

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Problems for people who come to Canada from other countries to live or be safe



“I Didn’t Feel Like a Human in There.” Immigration Detention in Canada and its Impact on Mental Health



About us



We are called **Human Rights Watch** and **Amnesty International**.



We work to make sure that everyone in the world is treated fairly and gets their human rights.

Human rights are the basic rules for how everyone should be treated.

Like the right to be safe and treated fairly.

About this report

This report is about people who come to Canada from other countries.

They want to live in Canada and start a new life.

But they have to wait to find out if they can stay.





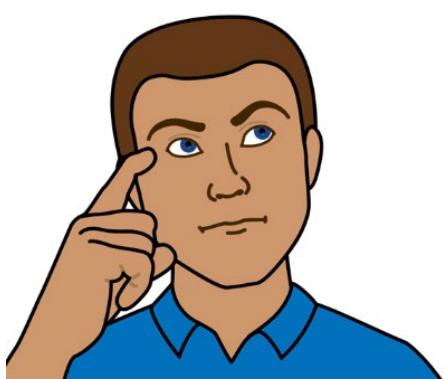
Some people come to Canada because of war or violence in their countries.

They come to Canada to be safe.



Some people come to Canada to find work, to study or to be with their family who are already in Canada.

Some people have already lived or worked in Canada. But they might not be able to stay.



Most of these people cannot just decide to live in Canada even if they want to.

The government decides if they can stay or not.



Many people are treated badly while the government is deciding.

This is wrong and should not happen.

It also breaks human rights laws in the world.



In 2020 and 2021 we looked at what was happening in Canada.

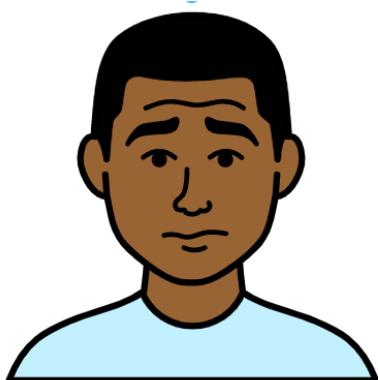
We spoke to many people.

For example:



- People who came to Canada to live or be safe and their families
- People who know a lot about mental health
- People who work for the government or the law

What can happen to people who come to Canada to live or be safe



Many people have a hard time while the government decides if they can stay.

Many people are treated like they have done a crime even if they have not.

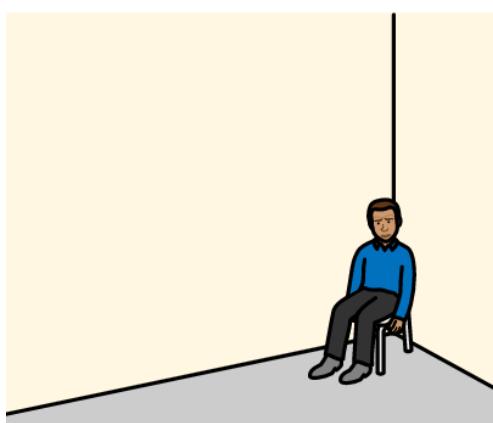


For example:

- Many people are kept in jails or places like jails.
Some places might be violent or unsafe.



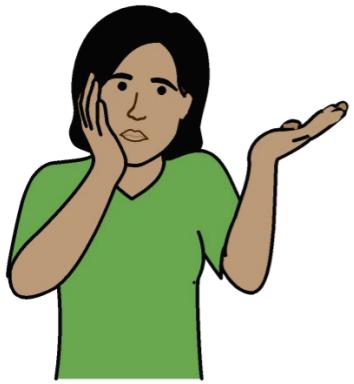
- People might be arrested. They might have their bodies searched.
- People might be put in handcuffs or chains to stop them moving.



- People might be locked up away from other people.



- Staff might watch what people are doing all the time.

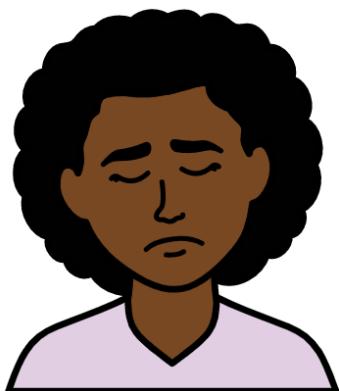


The law does not say how long people can be kept in these places.

That means people might be there for a very long time.



Many of the rules about how people are treated in Canada are unfair.



Some groups of people that come to Canada are often treated worse than other people.

For example, Black and brown people and people with mental health conditions.



Mental health

Some people come to Canada to be safe from violence in their countries.



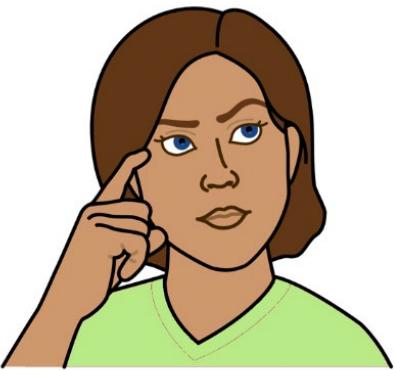
They can find it very hard to be in jail or places like jail in Canada.

They might feel upset, worried or scared a lot.



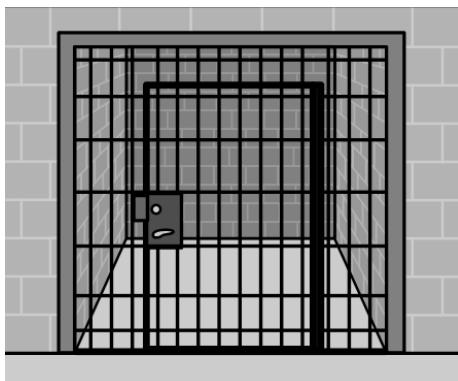
People with mental health conditions do not get the right support while they wait to see if they can stay in Canada.

They are treated badly instead.

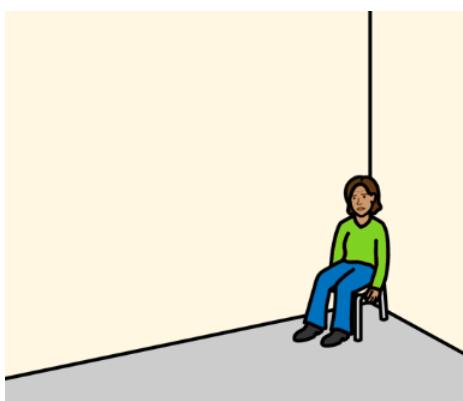


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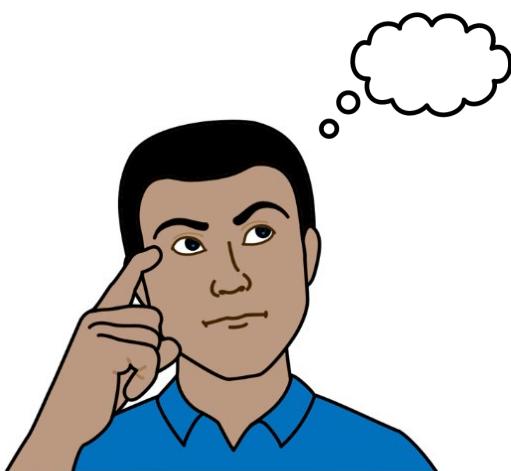
People might think that people with mental health conditions are dangerous.



They might keep people with mental health conditions in jails more than other people.



Or they might lock people up away from other people.



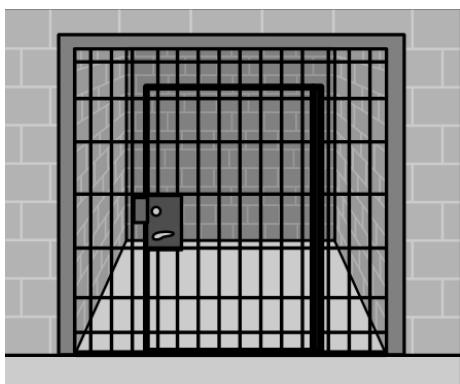
People with mental health conditions might be stopped from making their own choices about important things to do with their future.

Other people sometimes make choices for them.

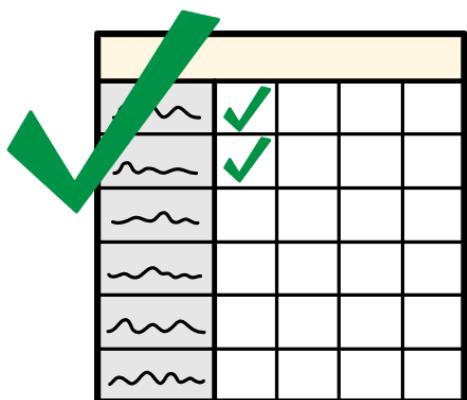


Some people might be able to live at home while they wait to see if they can stay in Canada.

But they might have to follow a lot of rules.



They might be locked up again if they cannot follow all the rules.



What we want to happen next

The things below are for the government in Canada and other organizations to start work on straight away.

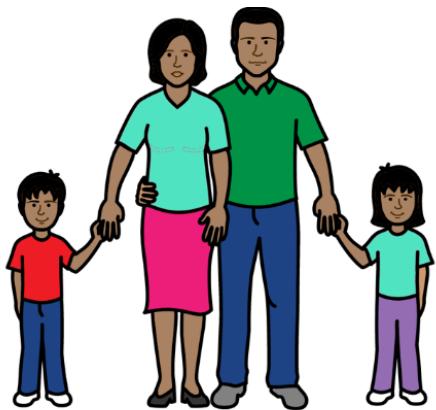


Stop treating people badly while they wait to see if they can stay in Canada.

For example:

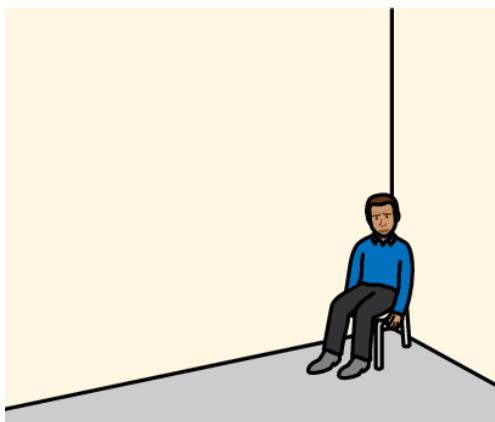


Stop keeping people in jails or places like jails.

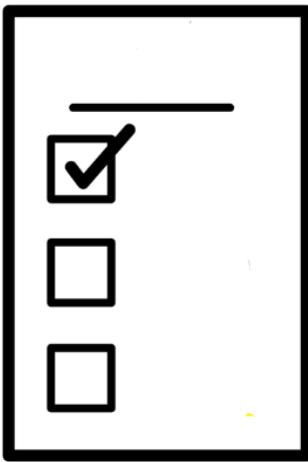


Do not keep people with disabilities and children in these places.

Children should always stay with their parents.



Stop locking people away from other people in jails or places like jails.



Change anything that is unfair about how people are treated.



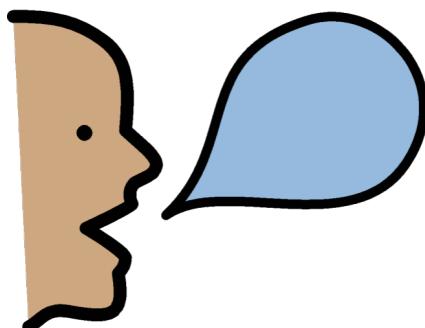
Set up a new organization to check how people who come to Canada to live or be safe are treated.

The organization should not be part of the government.



The organization should visit places where people are kept.

It should take action if people are treated badly.



Make sure that people can complain to the organization if they are treated badly.



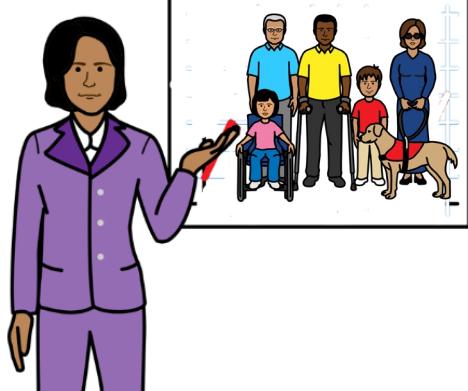
Let more people live at home instead of jails and places like jails.

Make sure they get support with everything they need.

Like housing, health care and the law.

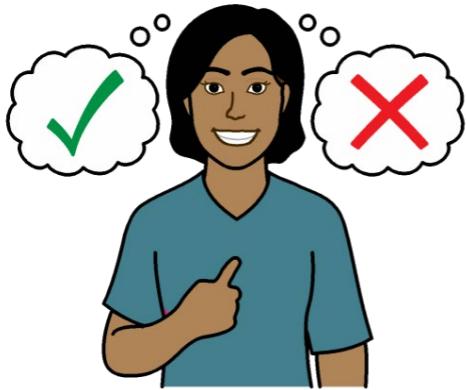


Make sure that everyone who comes to Canada can get good mental health care if they need it.



Staff should get lots of training about how to support people with disabilities.

People with disabilities should help with the training.



Make sure that people with disabilities can make their own choices.

People should support them to make their own choices.

People should not make choices for them.