

Mental Health is for Everyone



Promoting Mental Health in Adults

This resource is to promote mental health.

For crisis help:

- **Call 9-1-1**
- **Suicide Crisis helpline call 9-8-8**
- **Visit your nearest hospital emergency department**



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What is mental health?

Did you know that 5 out of 5 people have mental health? Yes! We ALL have mental health.

Mental health is how you think, feel and act. It plays an important part in your overall health. Good mental health allows you to reach your goals, feel good about yourself, and cope with life's ups and downs. We all have highs and lows in our mental health. It is normal to have feelings like anger, sadness or anxiety when facing those ups and downs. Learning ways to cope with stress, finding things you enjoy doing, and having caring relationships with friends and family, helps build and support good mental health.

There is no health without mental health!

What is mental illness?

Mental health and mental illness are not the same. In a given year, 1 in 5 Canadians face a mental illness. A mental illness is when a person is diagnosed with a concern that alters their thinking, mood and/or behaviour. Some examples include depression, schizophrenia, anxiety disorder, and addictions such as alcohol or drug abuse. Mental illnesses are linked to times when a person is distressed and their ability to function well has changed. Whether or not you have a mental illness, it is important to know how to take care of your mental health and when to reach out for help. We can all work on and improve our mental health.

Why is it important to take care of your mental health?

Life is full of ups and downs. We can't always control what happens. It is important for **all of us** to take care of our mental health **everyday** so that during times of stress, uncertainty, challenge, and life changes (even positive changes) we have the skills and tools needed to help us cope and stay mentally healthy.



Transitions and life events

Change is constant. It helps us grow and learn and forces us to do things differently. While change can be positive, it can also be a source of stress and impact our mental health.

Transitions and life events are periods of change or key times in our lives that mark the beginning of something new. This can include:

- Graduating school or moving out.
- Retiring from work.
- Becoming unemployed.
- Losing a loved one or getting divorced.
- Moving to a new country or city.

We cannot control everything that happens in our lives; however we can control how we respond. Stress comes with change and having the tools to adapt is key. It is important to build the skills needed to help us cope.



Resiliency is key!

Resiliency is the ability to handle life's ups and downs in positive ways and to bounce back from hard times. Becoming resilient will not make problems go away, but it can allow you to work through them, enjoy life and handle stress. Building resilience takes time. What works for one person may not work for another.

Consider these tips:

Build healthy relationships:

Connection with others can provide us with feelings of love, value, and respect.

Learn from experience:

Think about the tools you've used in the past that helped during hard times.

Stay hopeful:

Stay positive and focus on the things in life you can control.

Think ahead:

Make a plan, take action, and ask for help if you need it!

Accept setbacks:

Accept that setbacks will happen. This can be a chance for you to learn and grow.

Self Care:

Spend some "me" time everyday doing things that bring you joy.

Think Positive:

Notice when negative thoughts come up. Instead, try to focus on the good.

Emotional health:

Being aware of how you feel allows you to have better control over your emotions.



It is important for our mental health that we:

- **Connect with others:** Meaningful connections in your life can help your mental health. Being connected to others supports your happiness, resilience and helps you to overcome life's challenges.
- **Practice spirituality, culture, and language:** Teach others about your culture or language. Practice spirituality, however that may look to you. For some it may be attending your place of worship, for another it could mean walking in nature.
- **Be physically active:** Physical activity boosts your mood and reduces stress. Adults 18 and older need 150 minutes of physical activity each week.
- **Healthy diet:** Use Canada's Food Guide to help you make healthy choices. Plan meals to make with family or friends!
- **Find purpose and meaning:** Explore what is important to you in your life.
- **Sleep:** Sleep helps you restore and repair your mind and body. An adult 18+ needs 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

Everyday practices you can try right now!

Ways to improve your mental health:

- Practice gratitude. Think of what you are grateful for at this moment.
- Meet up with a friend.
- Get involved in cultural events.
- Leave a kind message for someone you know, or even a stranger.
- Manage stress by going for a walk, doing deep breathing exercises or listening to music.
- Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is focusing your attention on the present moment. It is a skill that takes time and practice.



Before and After examples using Mental Health tips

New Residents

Before:

The Patel family are new to the community.

Everything is so different, and the family have been missing their old neighbourhood.

The children are settling into their new school and the family is excited to meet new friends and get to know other families in the school community.

The school is hosting a Family Meet & Greet night in the coming weeks.

After:

- The family attended the school's Family Meet and Greet night. They spoke with their school's Public Health Nurse where they were connected to school and community information, services and resources.
- The family started going on evening walks to the park where the children could play, and they could connect with other families in the neighbourhood. Being physically active helped them all to feel mentally and physically well.

Before long, the Patel family felt a sense of belonging in their new neighbourhood and school community.



Young adult moving away to school.

Before:

Alex started college and they were eager to leave home and become independent.

By mid- semester, Alex began having feelings of loneliness and was struggling to keep up with their classes. Alex felt very stressed with their heavy workload and felt it difficult to cope with being away from home without their family and friends.

After:

- Alex met with a tutor and made a plan for their workload. They reached out to their school's Mental Health Services for more support.
- Alex began to write out which tasks they would like to have done by the end of the day and three things they were grateful for.
- Alex worked on changing their thinking from "I need to get straight A's" to "I am proud of the hard work I am putting into my studies, no matter the result".
- Alex reflected on what was important to them. They decided to volunteer to help clean up litter around the community. There they met a group of friends who shared similar interests.
- Alex tried two new healthy dinner recipes a week. This helped to build their feelings of self-confidence.
- Alex also worked on their sleep routine. They began to put their electronics away one hour before bed. They went to bed at the same time each night and found that they had more energy during the day.

Making these small changes helped Alex manage stress, connect with others and cope with this change in a healthy way.



Single parent of two children

Before:

Tina is a single parent of 2 young children, she works fulltime at a school and drives an hour each way in to work and back. Tina rushes home each night to make dinner, help the children with their homework and pack lunches for the next day. Lately Tina has been feeling stressed and has started to notice that she is feeling sad most days and is not enjoying life the way she used to.



After:

- Tina made an appointment to speak with her doctor who listened to her concerns and suggested some lifestyle changes.
- Tina spoke with her family about how she was feeling and they worked out a plan. They started a weekly meal plan, sharing chores, and homework, so that Tina could have 30 minutes to herself in the evening.
- The family began preparing meals together and the kids started making their lunches. This helped share the food prep work while spending quality time together.
- The family started limiting daily technology use and began going on a walk together each evening.

These changes helped bring the family together. Soon Tina started feeling like herself again and was feeling less stressed.



Finding help

Taking care of your mental health also means reaching out when you need it. We all have times when we feel overwhelmed, or when we need someone to talk to. Reaching out for help is a positive way to take care of your mental health – you are not alone.

For crisis help call **9-1-1**.

For Suicide Crisis helpline call **9-8-8**.

2-1-1 Ontario is a helpline that easily connects people to the social services, programs and community supports they need. Call or text 2-1-1 or visit 211Ontario.ca. Language interpretation is available if you don't speak English.

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EVERYONE.**



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/health



If you require this information in an
accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.