



# Tracking Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Prevalence with Survey Data

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Delivering insight through data for a better Canada

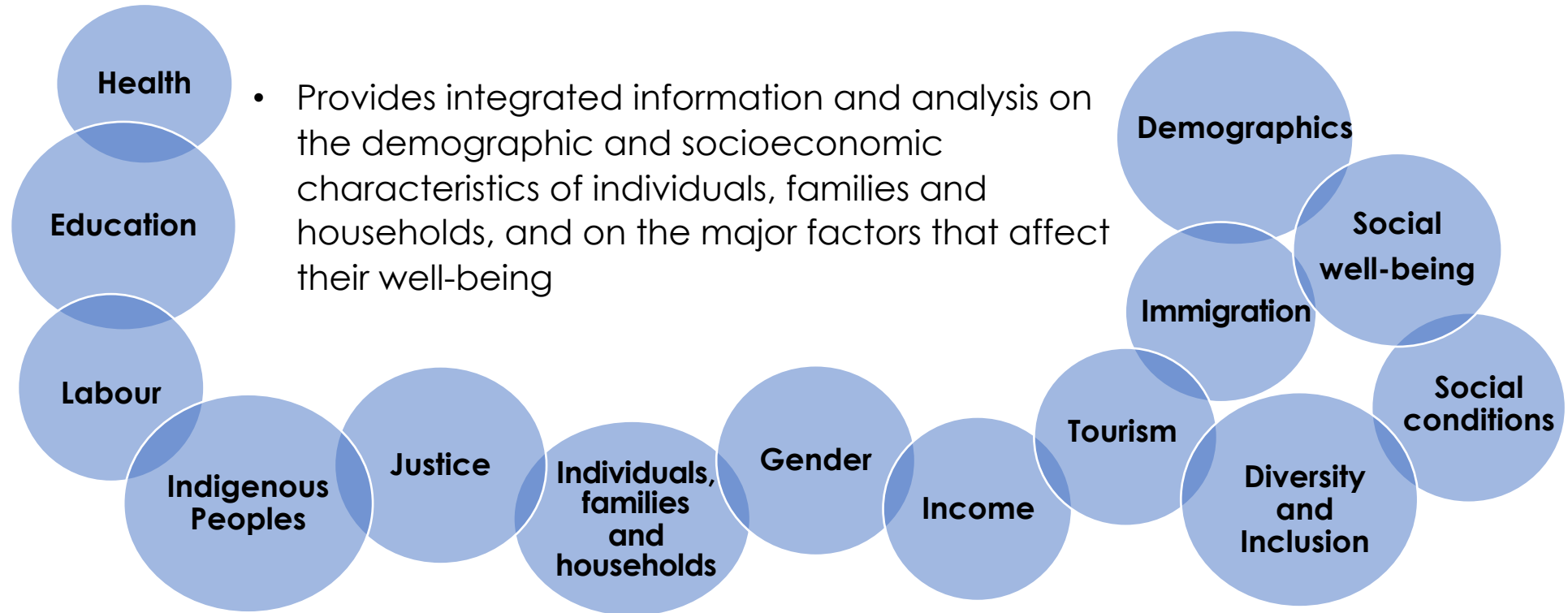


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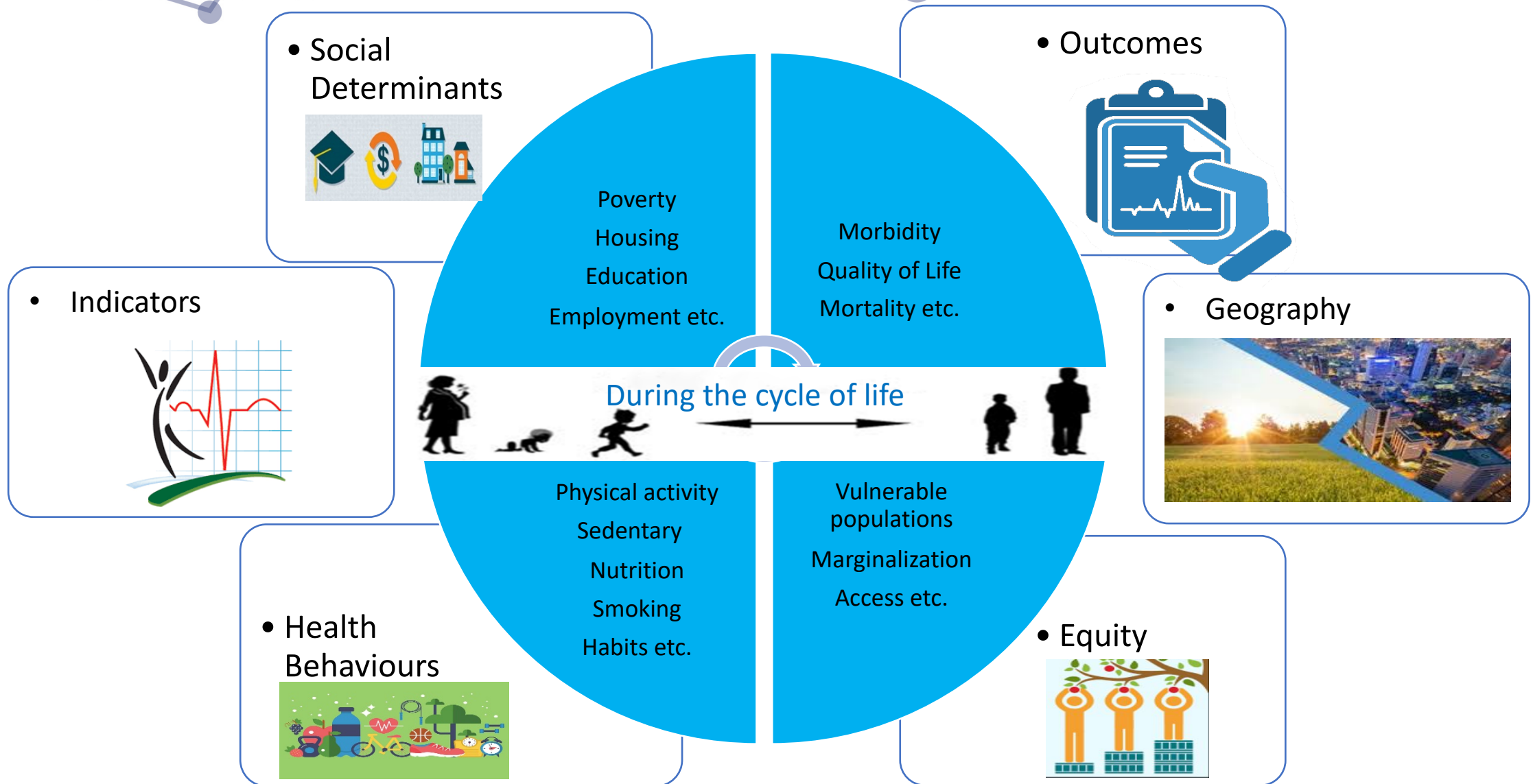
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# Social Statistics



**Information spanning multiple domains**

# Population Health Framework





# Exploring a framework for PTSD: Measurement Matters

- Measuring PTSD – 3 approaches:
  - Self-reported diagnosed condition (single question)
  - Long assessment - Detailed questionnaire of symptoms & experiences
  - Short assessment - Quick questionnaire of symptoms
- Targeting 2 reference periods
  - Current / recent
  - Lifetime



# Measurement Approach #1

## Single question - diagnosed condition

*“We are interested in **“long-term conditions”** which are expected to last or have already lasted 6 months or more and that have been **diagnosed by a health professional**.*

...

*Do you have post-traumatic stress disorder?”*

### Opportunities:

- Relatively easy to understand
- Minimal response burden

### Limitations:

- Captures only those who report they are currently diagnosed by a health professional
  - Underreports people who have symptoms but do not seek medical help
  - Underreports people who were diagnosed in the past

## Measurement Approach #2

### Long assessment – Detailed questionnaire of symptoms and experiences

- Assesses clinical criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder:
  - Step 1 – List of traumatic events
  - Step 2 – Questions about symptoms, recency of symptoms
  - Step 3 – Questions about life and activity interference
  - Step 4 – Questions about treatment history

#### Opportunities:

- Gold standard for survey assessment
- Can capture undiagnosed conditions

#### Limitations:

- Very complex to develop, administer, and validate
- Many questions for people who have symptoms (few questions for people without symptoms)
- Lack of survey measurement tools available to map to current clinical guidelines (DSM-5)



## Step 1: Traumatic Event Check List:

### **Examples** from list of approx. **30** traumatic events

Have you ever participated in combat, either as a member of a military, or as a member of an organized non-military group?

Were you ever a refugee — that is, did you ever flee from your own home to a foreign country or place to escape danger or persecution?

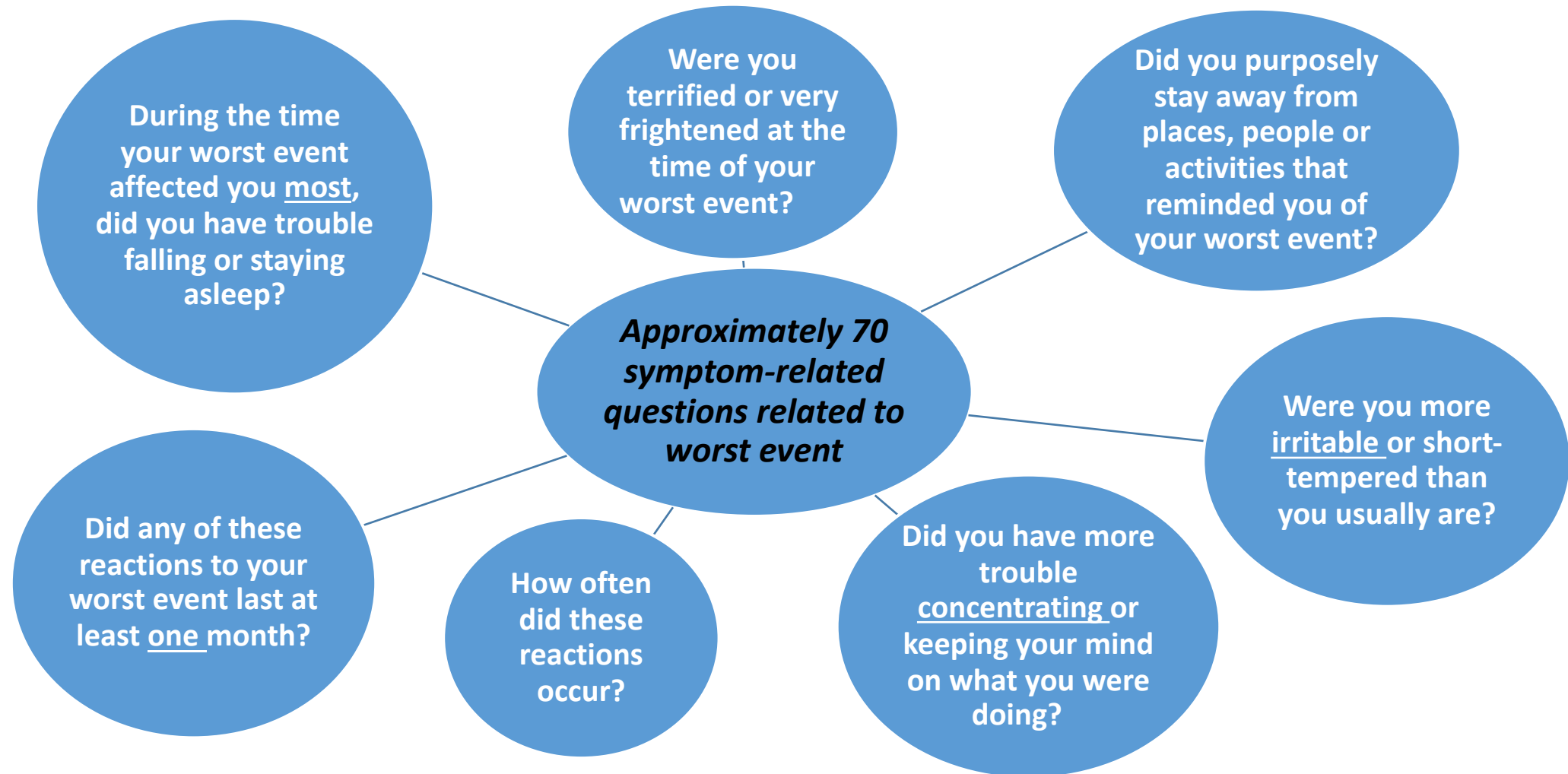
Were you ever involved in a life-threatening motor vehicle accident?

Were you ever in any other life-threatening accident, including on your job?

Have you ever had a life-threatening illness?

Were you ever involved in a major natural disaster, like a devastating flood, hurricane, or earthquake?

## Step 2: Assess symptoms: **Examples** of symptom-related questions





### Step 3: Assess impact of symptoms experienced

Social life and  
close relationships



Work or school



Household  
responsibilities



### Step 4: Treatment history

- Treatment received from a health professional
- Hospitalization
- Medication use
- Other sources of care (social support, alternate therapy)
- Unmet needs

## Measurement Approach #3

### Short assessment - Quick questionnaire of symptoms

- Approximately 4-20 symptom questions
- With/without lifetime event checklist
- Uses a score (i.e. “yes” to certain number of items) or scale to determine who is likely to have PTSD

#### Opportunities:

- Easy to administer
- Reduced response burden

#### Limitations:

- Not a complete assessment
- Limited contextual information



## Example of a short list of symptom questions – *PC-PTSD*

**Have you ever had any experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that,  
in the past month, you...**

**Have had nightmares about it or thought about it when you did not want to?**

**Tried hard not to think about it or went out of your way to avoid situations that  
reminded you of it?**

**Were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled?**

**Felt numb or detached from others, activities, or your surroundings?**



## Building on past successes of mental health surveys...

### Outreach strategies:

- Focus groups
- One-on-one qualitative testing
- Advisory committee
  - Mental health experts
  - Consumers
  - Policy makers
  - Collection specialists

### Committed to providing:

- Private and confidential data collection
- Validated approach/instruments
- Quality data

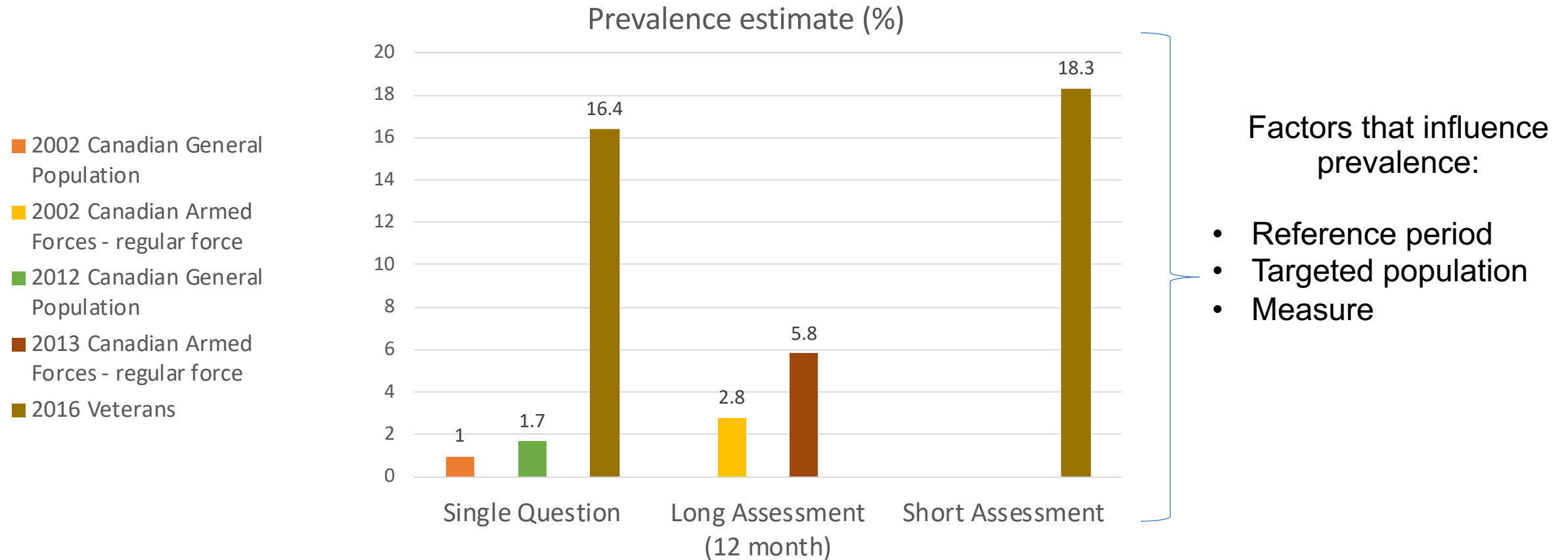


# Statistics Canada Surveys

- In-depth mental health focused surveys
  - Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) – Mental Health: 2002 & 2012
  - Canadian Forces Mental Health Survey: 2002 & 2013
- General health focus
  - A few questions on mental health
    - Self-rated mental health, stress, chronic conditions, suicide
    - Short scales and screeners: depression, positive mental health, distress
    - Alcohol and substance use



## Variation in prevalence rates of Post-traumatic stress disorder (Statistics Canada surveys)





# Continuing our dialogue to inform the PTSD Framework

Questions for group discussion:

## 1) How to measure PTSD

- Measurement approach (e.g. diagnosed conditions, symptom-based detailed assessment, short assessment)
- Reference timeframe (e.g. lifetime, current)

## 2) Who should the target population be?

- All Canadians? Specific occupations? Certain demographic groups?

## 3) What other information is required to understand PTSD?



# Thank you!

For more information, please contact:

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