

United Way Maritimes

Impact Area



Wellbeing
& Safety

What is Wellbeing and Personal Safety?

Wellbeing refers to the highest possible quality of life, including physical, mental, emotional and sexual health. When people don't have access to the tools, education, relationships, and supports they need to thrive, it can compromise their personal safety. It can lead to increased likelihood of mental illness, suicide, vulnerability to being victimized, violence or abuse perpetration, substance use, and more.

Wellbeing and safety are broad terms that can encompass a huge number of important factors. At United Way Maritimes, we are choosing to focus on mental health, substance use, and gender-based violence because these are deeply connected to poverty and greatly impact our communities.

Important Terms to Know:

Mental health refers to a person's state of psychological and emotional wellbeing. It exists on a continuum but generally describes having a sense of purpose, strong relationships, connectedness, stress coping skills and enjoyment of life.

Mental illnesses are disorders or conditions diagnosed on a person's problematic mood, thinking or behaviour. They also exist on a continuum.

Substance use describes the use of controlled and illegal drugs, cannabis, tobacco/nicotine, and alcohol for various reasons, including medical, religious/ceremonial, personal enjoyment, and coping purposes.

Domestic violence describes forms of violence that occur within the home (family violence) or interpersonal relationships (intimate partner violence). It can look like physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse.

Who is impacted by compromised safety and wellbeing in Canada?

48.6% of youth aged 15-24 are most likely to report harm due to alcohol use in the past year, and to experience substance use disorders.

2SLGBTQIA+ people are more likely to report poor mental health than non-2SLGBTQIA+ people. Nearly 1 in 3 people with a disability report poor mental health.

44% of women and girls who have ever been in an intimate partner relationship reported experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ women are especially vulnerable to intimate partner violence.



United Way
Maritimes

Serving Central &
Southwestern NB,
PEI & Mainland NS



Local Statistics

New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2024, 52.6% of people rated their life satisfaction as high, and 20.3% rated their life satisfaction as low.• 21.6% of people self-report poor mental health.• 37.3% of people have a mental or substance use disorder.• In 2022, domestic violence occurred at a rate of 429 per 100,000 people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2024, 47.9% of people rated their life satisfaction as high, and 24.2% rated their life satisfaction as low.• 24.0% of people self-report poor mental health.• 43.5% of people have a mental or substance use disorder.• In 2023, domestic violence occurred at a rate of 325 per 100,000 people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2024, 46.8% of people rated their life satisfaction as high, and 23.0% rated their life satisfaction as low.• 17.5% of people self-report poor mental health.• 35.4% of people have a mental or substance use disorder.• In 2023, domestic violence occurred at a rate of 251 per 100,000 people.

United Way Maritimes Impact

United Way Maritimes will address wellbeing and safety through community investments, capacity building, delivery of programs, and thought leadership activities to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased access to non-judgmental, non-coercive, and evidence-based mental health and substance use support
- Increased access to personal wellbeing and life skills development opportunities
- Reduced susceptibility to experiencing or perpetrating violence and harm
- Individuals are empowered to live safer and improve their well-being

What might this look like?

Immediate Needs	Intervention & Prevention	Addressing Root Causes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harm reduction• Crisis supports• Intimate partner violence emergency shelters• Victim safety planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer support programs• Counselling and support groups• Healthy relationships education• Crime prevention programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issue focused forums and training• Advocacy for public policy changes to address intimate partner violence, mental health and harm reduction

Sources for this document can be found at www.unitedwayhalifax.ca/impact-area-sources/

