



WHAT IS THE CANADIAN BRAIN RESEARCH STRATEGY?

The Canadian Brain Research Strategy (**CBRS**) is a pan-Canadian effort to develop a national research strategy for brain and mental health. At the core of CBRS is the conviction that we need to foster better neurological and mental well-being for all Canadians. We achieve this by leveraging our strengths to drive progress by investing in a Canadian Brain Research Initiative.

BACKGROUND

Understanding the human brain is one of the greatest and most pressing scientific challenges of our time. Our brains shape our memories, passions, and societies. Accordingly, when our brains are challenged – by neurological disorder, brain injury, mental illness, and/or addiction – the implications extend past individual health and well-being to impact global development and productivity.

Canada can harness its world-class expertise in brain research to lead a coordinated effort to optimize brain health across the lifespan. The CBRS has engaged a broad coalition of stakeholders (see details in figure below), including current and future research leaders, private and non-profit organizations, health charities, research funding agencies, industry, patients, and Indigenous partners. Through a consensus-building process, CBRS has developed a unifying framework that aligns and coordinates research efforts across the country towards a shared and pressing objective to understand the human brain for real-world impact. By implementing a national brain research initiative, Canada can optimize brain health for the benefit of all Canadians and the world.



A National Research Strategy for Brain and Mental Health Brought to You by



WHAT WE RECOMMEND

That the Government of Canada make research on the brain and mental health a national priority with targeted policies and investment in a Canadian Brain Research Initiative. The coalition convened by the CBRS believes that the time for a national initiative is now. There is a need for a coordinated approach to brain research and health, and the talent and infrastructure to support it. We have the network, partnerships, vision, and strategic plan in place. We now need the funding to catalyze this network into concerted, bold, and concrete action.

WHY IS A CANADIAN BRAIN RESEARCH INITIATIVE SO IMPORTANT NOW TO TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF CANADIANS?

- As of 2019, more than 7.5 million Canadians – 1 in 5 people – reported living with a brain condition. Research remains our beacon of hope, as the only path to prevention, treatments and cures is to gain new knowledge on the brain.
- We are verging on a new era of therapeutic breakthroughs in brain health that promise to reshape the future of millions of people worldwide. Canada must play an active role for our nation to realize the health, social, and economic benefits for our own diverse population.
- Sustained investment in a brain research ecosystem yields significant impact on economic prosperity, societal well-being, and healthcare sustainability by driving innovation and generating solutions that extend well beyond the realm of public health.

WHY IS A CANADIAN BRAIN RESEARCH INITIATIVE CRITICAL FOR BRAIN SCIENCE?

- Canada is a world leader in neuroscience and mental health research and we need a brain research initiative of our own to be able to keep up with, connect to, and draw on global efforts.
- Navigating the intricate complexities of the brain demands a comprehensive approach to brain research and health that extends across the entire lifespan and recognizes the interconnectedness of brain conditions.
- Establishing a coordinated, transdisciplinary brain research ecosystem is essential for effective understanding and intervention, while ensuring that the resulting innovations and treatments are accessible to the Canadian public.

HOW IS A CANADIAN BRAIN RESEARCH INITIATIVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADA TO LEAD?

- National-level resources to coordinate the brain research ecosystem will position Canada internationally to better develop, attract, and retain Highly Qualified Personnel. This will in turn create a critical mass of brain science talent for a spectrum of Canadian academic, industry, and other sectors to succeed.
- Brain conditions have global significance as they currently constitute the majority of disabilities in Canada and worldwide, and this will only increase with aging populations.
- Having a coordinated effort from the Government elevates the importance of this issue within the international research community, and communicates its significance to future researchers.
- "Brain Health" is a fundamental human right that should align with Canada's international commitments as well as with Federal laws and policies.

CONTACT

Jennie Z. Young, Ph.D., Executive Director – Canadian Brain Research Strategy

jennie.young@canadianbrain.ca