

# Mental Health in the Workplace

## Participant's Guide



Improving business. Improving lives.

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## Definitions: mental disorder and mental health problem

It's important to be familiar with three terms used frequently throughout this workshop: 'mental disorder' and 'mental health problem' and "optimum mental health".

- **Mental disorder:** You may have heard the terms 'mental disorder' and 'mental illness' used to describe the full range of mental disorders. Mental disorder and mental illness have the same definition. The term 'mental disorder' will be used throughout this training.

Definition: "Mental disorders are health conditions involving changes in thinking, emotion or behavior (or a combination of these). Mental disorders are associated with overwhelming distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities." Source: [DSM5 \(DSM5.org at http://www.dsm5.org\)](http://www.dsm5.org)

- **Mental health problem:** You may also encounter the term 'mental health problem'. Unlike mental disorders, mental health problems are typically temporary. Temporary mental health problems are not seen as diseases or illnesses. They arise from the natural stress and trauma of life such as the illness or death of a loved one. As a result, a person may have trouble sleeping or focusing at work. Temporary mental health problems are a signal to get support and assistance from family, friends or counselors.
- **Optimum mental health:** According to Health Canada, being mentally healthy gives us the capacity to feel, think and act in ways that enhance one's ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges. We feel well, we can cope with stress, we can achieve our personal goals. It's more than the absence of illness or disease.

## Workshop objectives

1. Understand the impact of mental health issues
2. Reduce the stigma/fear associated with mental health issues in the workplace
3. Be able to recognize when someone (oneself, a friend, family member or colleague) is struggling and respond appropriately
4. Learn about resources available to support employees and/or family members
5. Identify resources to boost resiliency

# Mental health awareness

## What are some signs that a person is mentally healthy?

What do they say or do? How do they behave?

## The Mental Health Continuum Model

It's important to be aware that just as our lives are not static, our mental health is not static. It changes over our lifetime and can be affected by many factors such as life events (death of family member, separation, etc.), genetics, overall health, our individual coping mechanisms in the face of stress. When we are mentally healthy, we are aware of our emotional state. Having self-awareness is useful because emotions are our guideposts through life. They let us know when we are on the right path, or allow us to correct course when we are not. Being self-aware of emotions also allows us to make decisions in the moment about when and how to express our feelings. This can be especially important in the workplace, where emotional awareness can help us respond to colleagues in an appropriate and supportive way that establishes trust and enables constructive problem solving to occur, even under stressful conditions.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada's Mental Health Continuum Model categorizes symptoms across four phases: healthy, reacting, injured and ill. The upper portion of the table shows typical behaviours; the lower portion shows actions to take at each phase. This model is a useful reference tool to help us recognize signs that there might be a problem so that we get the help needed to get back to a healthy phase.

Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Ill
Normal fluctuations in mood	Nervousness, irritability, sadness	Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness	Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed mood
Normal sleep patterns	Trouble sleeping	Disturbed sleep	Unable to fall or stay asleep
Physically well, full of energy	Tired, muscle tension, headaches	Fatigue, aches/pains	Exhaustion, physical illness
Socially active	Procrastination	Decreased performance, presenteeism	Unable to perform duties, absenteeism
	Decreased social activity	Social avoidance	Isolation, avoiding social events
Actions To take At Each Phase of The Continuum			
Focus on task at hand	Recognize limits	Identify and understand own signs of distress	Seek consultation as needed
Break problems into manageable tasks	Get adequate rest, food, and exercise	Talk with someone	Follow healthcare provider recommendations
Identify and nurture support system	Engage in healthy coping strategies	Seek help	Regain physical and mental health
Maintain healthy lifestyle	Identify and minimize stressors	Seek social support instead of withdrawing	

The Mental Health Continuum Model © 2016 [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)



## Are You In A State of Positive / Optimum Mental Health?

Our mental health fluctuates across a continuum, and during some periods we may flourish while in others we may languish. The MHC-SF was designed by Dr. Corey L. Keyes to assess whether an individual is exhibiting a state of positive mental health. This assessment is based upon a snapshot in time, and is intended for educational use only and not for the purpose of diagnosing the presence of a mental disorder.

Please indicate whether you have felt or thought the following EVERY DAY or ALMOST EVERY DAY during the past 30 days.	Yes	No
1. Interested in life		
2. Happy		
3. Satisfied with life		

	Yes	No
4. That you had something important to contribute to society		
5. That you belonged to a community (like a social group, school, neighborhood etc.)		
6. That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place for all people.		
7. That people are basically good.		
8. That the way our society works made sense to you.		
9. That you like most parts of your personality.		
10. Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life.		
11. That you had warm and trusting relationships with others.		
12. That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person.		
13. You were confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions		
14. Your life had a sense of direction or meaning to it every day or almost every day.		

### Scoring Instructions:

	Yes	No
Did you answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions 1-3		
Did you answer 'Yes' to at least 6 of the questions 4-14		

*An answer of 'Yes' to both of the scoring questions suggests that you are "flourishing" and in a state of positive mental health. Individuals who are unable to answer 'yes' to both questions are most likely experiencing some form of stressor that places them somewhere on the mental health continuum of reacting, injured or ill. Individuals who have additional questions should consult a medical professional or their EFAP.*

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## Temporary mental health problems

Nearly all of us experience temporary mental health problems from time to time that impact our quality of life. Temporary mental health problems are not seen as diseases or illnesses. They arise from the natural stress and trauma of life such as the illness or death of a loved one. As a result, a person may have trouble sleeping or focusing at work. Temporary mental health problems are a signal to get support and assistance from family, friends or counselors.

An example of a temporary mental health problem is the reactions that many people are experiencing in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Many individuals are experiencing increased levels of stress as daily routines at work and home change, or we find ourselves worrying about our health or that of a loved one. Some individuals are experiencing financial difficulties, while others are noticing that the added stress is creating a strain on relationships. When we experience temporary mental health problems, practicing self-care, using positive coping strategies, or seeking support for others can help us return to healthy functioning. Common examples of effective coping strategies include

- Starting a gratitude list
- Exercise
- Talking with family and friends
- Spiritual activities
- Participating in hobbies
- Meditation
- Contacting the EFAP

What coping strategies have you used in the past month to maintain your mental health?

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## Mental disorders

Mental disorders affect 20% of Canadians. You may have heard the terms ‘mental disorder’ and ‘mental illness’ used to describe the full range of mental disorders. Mental disorder and mental illness have the same definition. According to Health Canada, Mental Disorders have a persistent and serious disturbance in thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that is severe enough to affect day-to-day functioning, making it difficult to cope with the simplest aspects of everyday life.” They can affect our mood or ability to adjust to life circumstances. They can also affect health, contributing to physical pain, shortness of breath, sleeplessness, or changes in weight.

## Common risk factors

Risk factors increase your risk for experiencing mental health problems and disorders.

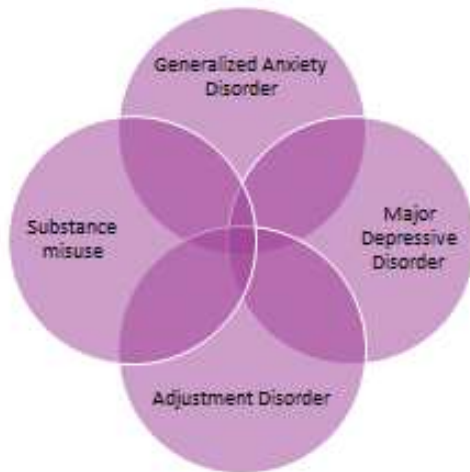
- Genetics – having a first degree relative (parent or sibling) increases the risk of inheriting a disorder
- Age (higher onset rates in youth)
- Personality traits –pessimism, learned helplessness, or neuroticism
- Poorly developed coping skills
- Medical history – cardiovascular disease and obesity often co-exist with mental disorders
- Brain injury – traumatic brain injury can raise the risk of mental disorders such as anxiety by 400%.
- Brain chemistry – An imbalance of neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin can contribute to difficulties with memory, concentration, sleep, and mood regulation.
- Social isolation
- Distressing or traumatic life events
- Drug and alcohol use

## Protective factors

Protective factors reduce the impact of negative outcomes associated with mental health problems and disorders. Protective factors can offset risks and improve our resilience. While we cannot always prevent negative impacts to our health, we can manage our risks in consultation with health professionals.

- Access to employment, education, social and medical services
- Thinking and problem-solving skills
- Social and emotional skills
- High self-esteem
- Optimism
- Healthy physical activity and nutrition
- Social connection and sense of belonging
- Spiritual practice

## Four common mental disorders



## Treatment for mental disorders

Many treatments for anxiety, adjustment disorders and depression are similar. Treatments typically include medication (to support neurotransmitter function or to reduce the severity of symptoms), talk therapies (such as cognitive behavior therapy), occupational therapy and other complimentary therapies. For more information on treatment approaches, contact your healthcare provider.

## Anxiety Disorders

### Description

Some anxiety is normal and helps to motivate us in challenging or dangerous situations. Anxiety disorders interfere with our ability to function and can include long periods of excessive or intense worry, fear or panic about routine events (e.g. work, school, family or health). All too often, people mistake these disorders for mental weakness or instability.

There are several different forms of anxiety disorders, including:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder is characterized by extreme unease, panic or worry about day-to-day demands, such as finances, career, health, children, or sometimes without obvious cause.
- Social anxiety disorders are often accompanied by fear of being judged or embarrassed in social situations, sometimes causing individuals to avoid social gatherings, meeting new people or working with members of the public.
- Agoraphobia creates a fear for personal safety in large or public places.
- Panic disorders include severe, repeated panic attacks that can occur at random or in response to a triggering event.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association; [http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/understanding-anxiety-disorders/](http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental_health/understanding-anxiety-disorders/)

## Symptoms

The anxiety and worry are associated with three (or more) of the following six symptoms (with at least some symptoms having been present for more days than not for the past 6 months):

- Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge.
- Being easily fatigued.
- Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank.
- Irritability.
- Muscle tension.
- Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, unsatisfying sleep).
- Heart rate changes, respiratory issues, digestive issues, muscle aches and pains
- Neurological: headache, vision changes, tingling or numbness in extremities
- The anxiety, worry, or physical symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

## Major Depressive Disorder

### Description

A sad, empty & despairing (or angry) mood that:

- Is always present or lasts most of the day
- Means a loss of interest and pleasure in activities that were formerly enjoyed
- Impairs performance at work, at school or in social relationships

### Symptoms

Five or more of the following symptoms lasting 2 weeks or more:

1. Sadness and loss of interest in work, hobbies, people
2. Irritability or frustration, even over small matters
3. Sleep disturbance
4. Weight loss or gain of + or - 5%
5. Fatigue or a significant reduction in energy level
6. Feelings of pessimism, worthlessness or guilt
7. Lowered sex drive/libido
8. Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, conversing
9. Withdrawal from family, friends, colleagues
10. Crying easily (or feeling like crying but unable to)
11. Suicidal thoughts or intentions

Some of these symptoms may be experienced at different times in our life. It is the number and consistency of the symptoms that can turn the situation into an illness.

There are varying degrees of Major depression: Mild, moderate or severe. The stronger the degree of the depression, the more symptoms will be present and those symptoms become more intense impacting the person's ability to function effectively.

## Adjustment Disorder

### Description

More difficulty than would typically be expected adjusting to a stressful life situation such as the death of a loved one, divorce or job loss. Symptoms do not resolve within 3-6 months of the termination of the stressful event.

### Symptoms

- Distress in excess of what would typically be expected from exposure to the stressor
- Significant impairment in social, occupational or educational functioning
- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue, decreased energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, conversing

## Substance Misuse

### Description

A pattern of using mind-altering substances leading to harmful consequences such as failure to fulfill familial or professional obligations, use in potentially unsafe situations and experience of recurrent legal problems.

These substances can include alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs such as opioids, stimulants, sedatives and tranquilizers.

### Signs & symptoms

- Work productivity decline/ inconsistent
- Unexplained absences
- Mood swings/ outbursts
- Decline in general health
- Monday / Friday illnesses
- Safety related problems/ violations
- Smelling of alcohol
- Relationship problems
- Attitude Changes

## What is a concurrent disorder?

A co-occurring addiction and mental health issue, such as depression and an alcohol problem, anxiety and problem gambling.

## To find out more about mental health and mental disorders

For additional information about mental health and mental disorders, please visit:

- Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://www.cmha.ca>
- Mood Disorders Society: <http://www.mooddorderscanada.ca>

## Key points

- Mental disorders are common and are treatable.
- It is very important to remember that we should **never attempt to diagnose** ourselves or others.
- If you are concerned about your mental health, visit a medical doctor. Only qualified health professionals (e.g. your family doctor or medical specialist) are equipped to diagnose and treat mental disorders.
- You can also contact the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) for information and support. Registered counselling professionals such as counsellors at the EFAP, can screen for some health problems and provide counselling in response to a variety of mental health issues.
- Seek prompt medical attention (within first 3 months of symptoms arising).
- Supporting Mental Health issues in the workplace is as important as managing any other type of disease/injury/trauma.

### WARNING

**Never attempt to diagnose a mental disorder in yourself or someone else. Only qualified healthcare professionals are equipped to diagnose mental disorders. If you are concerned or want to explore a more detailed assessment of your mental health, visit your doctor or contact the EFAP (see contact information further down in this guide).**

# Stigma

## Startling statistics

- Of the 20 per cent of Canadians who suffer from a mental health disorder, fewer than one in three will seek treatment (Canadian Medical Association & Canadian Psychiatric Association, 2016.)
- Depression and anxiety cost the Canadian economy almost \$50-billion a year in lost productivity. Depression cost \$32.3 billion in lost gross domestic product. Anxiety cost \$17.3 billion a year (The Conference Board of Canada, 2016.)
- On any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental health challenges (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, 2018.)
- 78% would not tell their employer if they were experiencing a mental health problem

## What can you do to remove stigma?

- What are my own attitudes and beliefs about mental health problems and disorders?

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- Where do they come from?

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- Are they accurate?

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- How do they impact my actions and reactions?

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- What can I (we) do to remove stigma.

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- Why or how will this action make a difference?

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**Stigma is a barrier** that prevents people from getting the help they need. We all have a responsibility to eliminate stigma.

- **Educate** yourself about mental disorders so you can fight stigma with facts.
- **Watch your language:** Don't use words like "psycho", "weirdo", "crazy" in everyday expressions.
- **Avoid labeling a person:** Avoid saying, he's bulimic or she's depressed. Instead say, "He has been suffering from bulimia" or "She is recovering from Major Depressive Disorder."
- **Challenge your own prejudicial thinking and recognize it affects your actions.**
- **Challenge stigma:** If you overhear stigmatizing comments, encourage the person to see things from another perspective.
- **Talk about it** among family, friends and colleagues: Mental disorders are like any other illness; you wouldn't be afraid to talk about diabetes or heart disease.
- **Be kind** - reach out if you think someone may be struggling. "You said you're down lately. Is everything okay? Want to talk about it? How can I help?"

## Supporting our Colleagues

### Chris is struggling and confides in you

- Chris is a trusted colleague. You have had a friendly and professional relationship for several years. Recently you notice some changes in Chris's behaviour and performance at work.
- Chris appears quieter than usual, is not participating at team meetings and rarely says good morning.
- There are dark circles under his/her eyes and s/he appears to have lost weight.
- Chris seems more irritable, having difficulty controlling anger and emotions, arguing with colleagues and supervisors. For example, when you asked for help with an important client file, Chris spoke in a raised voice, appearing red in the face, telling you to, "go bother someone else for a change."
- Chris emails you later saying *"I'm sorry for what happened earlier. I'm going through a tough time right now. I'm exhausted and overwhelmed."* Chris's behavior is deeply concerning to you.

#### **Role of concerned colleague:**

After reading the scenario, use the communication tips and tactics on pages 12-14 to prepare for your conversation with Chris.

#### **Role of observer:**

Your role is to observe the interaction between the colleague communicating concerns constructively and Chris. Use the Observer Checklist on the next page and focus on the quality of the interaction between the participants. Record your observations on the Observer Checklist.



## Observer Checklist

Establishes rapport by	Not Observed	Observed but could use improvement	Observed and demonstrated effectively
Sharing perceptions of behavior using “I” statements			
Describing how/why the behavior is uncharacteristic			
Demonstrates empathy and active listening by			
Paraphrasing key messages			
Speaking in a calm, encouraging tone			
Recognizing and naming emotions			
Acknowledging and validating concerns			
Allowing time for reflection			
Respect boundaries			
Affirming confidentiality			
Confident in suggesting professional resources			

## Being supportive when someone shares

- Be a great active listener – seek to understand
- Express empathy – e.g., say: “That must be very difficult for you.”
- Suspend your judgment
- Maintain confidentiality at all times unless there is a threat of self-harm or harm to others
- Discuss solutions only after statements of understanding
- Build a bridge to professional help (suggest they contact their doctor and/or EFAP)
- Don’t try to diagnose or act as a therapist
- Don’t force them to express their emotions if they are not comfortable
- Agree on a follow-up meeting

## Active listening and empathy

Actively listen	Express empathy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate distractions</li><li>• Suspend judgment</li><li>• Show interest</li><li>• Paraphrase</li><li>• Summarize</li><li>• Eye Contact</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize emotional signals</li><li>• Name the emotion</li><li>• Confirm the emotion</li><li>• Mirror the emotional tone</li><li>• Open body language</li></ul>

## Employee & Family Assistance Program

**Access Your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)**

**For confidential EFAP support call:**  
English 1 844.880.9142  
French 1 844.880.9143

**or visit:**  
[www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com)

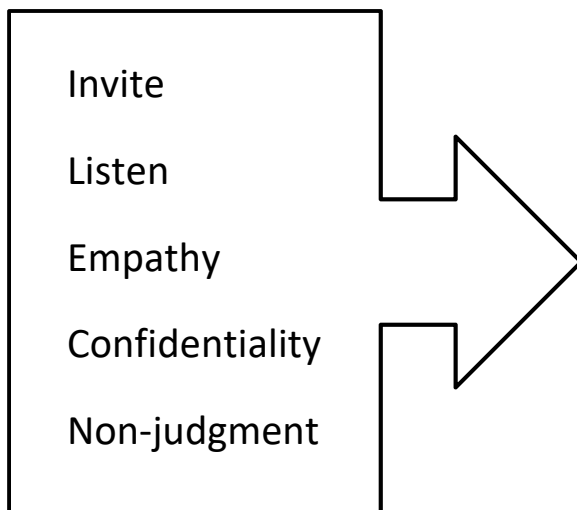
**or access resources:**



## Signs that someone is struggling

- Lateness or frequent breaks away from work
  - Absent or late more frequently
  - Reduced social interaction or camaraderie
  - Reduced quality of work
  - Withdrawal/avoidance
  - Agitation
  - Complains of feeling exhausted
  - Increased errors
  - Missed deadlines
  - Changes in appearance
  - Confusion or forgetfulness
  - Increased conflict
  - Frequent changes in mood
  - Increased anger or crying
  - Complaints of aches and pains
  - Less emotionally responsive
- Signs of substance misuse:**
- Work productivity decline/ inconsistent
  - Unexplained absences
  - Mood swings/ outbursts
  - Decline in general health
  - Monday / Friday illnesses
  - Safety related problems/ violations
  - Smelling of alcohol
  - Relationship problems
  - Attitude Changes

## Assisting colleagues experiencing difficulty



- Meet in a private, neutral location
- Share your perception of the situation and the impact using 'I' statements
- Use a conversational tone
- Encourage your colleague's point of view
- Allow time for reflection
- Listen without judging
- Respect boundaries
- Suggest (don't push) resources (EFAP)
- Check in with them / offer to follow up
- Seek guidance (from your Manager, EFAP)

## Prepare for possible reactions

It's not uncommon for some people to react in a variety of ways to what you have to say. So it's helpful to be comfortable with effective ways to respond so that you can keep the conversation moving forward productively and professionally.

If the reaction is:	Do this:
<b>Emotional</b>	Help the person feel comfortable. Give time to collect themselves before continuing.
<b>Defensive/angry</b>	Listen to them and encourage a better understanding of their point of view. "What I have said seems upsetting to you. I'm interested in hearing your perspective."
<b>Denial</b> Rephrase your concern, try again, and provide examples and discuss the impact	Rephrase your concern.  Try Again: "Things aren't fine between us. We've worked together a long time and I notice a difference. Our relationship is important. Let's talk."  Provide examples and discuss the impact: "You haven't attended the last three meetings and the project is starting to fall behind. I am bringing this up because I am concerned about this and about you."
<b>Declines assistance</b>	Respect your colleague's decision to decline assistance. Restate your offer of help and if there is no openness try again later: "I want you to know that I am available to listen if I can be helpful."

Tips for Assisting A Colleague Who May Be Experiencing A Mental Health Issue	
Situation	Things to say and do
<b>Plan a private meeting</b>  <b>Getting started</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Choose a private location</li> <li>✓ Share your observations and the reason for the meeting</li> <li>✓ Describe the impact of the behaviour</li> <li>✓ Identify your colleague's strengths</li> <li>✓ Invite your colleague's point of view</li> <li>✓ Keep things conversational</li> <li>✓ Respect boundaries</li> </ul>	<b>Plan your conversation:</b>  <b>For example:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The reason I want to speak with you is that I’ve noticed you seem reluctant to respond to my inquiries about client files and it’s starting to impact service. For example, Wednesday when I asked for help with a file, you turned your back without answering my question and did not respond to my email asking for assistance with the same file. You have always been helpful and responsive in past and I’m concerned. Is there something making it difficult for you to respond? ...What can I do to help?”</li> <li>• “In the past we’ve been able to resolve our differences professionally. Yesterday, you raised your voice at me and told me to back off when we were discussing our client file. I’m concerned, because I’ve never seen you act this way before. Help me understand if I’ve done anything to cause offense.”</li> </ul> <b>Avoid starting the conversation with self-protective, critical or confrontational statements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I hope you won’t take this the wrong way but...”, “We’ve all been noticing that...”, “Or, ‘There seems to have been a marked change in you’”. These sorts of judgmental statements will generally make the person feel worse and may create resistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Assure confidentiality</b>	<b>Assure the person that you will keep his/her private life confidential</b>  “This is just between us. I will not share this with anyone.”
<b>Let your colleague respond</b>	<b>Allow for quiet to let them think and respond</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn off your inner dialogue and listen actively to what your colleague is saying.</li> <li>• Do your best to suspend judgments</li> </ul>
<b>Be a Great Active Listener</b>	<b>Let the person know that you care and seek to understand</b>  “I’m glad you trust me and are willing to be open with me about what is going on in your life.”  <b>Give your full attention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open posture and body language, affirmative nods</li> <li>• Eye contact without staring or glaring</li> <li>• Suspend your judgment</li> </ul> <b>Paraphrase regularly</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect your understanding of what the person is saying</li> <li>• Use some of the person’s key words and phrases</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Summarize</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the person has shared their situation</li> <li>• Confirm that you have understood correctly</li> </ul>
<b>Express empathy</b>	<p><b>Acknowledge your colleague's thoughts and feelings (you don't necessarily have to agree)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I'm sensing that you're angry and frustrated by what I just said. Please help me understand why you feel this way."</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional tips for expressing empathy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the emotion being expressed by the other person and be aware of how it is impacting you</li> <li>• Do your best to remain calm and in control of your emotions</li> <li>• Reflect your understanding of the emotion, the tone and intensity expressed by your colleague</li> <li>• Express your understanding of their feelings and emotion – "Sounds like you are really feeling stressed by all this, and it's worrying you that you feel so out of control."</li> <li>• Separate the emotion from the person and their message – compartmentalize, if you will</li> <li>• Use "I" statements when speaking about your point of view and observations</li> </ul> <p><b>Seek confirmation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask if this is really how they are feeling</li> <li>• Watch for affirmative nods and statements confirming that you have understood</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid expressing judgment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Why can't you discuss this without becoming angry?"</li> <li>• "I can see why you're upset by this news."</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoid expressing sympathy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not say, "Oh you poor thing!", or "I feel so sorry for you, it makes me sad."</li> </ul> <p>Sympathy creates resistance to sharing more and less openness to your suggestions</p>
<b>Common reactions:</b>	<p><b>Your colleague becomes angry or defensive:</b></p> <p><b>Give the person time to collect him/herself</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the person has been reluctant to talk about the situation or behaviour causing concern, it may touch an emotional cord. Most people can gather themselves together in a matter of moments. Give them time.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the person reacts angrily or defensively, seek to understand his/her views</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What I have said seems upsetting to you. I'm interested in hearing your perspective."</li> </ul>

	<p><b>If your colleague denies the behaviour:</b></p> <p><b>Try Again</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Things aren’t fine between us. We’ve worked together a long time and I notice a difference. Our relationship is important. Let’s talk.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Provide examples and discuss the impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You haven’t attended the last three meetings and the project is starting to fall behind. I am bringing this up because I am concerned about this and about you.</li> </ul> <p><b>Respect your colleague’s decision to decline assistance. Restate your offer of help and if there is no openness try again later</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I want you to know that I am available to listen if I can be helpful.”</li> </ul>
Seek out expert resources and guidance	Gain clarity by consulting with your manager or the EFAP

## How to respond when there is a risk of harm to self or others

Your Steps	Things to say and do
Express your concern	“I am concerned about your health and safety and am going to take action to get you some professional support.”
Then do one or more of the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow your organization’s procedure.</li> <li>• Call 911 and report a medical incident versus a police or crime incident.</li> <li>• Call a taxi and accompany them to ER. Call their loved one for assistance. Never let the person drive alone. Insert taxi contact number: _____</li> <li>• Call confidential EFAP and put the person on to an intake worker: 1 844.880.9142</li> <li>• Call a suicide crisis hotline. Visit <a href="http://www.suicideprevention.ca">www.suicideprevention.ca</a> for a list of centers.</li> <li>• Call your internal HR partner or Health Services partner or your People Leader for advice. Insert contact number: _____</li> </ul>

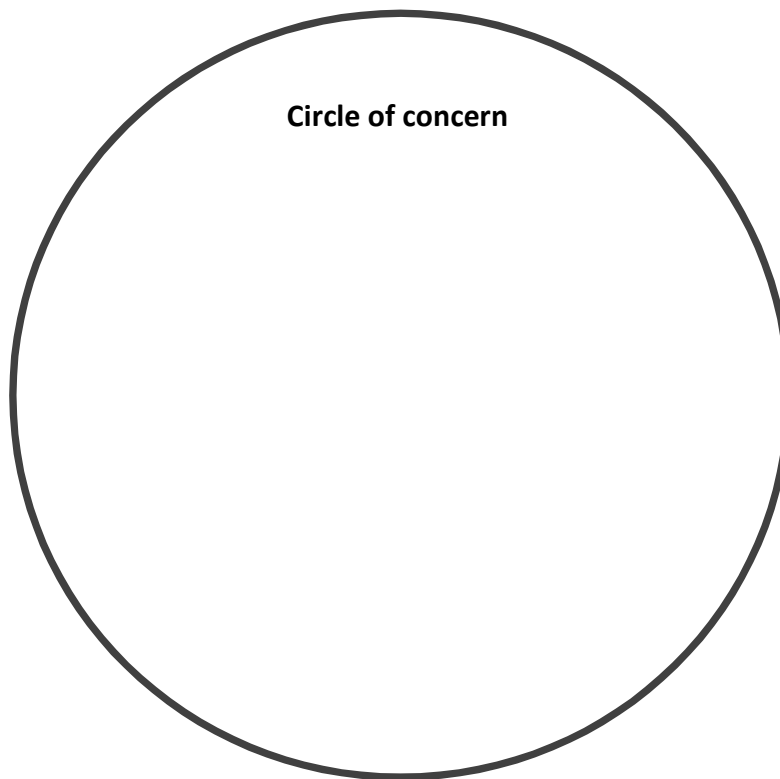


# Resiliency and self-care

## The circles of concern

### Step 1 Instructions:

1. Take a moment to think about your current live events – what do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? What are the things that lead you to feel angry, upset or frustrated?
2. List these items in the circle below.

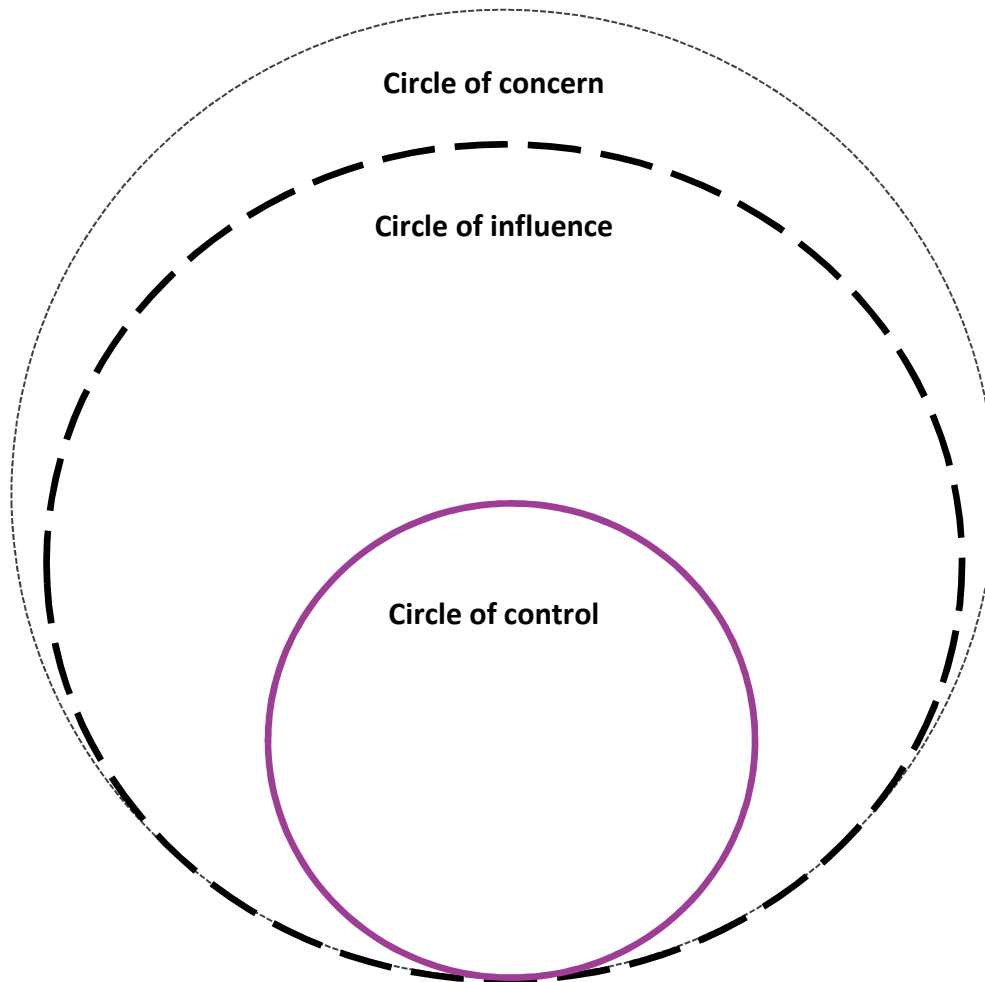


In the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, written by Stephen Covey, habit 1 explores the value of being proactive and introduces readers to the concept of Circles of **Concern**, **Control** and **Influence**. The concept suggests that while we all have a number of concerns stemming from both our work and personal lives, there are 2 main areas where we can choose to focus our time and energy.

According to Covey, highly effective people spend far more time and energy focusing on what's inside their circles of influence and control, than on what is outside of these circles.

## Step 2 Instructions:

1. Review the items you recorded in your circle of concern and determine **which ones you are able to influence?** In other words, for which items can you affect the outcome by influencing the actions, behaviors, or opinions of others? List these items in the **circle of influence** below.
2. Review the items you recorded in your circle of concern and determine **which ones you are able to control?** In other words, for which items can you affect the outcome by commanding, directing or dominating circumstances or people? List these items in the **circle of control** below.



After completing this exercise, what most people realize is that there are actually very few things that they can control, and many more things that they are able to influence. So, as you look at what you have in your circles, the important question is – **do you spend a sizeable amount of your time and energy outside your circle of influence or outside your circle of control?**

## Resources for support

### At home:

- Family
- Friends
- General practitioner
- Therapist
- Mentor

### In your community:

- Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://www.cmha.ca>
- Mood Disorders Society: <http://www.mooddorderscanada.ca>
- Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): <http://www.camh.net>
- Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention: <http://www.suicideprevention.ca/>
- NAMI Family to Family – A 10 week interactive, educational program for families of a loved one living with mental illness [http://toronto.cmha.ca/programs\\_services/nami-family-family-education-program/](http://toronto.cmha.ca/programs_services/nami-family-family-education-program/)

### At work:

- Your colleagues
- Your leader
- Human Resources
- Employee Relations
- Occupational Health Services
- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7/365
  - 1.844.880.9142 — English
  - 1.844.880.9143 — French
  - 1.877.338.0275 (TTY) — English and French
  - [www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com) (Articles and resources)

The EFAP is available to help support employees and family members with work, health and life issues.	
Recommending the EFAP	Things to say and do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Get to know about the EFAP</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Recommend, don't hard sell</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Focus on the benefits for the person</b></li> </ul>	<p>Recommend the EFAP following these strategies:</p> <p><b>Why:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are concerned</li> <li>• Do something before the problem gets worse</li> <li>• Set clear boundaries for roles</li> <li>• Have confidence that there is support/help</li> </ul> <p><b>When:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use your judgment when help/assistance is needed</li> <li>• For all types of personal life challenges, the EFAP provides a wide range of work, health and life services to support individuals on and off the job.</li> </ul> <p><b>How:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind your colleague of the EFAP services (the soft approach)</li> <li>• Provide your colleague with information about the service, so they can easily call EFAP later. It's a good idea to have information about the EFAP accessible.</li> <li>• Suggest an inquiry by calling EFAP to see how the service might be able to help.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stigma of counselling: "You think I'm crazy"</li> <li>• Sign of weakness: "I can handle it myself"</li> <li>• Concern about confidentiality: "Everyone will know"</li> </ul> <p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normalize the service by mentioning that while many people from the company use the program, they don't know who, but they know the program is utilized</li> <li>• Say, "We all experience difficulty and everyone needs help from time to time."</li> <li>• Share your own experiences (if comfortable doing so)</li> <li>• Reinforce benefits and confidentiality</li> </ul>

## Thinking back

Has your thinking about mental health changed?

What can you do to address stigma in the workplace?

What skill, resource or strategy will you employ in your work and life?

Off the job?

On the job?

# Articles

## Depression

"I feel depressed." We've probably all uttered these words at one time or another in our lives. Most often we are referring to feeling sad or unhappy in reaction to something negative that is going on in our life. Short episodes of feeling depressed in reaction to life situations are a normal and natural part of our emotional life. However, should feelings of sadness persist, a person may be experiencing Major Depressive Disorder, and that may require professional treatment.

### Warning Signs

It is common to experience feelings of sadness, the 'blues' or to 'be in the doldrums' on occasion. We can't be cheerful and 'up' all the time -- indeed, we may place such pressure on ourselves to be so, that this becomes a source of stress. Everyday experiences that cause tension -- conflict with a spouse or our children; pressure at work; financial worries; the loss of an important relationship -- can also be triggers for feeling down. The sadness or worry we experience in response to these situations may be mild and short-term, or it may be more complex and long lasting. Experiences of extreme stress or loss may lead to a disorder that will require professional treatment. If this should happen to you or a loved one, you need to know when to seek help, and what type of help to seek.

Watch out for the warning signs of depression, and pay attention to thoughts, feelings and symptoms that persist despite your best efforts to alleviate them. This will help you to know which approaches might help you feel better, and function at normal, healthy levels.

While it can be a debilitating condition, Major Depressive Disorder -- even in its most critical form -- is usually treatable. Counselling, medication or a combination of the two have excellent success rates in treating both minor and more serious cases of depression and anxiety.

## Understanding depression

### A Common Condition

Depression is very common. Many people who have Major Depressive Disorder feel that they are alone in their experience but this is not the case. According to the Canadian mental health Association (CMHA) ten per cent of people will experience a clinical depression in their lifetime. Unfortunately, only twenty-five per cent of those afflicted will seek professional help.

Medical Science believes that there is a biological basis for depression. The exact cause of depression is unknown, however, research suggests that neurotransmitters or brain chemicals are involved as a significant factor in depression. As a result, certain medications, which act on the neurons that produce the neurotransmitters; namely, serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine -- the brain chemicals thought to be implicated in depression -- are effective as a treatment for depression.

However, this is not to discount the role that environment and situational factors play in depression. The most effective treatment for depression has been found to be appropriate medication in combination with counselling -- a two-part strategy that yields greater results than either medication or counselling alone.

## Signs of Depression

Recognizing the signs of depression is an important first step towards seeking the right kind of help and feeling better. A person who is depressed may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Feelings of sadness or despair, despondency, or conversely, a lack of feeling, an emotional 'numbness,' lifelessness or apathy
- A loss of interest in once enjoyable hobbies, activities and people
- Trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much
- Increase or decrease in appetite or weight
- Feeling tired and weak
- Feeling anxious or restless
- Problems focusing, concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Crying more easily than usual
- Feeling overwhelmed by negative thoughts
- Loss of interest in sex
- Feeling worthless, guilty, helpless or hopeless
- Thinking or talking about death or suicide

We all may experience some of these feelings on occasion. Another sign of depression is if you have tried different ways to alleviate these symptoms and they have been unsuccessful. A person may be considered depressed if he or she experiences five or more of these symptoms for a continuous period of two weeks or longer. If you think you are depressed, we recommend that you seek professional advice from a physician or counsellor immediately.

## Approaches to treating depression

### Counselling

Meeting with a professional counsellor can be very beneficial for a person experiencing depression. Counselling provides an opportunity to talk openly and confidentially about the feelings and thoughts a person is experiencing and to identify strategies for coping with them. Discussing and gaining insight into the circumstances that may have triggered the episode of depression can also be helpful. An EFAP counsellor can work with you if you are mildly depressed, and make a referral to an appropriate resource for longer-term treatment of more serious depression (e.g., Cognitive Behavioural Therapy).

### Medication

Because of the imbalance of brain chemicals found in depression, anti-depressant medication that restores the chemical balance often plays a key role in its treatment. Your physician or pharmacist can provide you with extensive information on prescribed anti-depressant medications and their use so that you can make an informed decision regarding your use of these medications. The local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association is also a good source of information.



## Other things that may help

When our spirits are low, it is hard to muster the energy required to take care of ourselves, but it is extremely important to do a few small things each day to move in the direction of recovery:

- Avoid using drugs and alcohol, which can worsen the symptoms
- Do the best possible to eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water
- Get out for short walks
- Stay connected with friends and family, and go along with some of their suggestions to participate in once enjoyable activities
- Understand that the depression is not your fault
- Talk to people who have gone through and recovered from depression
- Postpone any big life decisions such as a changes in house, job or spouse as judgment may be compromised by the emotionality of depression
- Take care not to expect the recovery process to occur rapidly as this will be discouraging. Recovery is sometimes a slow, 'little by little' process

## When a friend or family member is depressed

If a friend or a family member is depressed, one of the most helpful things that you can do for them is to encourage and assist them in getting professional help. You can also:

- Work hard at being understanding with the person
- Actively Listen and express Empathy
- Offer encouragement - help the person understand that they will get through this. Try to avoid obvious solutions such as "be strong" or "think positively"
- Invite the person to participate in activities, but keep these activities short and simple
- Share regular day-to-day conversation from time-to-time in an effort to normalize the interactions

To ensure the strength of your own health and well-being, remember to take care of your own needs, and to take regular breaks from supporting your friend or family member.

## When to seek help

There are times in everyone's life when personal problems challenge us to increase our resolve and improve our coping strategies. On occasion though, our coping mechanisms and the strategies we've become accustomed to relying upon are not enough. How do you know when professional help is necessary?

A good rule of thumb is to look at how intensely a problem is affecting you or a loved one and how long it has lasted. If the difficulty is causing you distress or interfering with your work, relationships, or other aspects of life, it is wise to seek help. The sooner an individual recognizes a problem and begins addressing it, the sooner recovery can begin.

## Common reasons to seek professional help

- When you have questions about yourself and your life that loom large and need to be put in perspective
- When pressures and stresses seem beyond your ability to cope with them
- When you feel depressed and/or overly fatigued or unusually anxious and the symptoms just won't go away
- When normal sleep patterns are affected (problems falling asleep, waking throughout the night and/or early awakening)
- When eating habits involve bingeing, purging, or drastic attitudes towards your daily diet
- When you have difficulty concentrating or focusing for extended periods
- When the process of making decisions prompts feelings of panic, despair or dread
- When there is prolonged loss of interest in hobbies or activities that once were a source of pleasure and enjoyment
- When you spend the majority of your day obsessing over the challenges or obstacles at hand
- When you experience unexplained anger and irritability
- When you are no longer achieving your potential at work
- When you are uncertain about career or life direction
- When you know you don't communicate well in relationships or feel the need to be either more assertive or less aggressive than you are
- When problems with those you live with are resulting in emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
- When you suspect or believe you or someone close to you may be abusing alcohol and/or other drugs
- When you feel you are lacking specific skills (relaxation, time management, stress management), which you see as a key to well-being
- When you are experiencing physical symptoms that persist in spite of medical interventions (e.g. headaches, stomach cramps, chronic pain, nausea or dizziness, lack of energy/lethargy, dramatic weight loss or gain, vomiting)
- When you are feeling a lack of purpose or meaning in your life the following are types of professionals or facilities can provide assessments, treatments or referrals in dealing with mental health issues:
  - Your Family Doctor
  - Your Employee Family Assistance Programs
  - Other mental health specialists such as counselors, Social Workers, Psychiatrists, or Psychologists
  - Community Mental Health Centres
  - Hospital emergency rooms, psychiatry departments and outpatient clinics
  - University or medical school-affiliated programs

If you're unsure of how to go about contact any of these services, you can consult your EFAP, the local Yellow Pages, or the Internet (using key words such as "mental health," "social services," "crisis

intervention," "suicide prevention," "hospitals," or "hotlines"). The College of Physicians and Surgeons, Canadian Psychological Association, and Provincial Psychological Association can also assist you.