**Employee Health Hurdles**

**Mental Health and Wellness February 2021**

**Overview:**

* Mental health is about enjoying life, having a sense of purpose, and managing the ups and downs that life throws at us. It is not simply the absence of illness.
* Although mental illness is sometimes used interchangeably with mental health, it is not the same meaning. A mental illness is described as disturbances in thoughts, feelings, and perceptions severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning (ex. anxiety, depression, schizophrenia).
* Even if you do not have a mental illness, does not mean that you feel great all the time. You can experience stress or even burnout.
* This would be similar to catching a cold or flu, it comes and goes, which is perfectly normal.
* Similar to everyone having varying degrees of physical health, everyone also has varying degrees of mental health.
* When you have positive mental health, you can handle the problems and the challenges of life of easier (more resilient).
* It is about thriving, not surviving!

**Take the Quiz on Happiness:**

<https://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=survey&ID=20>

**Take the Quiz on Relationships:**

<https://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=survey&ID=26>

**Take the Quiz on Self-Compassion:**

<https://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=survey&ID=50>

**Take the Quiz on Wellbeing:**

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/screening/online/?screen=wellbeing>

**Quizzes for Various Health Topics:**

<https://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=surveyList&age_category=2>

**Contributing Factors that Affect your Mental Health:**

* Life experiences (family, death, financial and employment status).
* Relationships with others (family, friends, coworkers, schoolmates).
* Work and social environment.
* Physical health problems caused by long-term illness or problematic substance use.
* The type of community you live in (supportive, trusting, and safe, or everyone keeps to themselves).

**Common Factors to Good Mental Health and Wellbeing:**

* Sense of purpose.
* Strong relationships.
* Feeling connected to others.
* Having a good sense of self.
* Coping with stress.
* Enjoying life.

Think good mental health- think resilience, confidence, and connection.

**Early Warning Signs of Negative Mental Health:**

* Eating or sleeping too much or too little.
* Pulling away from people and your usual activities.
* Having low or no energy.
* Feeling numb a little or like nothing matters.
* Having unexplained aches and pains.
* Feeling helpless or hopeless.
* Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual.
* Feeling on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared.
* Yelling or fighting with family members or friends.
* Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in your relationship.
* Inability to perform daily tasks like caring for your children or getting to work or school.
* Thinking of harming yourself or others. Please seek immediate help by calling 911, and they will be able to help guide you through your thoughts and feelings.

**Covid-19 Pandemic and Results on Mental Health:**

* Feel a sense of social exclusion and judgement.
* Concerns about child education and wellbeing.
* Fear of getting sick with Covid-19 or making others sick.
* Worry about losing your job, not being able to work and finances.
* Fears of being apart from loved ones due to isolation and physical distancing.
* Feelings of hopelessness, boredom, loneliness, and subsequent depression.

**Ways to Maintain Positive Mental Health:**

* It takes practice, patience, and support (similar to physical health).
* Get professional help if you need it (primary health provider, registered psychologist, mental health provider in your area, and/ or employee family assistance program).
* Know and accept that life has challenges, it is inevitable.
* Know and accept your personal strengths and weaknesses.
* Connect with others- create healthy, trusting relationships, with support and acceptance (of yourself and others).
* Recognize and accept that everyone is unique with their own positive and negative feelings and thoughts.
* Stay positive.
* Get or stay physically active.
* Help others.
* Get enough sleep.
* Develop coping skills.
* Set realistic goals.
* Create a sense of meaning in your life.
* Take part in local events.

**Mental Health in the Workplace:**

* People spend a lot of time in the workplace, so promoting good mental health in the workplace benefits both employees and employers.
* It increases productivity, overall mood of the workplace, employee satisfaction, staff retention, and teamwork.

**How an Employer Can Promote Good Mental Health:**

* Be clear about tasks and responsibilities (discuss how their work contributes to the organization).
* Assign manageable work loads (get input and work with the employees).
* Provide opportunities to learn and grow professionally.
* Have conflict and dispute resolutions practises in place.
* Involve employees in decision making.
* Recognize employee work achievements in a fair and timely manner.
* Offer flexible work arrangements.

**How an Employee Can Promote Good Mental Health:**

* Take opportunities to learn whenever possible.
* Have and use conflict and dispute resolution practices in place.
* Communicate with others to enhance teamwork.
* Ensure to have a balance between work life and home life.

**Tips to Maintain Positive Mental Health:**

* Stay informed but take some breaks from the news.
* Physical distance, but stay connected through email, phone, and virtual connections.
* Practise mindfulness like stretching, meditation, and deep breathing exercises.
* Eat healthy, get plenty of sleep and exercise routinely.
* Practise safe food handling techniques.
* Focus on the positive and things you have control over like your reactions.
* Be kind and compassionate.
* Limit use of substances like alcohol, smoking, and drugs.

**Stop trying to calm the storm.**

**Calm your mind,**

**And**

**the storm shall**

**pass.**

**For further employee and local support services:**

Acadia Health & Wellness page at <https://hr.acadiau.ca/benefits/health-wellness.html>

Employee Family Assistance Program at <https://hr.acadiau.ca/10261.html>

Nova Scotia Mental Health Supports at <https://www.mentalhealthns.ca/find-support> and

[Nova Scotia Health Authority: Mental Health and Addictions (NSHA MHA)](https://www.ementalhealth.ca/index.php?m=record&ID=54757)

Nova Scotia Government Resources [**novascotia.ca/help**](http://www.novascotia.ca/help)

**Resources:**

**Mindfulness:**

<https://app.mindwellu.com/novascotia>

**Wellbeing Quiz:**

<https://ca.portal.gs/>

**Specific Interventions for numerous health issues:**

<https://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/interventions/search-interventions/>

<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

<https://novascotia.ca/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/healthy-eating/covid-19.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/mental-health-wellness-all-ages.html>

**Specific Fact Sheets for Numerous Topics:**

<https://www.ccohs.ca/topics/wellness/mentalhealth/>

**Tips for Good Mental Health:**

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/tips-for-good-mental-health>

**Men’s Mental Health:**

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2018-12/mens_mental_health_one_page_eng.pdf>

**E-Learning Mental Health 101:**

<https://moodle8.camhx.ca/moodle/course/view.php?id=7>

**Information for Coping with Covid-19:**

<https://www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/coping_w_covid19.pdf>

**Avoiding Burnout:**

<https://homewood-production.s3.amazonaws.com/redactor/28958-7gev7y.pdf>

**Complete List of Resources for Healthy Minds @ Work:**

<https://www.ccohs.ca/healthyminds/tools/>

**Statistics and Data on Mental Health in Canada:**

<https://health-infobase.canada.ca/positive-mental-health/PDFs/PMHSIF-Quick-Stats-Adults-2019.pdf>

**References:**

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<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/English>

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<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/what-is-mental-health>

<https://www.camh.ca/en/driving-change/the-crisis-is-real/mental-health-statistics>

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/mental-health-workplace.html>

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/protective-risk-factors-mental-health.html>

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/topics/mental-health-wellness.html>

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_conversations.html>

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_intro.html>

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/target-audience/individual>

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2018-11/Overview_of_Mental_Health_Data_in_Canada.pdf>

<https://www.psycom.net/quizzes>

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1>

<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/covid-19>