

# A New Canadian Concept



# My 'WHY'

- ▶ UW – Sociology & Legal Studies
- ▶ Worked at Vanier Correctional Institute for 2 years teaching Anti-Substance Abuse & Anti-Fraud Programs to Women Offenders
- ▶ CVH started my career in Healthcare IT
- ▶ Loss of 2 children = Intro to Mental Health Support network
- ▶ Joined Bayshore, Death of "My 2 Dads", Separation after 22 yrs
- ▶ Creativity embedded Personality often can lead to mood swings, Anxiety & Depression → Coping mechanisms – Work, Work, Work
- ▶ Teen with Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, navigating non-binary
- ▶ Mother-in-Law - CJD experience
- ▶ Career focused on finding Opportunities for Improvement, Innovation, Efficiencies
- ▶ 20 years later – planning my Semi-retirement Hobby Farm, and came across this idea.



# Thistle House Care Farm

Biodiverse  
Micro Farming



Ecological  
Solution

Therapy  
Animals



Agricultural  
Sustainability

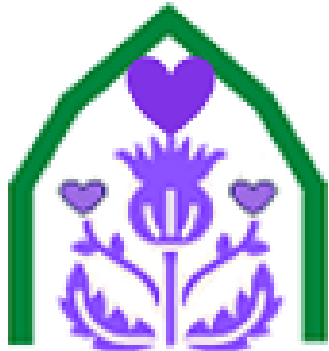
Mental  
Health Care  
Team



Healthcare Solution

## What is a Care Farm?

- ▶ Through the therapeutic use of farming practices, care farms can provide health, social and educational care services for vulnerable groups of people. This includes supporting Aging Seniors, Dementia, Mental health and so much more!
- ▶ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAD\\_ZKd7ccs&t=18s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAD_ZKd7ccs&t=18s)



**THISTLE HOUSE CARE FARM**

<https://thistlehousefarm.ca>

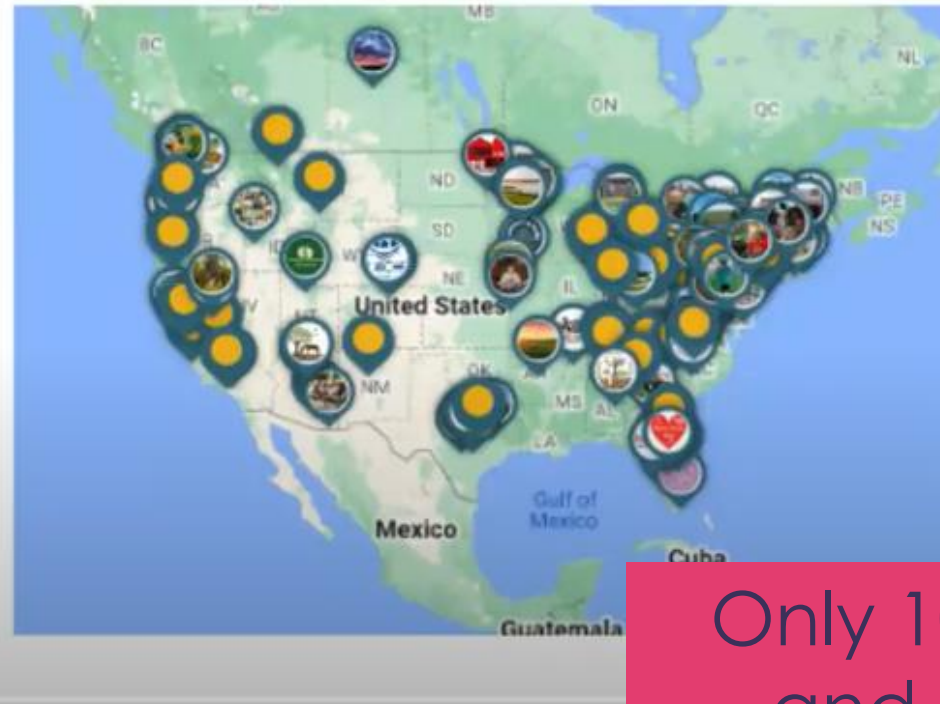
# Thistle House Farm Inc.



- ▶ Started the for-profit side to start raising funds to get the 'Care Farm' supported
- ▶ Selling vegetables & plants from the raised garden beds
- ▶ Eggs from our free-range chickens



# Groundbreaking in Canada!



- Mono
- Roslin
- Milton
- Arthur

[www.carefarmingnetwork.org](http://www.carefarmingnetwork.org)

Only 10 in all of Canada  
and only 6 in Ontario

# Benefits of Care Farming

There is a well-established and growing body of evidence that shows that spending time hands-on with plants and animals can make a noticeable difference to your well-being.

Some of the

Participants are amazed at the results of their work in seeing that, with a little bit of energy, there can be huge results. Seeing plants growing and producing crops **brings new hope and determination** (Elings & Hassink, 2008). **Sensory experience** is very important, especially for a participant who has experienced trauma.

(Elings & Hassink, 2008)

- Preventing mental health issues
- Increased self-esteem
- Psychological well-being
- Reduced stress
- Improved social interaction
- Grief Recovery
- Enhanced confidence and sense of achievement
- Developing life skills
- Working individually and as part of a team
- Increased self-esteem
- Opportunity to meet and engage with new people
- Evidence
- Community skills
- Work

Studies confirmed that time spent with other people in a natural environment where you can **learn** and **grow** will only do you **good**.

# 3 Program Participant Groups

**Mental Health**  
Youth & Adults

**Seniors w Dementia**  
Activity Day Program

**Aging @ Home**  
Daily Respite Program

# Farm Activities

## Seasonal:

- ▶ Vegetable Gardens
- ▶ Pollinator Flower Gardens
- ▶ Sensory Gardens
- ▶ Biodiversity Care
- ▶ Outdoor Arts & Crafts

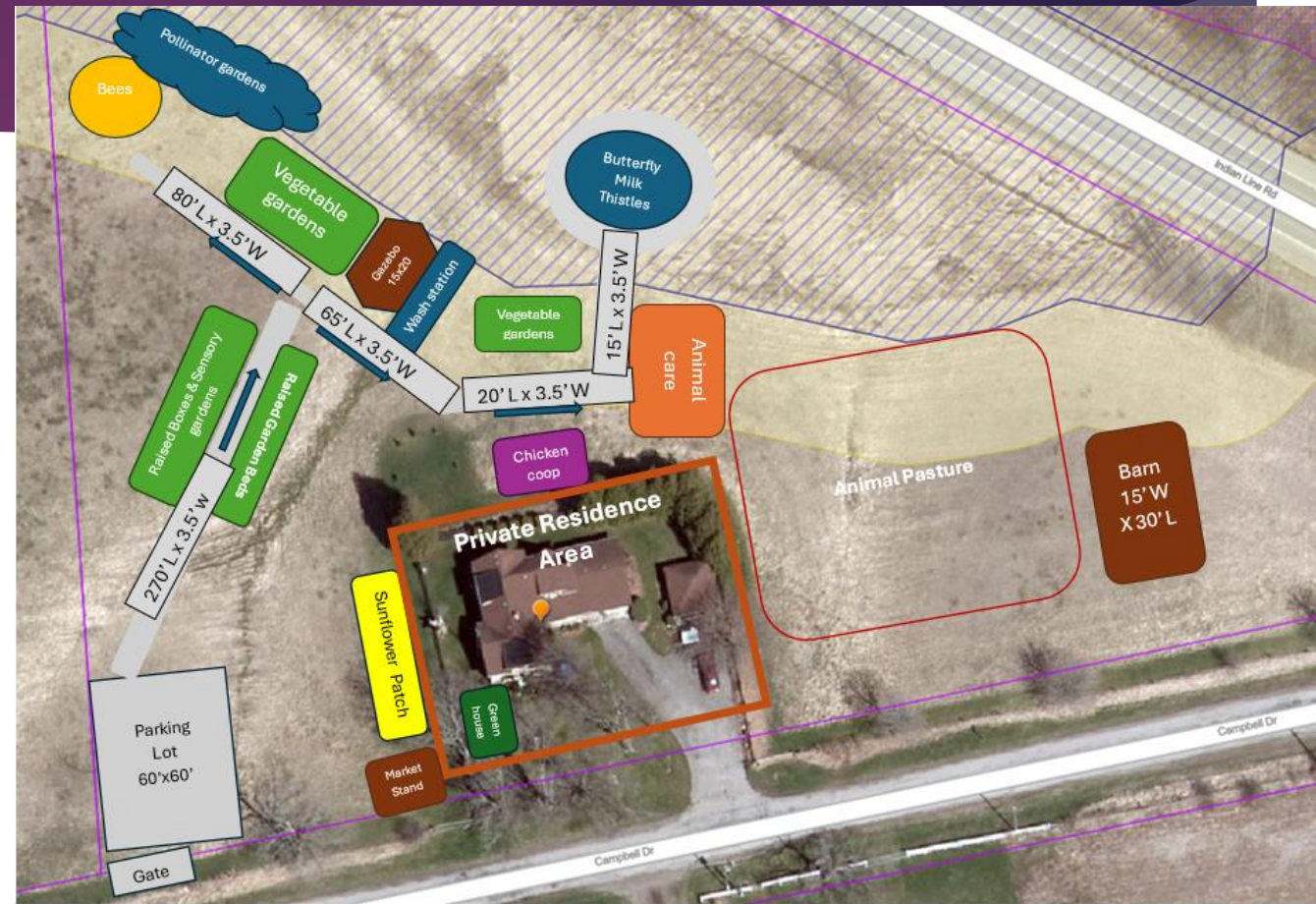
## Year Round:

- Animal Assisted Interventions
- Sensory Garden Activity Take-home
- Group Counselling
- Greenhouse / Nursery
- Fundraising Community Days

# Location

## ▶ Brant County

- ▶ 2019 - 3700 in Brantford/Brant live with Dementia
- ▶ 6000 Caregivers needing respite
- ▶ Population is growing at a 10.8% rate increase
- ▶ Seniors 65+ are fastest growing age group in last 15 years accounting for 19.3% of population



# The Need - Dementia

- ▶ As of Jan 2024 – 733,040 people in Canada are living with Dementia;
- ▶ Every day, more than 350 people in Canada develop Dementia;
- ▶ This is more than 15 every hour;



First Canadian Dementia Care Farm

- ▶ Care Farms provide physical activity, social activity, provide activities for thinking, fresh air = good night sleep, sensory gardens important to brain healing, purpose to get out of bed, treatment for depression, provide healthy behaviours (eating, exercise, animal care)

***8/12 recommended Activities of Dementia Prevention!***

- ▶ Delaying Dementia onset by 1 year could avoid nearly 500,000 cases in Canada by 2050;
- ▶ Delaying Dementia by 10 yrs could avoid more than 4 million cases by 2050;

**Alzheimer***Society*

# Alzheimer Society Day Program - July

- ▶ Hosted a free open house event for a group of day programmers and their family members



- ▶ Positive survey results



# How to contact us

- ▶ Visit us at [www.thistlehousefarm.ca](http://www.thistlehousefarm.ca)
- ▶ Fill in our **Senior's Day Program Survey**:  
Submit form if you're interested in the Senior's Day Program

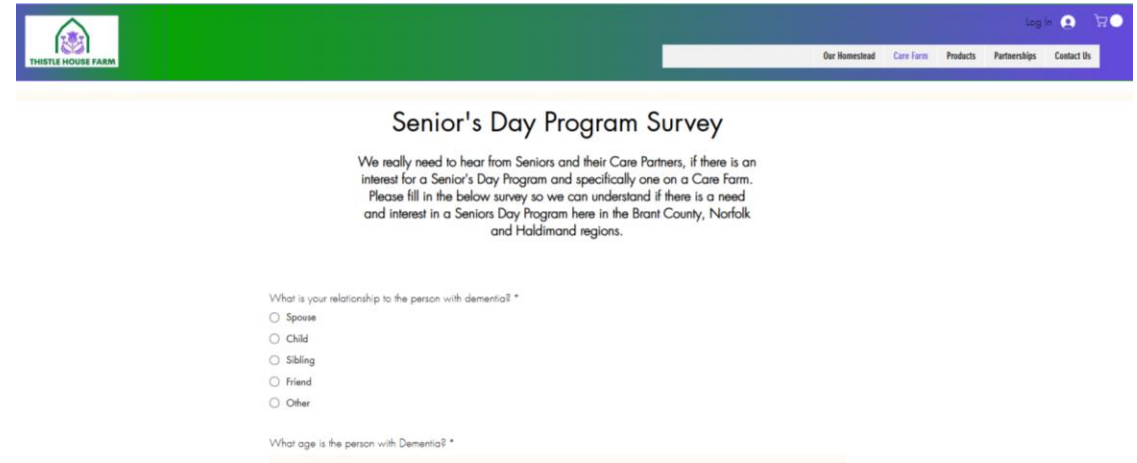
[Senior Day Program Survey | Thistle House Farm](#)

- ▶ Email us a:  
**ThistleHouseCareFarm@gmail.com**

## Follow us on Facebook or Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/thistlehousefarm>

<https://www.instagram.com/thistlehousefarm>



The screenshot shows the Thistle House Farm website header with the logo and navigation links: Our Homestead, Care Farm, Products, Partnerships, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled "Senior's Day Program Survey" and includes the following text:

We really need to hear from Seniors and their Care Partners, if there is an interest for a Senior's Day Program and specifically one on a Care Farm. Please fill in the below survey so we can understand if there is a need and interest in a Seniors Day Program here in the Brant County, Norfolk and Haldimand regions.

Below the text is a survey question: "What is your relationship to the person with dementia?" with radio button options: Spouse, Child, Sibling, Friend, and Other. Below this is another question: "What age is the person with Dementia?" with a text input field.

# Interested in Sponsoring?

- ▶ Sponsorship at Thistle House Farm can be done in various ways!
  - ▶ **Vendor sponsors** receive advertising on our social media avenues and signage at our farm
  - ▶ **Links to support:**
    - ▶ **Amazon Wishlist**
    - ▶ **GoFundMe**
  - ▶ **Volunteering:**
    - ▶ **On community days or day program days!**



**THISTLE HOUSE CARE FARM**

## Sponsorship Levels

By sponsoring Thistle House Care Farm, you are making a profound difference in the lives of our participants and the broader Brant County community. Your support will ensure the continued success and growth of our day programs, allowing us to touch more lives and create lasting positive change.

<p><b>\$2,500</b> PLATINUM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business advertising space along fence line of Cockshutt Road</li> <li>• Social Media shout outs and features</li> <li>• Business advertised on Thistle Care House Farm website</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$1,500</b> GOLD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business advertising space along fence line of Cockshutt Road</li> <li>• Social Media shout outs and features</li> <li>• Business advertised on Thistle Care House Farm website</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$1,000</b> SILVER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming rights for chicken coop</li> <li>• Social Media shout outs and features</li> <li>• Business advertised on Thistle Care House Farm website</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$500</b> BRONZE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Sponsored by" plaque on seating area for our day programs</li> <li>• Social Media shout out</li> <li>• Business advertised on Thistle Care House Farm website</li> </ul>
<p><b>\$100 - \$500</b> SPONSOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go Fund Me donation or purchase from Amazon Wishlist</li> <li>• Social Media shout out</li> <li>• Business advertised on Thistle Care House Farm website</li> </ul>



Go Fund Me



Amazon

4 Campbell Dr., Mount Pleasant, ON., NOE 1K0 | 416-434-5482 | thistlehousefarm@gmail.com

# Questions?

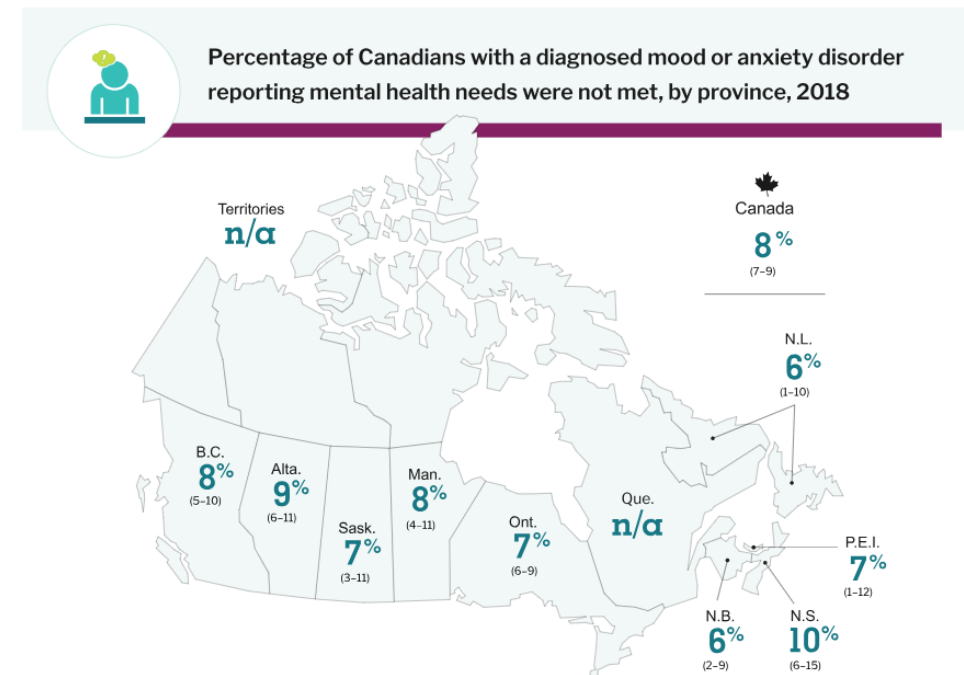


# APPENDIX

# The Need – Mental Health

- ▶ 2018 – Canadians age 12 and older – 14% reported being diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder
- ▶ Nearly 8% they were unable to get treatment
- ▶ 20% said they had some care but it didn't meet their needs
- ▶ 851,000 Canadians unmet treatment for mental health
- ▶ The 2022 study compared to 2012 showed 2-3 times increase in mental health issues with Canadians

Percentage of Canadians with a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder reporting mental health needs were not met, by province, 2018



# The Science & Studies

## Two main theories:

- ▶ **Attention Restoration Theory by Kaplan & Kaplan(1989):**  
Attention to nature does not require effort, and it actually stimulates attention that is restorative
- ▶ **Psycho-Evolutionary Model by Ulrich (1991):**  
Being in nature reduces the brain stresses that are caused in urban environments

Both discuss influence nature has on reduction of stress and mental fatigue by understanding recover effects that nature has on human beings;

**Horticultural Theory:** Use of plants by a trained professional as a medium through which certain clinically defined goals may be met (Elings, 44, 2006);

**Therapeutic Horticulture:** Process by which individuals may develop well-being using plants & horticulture and is achieved by active or passive involvement (Elings, 44, 2006)

# NBIs – Nature-Based Interventions

Studies have shown that NBIs have an affect on participants Changing Environment resulting in Change of Behaviour and can be categorized as ‘Treatment’ or ‘Preventative’ Intervention Goals.

Here are just a few examples: **CHANGE ENVIRONMENT**

Intervention	Description	T-treatment P-prevention	Intervention Goals, and Intended Health or Wellbeing Outcome	Target Beneficiaries
<b>1. Provision of gardens in hospitals or residential care homes (sometimes referred to as healing gardens).</b>	The provision of gardens that can either be viewed from hospital rooms or accessed by patients and families (can include green walls).	T	<i>Reduce pain and stress, potentially leading to improved healing time and mental health, quality of life, wellbeing, reduced agitation for patients with dementia.</i>	Hospital or residential care patients, their families and friends, staff. Can have targeted groups in some circumstances, e.g., hospitals for patients living with dementia.
<b>8. Community gardens/allotments.</b>	Gardens in accessible locations for community members to encourage engagement in growing one’s own food and to provide food education involving fruit and vegetables.	P	<i>Improve nutrition, social connections and psychological benefits (e.g., confidence, psychological restoration).</i>	Neighbourhoods or entire towns, sometimes with specific intended beneficiaries (e.g., age groups).
<b>11. Provision of accessible natural environments.</b>	Location and spatial planning of accessible natural environments, with paths. Infrastructure created or improved in local woodlands, and a programme of social engagement.	P	<i>Increase use of natural environments for health, recreation, leisure, etc. to facilitate health and wellbeing outcomes such as reduced stress, improvements in mood.</i>	Local residents and wider populations.

# NBIs – Nature-Based Interventions

## CHANGE BEHAVIOUR:

Intervention	Description	T/P	Intervention Goals (i.e. Health Outcome)	Target Beneficiaries
<b>13. Care-farming or farm therapy, including horticulture and animal-assisted therapy.</b>	Therapeutic use of commercial farms and agricultural landscapes as a base for promoting mental and physical health, through normal farming activity or horticulture.	T	<i>Mental health promotion and to reduce distress in people with dementia. Reduce social isolation.</i>	Youth at risk; youth with special needs (e.g., autism); cancer survivors; mental disorders; people with lost functionality; people recovering from serious illness.
<b>15. Wilderness therapy.</b>	Structured nature-based activities and programmes in 'wilder' environments for 'at risk' groups or those recuperating or in recovery	P / T	<i>Address social and psychological issues through a range of pathways, including by facilitating positive human-nature interactions, building self-esteem and fostering social connections.</i>	People with severe mental health issues; youth at risk of involvement in crime; individuals who are imprisoned or on probation from crime; ex-offenders; victims of crime; children with ADHD; those living with or recovering from a range of mental and physical conditions; people with post-traumatic stress disorder.
<b>16. Wilderness programmes.</b>	Programmes designed to challenge participants in natural environments.	P	<i>Personal growth, social skills.</i>	Often youth, but also targeting any interested people and groups.

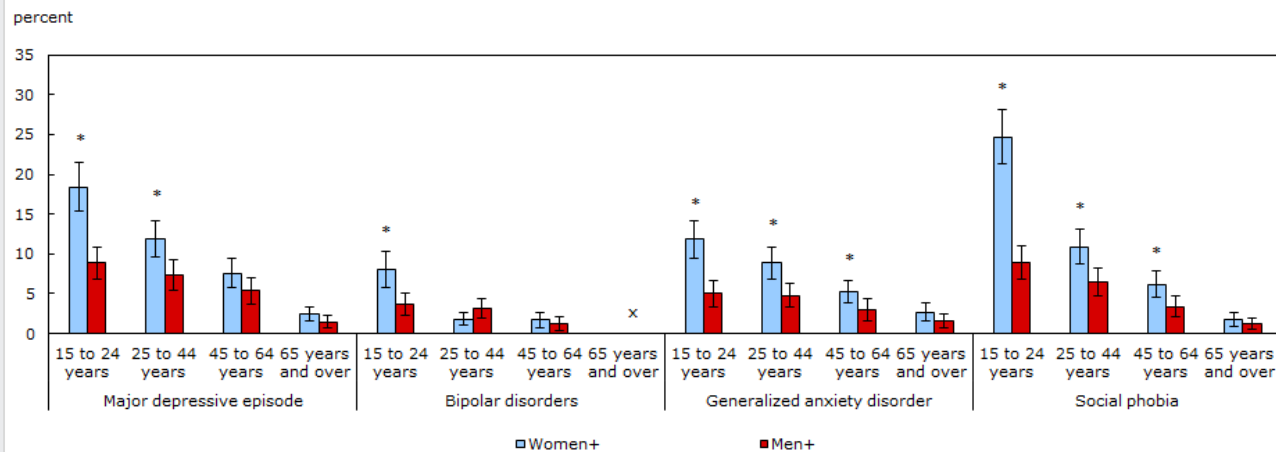
# Therapies

Through the therapeutic use of farming practices, care farms can provide health, social and educational care services for vulnerable groups of people. This includes people dealing with:

- ▶ Aging @ Home Seniors
- ▶ Brain Injury, Special Needs
- ▶ Dementia
- ▶ Mental health, Youth & Adults
- ▶ Learning disabilities, Autism and ADHD
- ▶ Veterans ([www.farmvetco.org](http://www.farmvetco.org))
- ▶ Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) [for example: Cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, ASDs – Autism spectrum disorders]

# The Need – Youth Mental Health

**Chart 1**  
12-month prevalence of selected mood and anxiety disorders, by age and gender, 2022



x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

\* significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between men and women in the same age group

**Notes:** Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval of the prevalence estimates. The category "women+" includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons. The category "men+" includes men (and/or boys), as well as some non-binary persons.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Mental Health and Access to Care Survey, 2022.

- ▶ Statistics Canada is now tracking Social Phobia and it's highest in young women now post COVID
- ▶ They need a space outdoors in small groups they can feel safe in and start to socialize again

# Funding Sources – Mental Health

Fund Name	Source	Description	Link
Models of Care Innovation Fund	Provincial – Ontario Health	Mental Health Funding – Innovative Services	<a href="https://www.ontariohealth.ca/about-us/our-work/our-stories/models-care-innovation-fund">https://www.ontariohealth.ca/about-us/our-work/our-stories/models-care-innovation-fund</a>
Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund	Federal	Used to be the Innovation Strategy. Provides national funding to support delivery of innovative, community-based programs in mental health promotion	<a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/innovation-strategy.html">www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/innovation-strategy.html</a> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/funding-opportunities/mental-health-promotion-innovation-fund.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/funding-opportunities/mental-health-promotion-innovation-fund.html</a>
Passport Funding	Provincial – MCCSS – Ministry of children, Community & Social Services	Reimbursement program that helps adults with developmental disabilities n Ontario access services and supports up to \$5500	<a href="https://passportfunding.ca/">https://passportfunding.ca/</a> <a href="https://www.dsontario.ca/passport-program">https://www.dsontario.ca/passport-program</a>
WSIB, WCB	Existing Bayshore contacts	Connected with Katie and Janet	
Private Clients	Benefits Company EAP	Clients paying for themselves with reimbursement opportunities through benefits	

# Funding Sources - Agricultural

Fund Name	Source	Description	Link
Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership	Provincial	Grants and Funding available to start new sustainable micro farms	<a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership">https://www.ontario.ca/page/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership</a>
Ministry of Agriculture	Federal	Links to additional resources and consultants for funding and grants	<a href="https://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/">https://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/</a>
Farm Grants.ca	Private	Helps new start up farms get grants for \$795 for 1 year of grant submission support	<a href="https://farmgrants.ca">https://farmgrants.ca</a>
Grass Roots	Provincial	Funds Project Initiatives supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing public engagement and support for agriculture, local food and rural development</li> <li>• building youth leadership capacity and increasing youth involvement in the agri-food sector</li> <li>• enhancing safety and risk management practices in the agri-food sector</li> <li>• strengthening public trust and public knowledge about Ontario's agri-food systems</li> <li>• encouraging agri-food and rural development outcomes</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/grassroots-growth-initiative-guidelines">https://www.ontario.ca/page/grassroots-growth-initiative-guidelines</a>

# Design Criteria

## **Community Space:**

- ▶ Shaded space/shelter for those participants who can't be in the sun (e.g. greenhouse, or shaded garden)
- ▶ Movable furniture for flexibility of gatherings

## **Private Space:**

- ▶ Private space is key for individuals that need quiet time alone (mental health, anxiety), bench near river, or water, or garden area) but never fully alone due to safety issues or self harm

## **Educational Space:**

- ▶ Is everywhere!
- ▶ Many of our clients have short attention spans so it is good to move them through different 'stations'
- ▶ E.g. greenhouse, barn, teaching garden, group counselling spot, sensory garden, gazebo for shade
- ▶ Mixture of crops and flower beds, to make arrangements
- ▶ Plant sales or veggie market to 'show off' what they produced

# Farming Model

- ▶ Biodiverse Micro-farming
  - ▶ Bases model on a small acreage farm
  - ▶ Mixed varieties and succession crops
  - ▶ Human-scale farm – no large machinery
  - ▶ Permanent bed system
  - ▶ Leverages carbon from atmosphere
  - ▶ Part of Climate change solution to keep nutrients in the soil
- ▶ Market Gardener Institute Course



# Education & Team Building



- ▶ Farm Offering can include a **Team Building Experience** including:
  - ▶ **Innovation & Creativity Training** – getting your team outside of the office and in nature opens new ways of being innovative and problem-solving corporate issues
  - ▶ **Leadership Training**
  - ▶ Tackling the ever-changing complexities of the “Corporate World” & parallels to Farm Life!
    - ▶ Adaptability
    - ▶ Relationship Management
    - ▶ Problem Solving
    - ▶ Risk Management
    - ▶ Forecasting and Pivoting Business Models to meet new demands of customers & changing environment
    - ▶ Intro to Biodiverse Micro-farming
    - ▶ Intro to Care Farming! Supporting others that have the same passion!

# Resources

- ▶ US Care Farming Network/Resource - <https://carefarmingnetwork.org/>

## **Ontario Care Farms:**

- ▶ Green Care Farms – Dementia Program run out of Andrews Farm in Milton: <https://carefarmscanada.com/>
- ▶ Care farm in Arthur, ON – focus on Birds, Maple Syrup, Farming for wellness- <https://rosenglitter.ca/>
- ▶ Care Farm in Mono Township – Animal and Farm Therapy for people suffering from various disabilities - <https://www.fiddleheadcarefarm.com/>
- ▶ Care farm in Roslin, ON focuses on Animal Care for Mental Health/Youth - <https://www.dragonflycarefarm.com/>

## **What is a Care Farm?**

- ▶ <http://www.natureplayfilm.com/>
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/carefarmdocumentary/>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=roPcsEOF9Gk&feature=youtu.be>

## **Nature-Based Intervention Research:**

- ▶ NBI Study: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6628071/>