.5% vs. 4.3%). Developmental disabilities were more common in men (1.8%) than in women (1.3%).

Learning and developmental disability rates were highest in youth aged 15 to 24 years. Among this age group, 9.2% of Canadians had a learning disability, compared with 5.3% of working age adults (25 to 64 years), and 4.1% of seniors aged 65 years and older.

Similarly, the rate of developmental disability was higher among youth (3.8%) than working age adults (1.4%) and seniors (0.6%). By contrast, memory disabilities were more prevalent among seniors (6.6%) than youth (4.0%) or working age adults (4.5%).

Mental health-related disabilities commonly co-occur with developmental and memory disabilities

More than 9 in 10 persons with developmental disabilities (92%) or memory disabilities (98%) had at least one other disability type. Among those with developmental disabilities, the most common co-occurring types were learning disabilities (69%) and mental health-related disabilities (66%).

For those with memory disabilities, the two most commonly co-occurring disability types were pain-related and mental health-related disabilities. Mental health-related disabilities were the most common co-occurrence among those aged 15 to 24 (80%) and 25 to 44 (81%), while pain-related disabilities were most common among those aged 45 to 64 (81%) and 65 years and older (75%).

Majority of persons with memory and developmental disabilities have unmet needs for disability supports

In 2022, 56% of persons with disabilities had unmet needs for assistive aids and devices, medications, and healthcare therapies and services. Those with memory (62%) and developmental (70%) disabilities were more likely to report unmet needs. As well, the percentage of unmet needs differed between those with more severe (70%) and milder (56%) developmental disabilities.



Nearly one in four students with learning disabilities study part-time

Nearly one in four (24%) current or recent students aged 15 to 24 years with learning disabilities were studying part-time, and half of them (50%) reported that this was due to their condition.

Additionally, many students with learning disabilities received educational accommodations. The most common were extended time during tests and exams (27%); a computer, laptop or tablet with specialized software or applications (13%); and a quiet room or sensory room (10%).

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Note to readers

The Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) sample is selected from the Census of Population respondents, making this survey a postcensal one. For methodological details, see [Surveys and statistical programs - Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#).

The 2022 CSD includes questions on both sex at birth and gender, while the 2017 CSD asked respondents if they were male or female (i.e., their sex). This analysis uses the concept of gender to disaggregate and disseminate 2022 CSD data, while the 2017 CSD uses the sex of the person. The change to disseminate data on gender rather than sex is consistent with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's [Policy direction to modernize the Government of Canada's sex and gender information practices](#) (2018) and the changes to the 2021 Census (see [Filling the gaps: Information on gender in the 2021 Census](#)).

In this analysis, a two-category gender variable is used to facilitate historical comparison and to protect the confidentiality of non-binary persons, given the relatively small size of this population in Canada. For 2022 data, the category of "men" includes cisgender and transgender men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons, while "women" includes cisgender and transgender women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons. Although sex and gender refer to two different concepts, the introduction of gender is not expected to have a significant impact on data analysis and historical comparability, given the small size of the transgender and non-binary populations.

A global severity score was developed for the CSD. It was calculated for each person using the number of disability types that a person has, the level of difficulty experienced in performing certain tasks, and the frequency of activity limitations. To simplify the concept of severity, four severity classes were established: mild, moderate, severe and very severe. "Mild" and "moderate" classes were collapsed into "milder," while "severe" and "very severe" classes were collapsed into "more severe." It is important to understand, however, that the name assigned to each class is simply intended to facilitate use of the severity score and is not a label or judgment concerning the person's level of disability.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3251](#).

The infographics "[Developmental disabilities, 2022](#)," "[Learning disabilities, 2022](#)" and "[Memory disabilities, 2022](#)" are now available in the series *Statistics Canada – Infographics (11-627-M)*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).