

Solutions

Health and Wellness Information from
Family Services Employee Assistance Programs (FSEAP)

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Newsletter



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Your Mental Health – Keeping an open mind

When we think of personal health and wellbeing we often focus on our physical health. All too often we are reminded by ads on TV, slick magazine pages or pop-up ads on Google, to strive for that perfect, healthy body. However, this is only part of what makes us “healthy” and able to handle the day to day stresses of life. Although a focus on the physical aspects of our health may seem easier, our mental health plays a key role in our personal and working lives.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health used to be considered the absence of mental illness but this is no longer the case. Mental health is a balance of our emotional and psychological well-being which allows us to function every day at home, at work and socially. Being mentally healthy enables us to cope with all the challenges and stresses in life, allowing us to contribute to society and leading wholesome lives.

When our physical health declines and if we are not feeling well, it is an automatic reaction to seek support from a physician or specialist. Yet, many of us who are struggling with emotional difficulties resist seeking support due to the stigma society associates

with mental illness. “Stigma” is otherwise known as a social attitude towards a mental illness that is who discrediting; ‘Self-Stigma’ refers to those individuals who internalize their feelings of guilt, shame or secrecy of their mental illness.

This may be partially due to the fear which society has developed over the years from lack of understanding the wide spectrum of mental health issues. According to the Mood Disorder Society of Canada, 75% of those with a mental illness in the world never receive any treatment at all.

Mental illness has no socio-economic boundaries or limitations of geography, age, race or status in society for it to occur.

Statistics show that:

- ◆ 1 in 5 individuals are impacted in any given time by mental illness
- ◆ For every 1 person impacted, at least 4 people are indirectly affected such as family members, co-workers and children.
- ◆ In Canada, the two most common forms of mental illness concerns are anxiety and depression.
- ◆ The highest rate of depression can be found in those under 20 years of age.

Mental illness can affect anyone or someone you care about. It’s treatable and people recover.

What to Watch For

We can all say we have had a bad day. One where things don’t seem to be quite right and we don’t feel like ourselves. Mental health issues are more than

fseap Now we’re
talking.

From time to time we all deal with difficulty in life. Sometimes it can be helpful to talk with a trained professional – someone who is objective, caring and experienced at helping with the particular issue you are facing. Contact us to find out more about our counselling and work/life services. Call 1-800-667-0993.



just a bad day. Emotional difficulties can become a concern when there is change in thinking, behaviour or moods over an extended period of time.

Some of the most common signs and symptoms of mental health related concerns are:

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in eating patterns
- Mood swings
- Panic
- Anger and irritability
- Anxiety
- Problems with concentration and accuracy
- Fuzzy thinking
- Withdrawing from social functions
- Short term memory problems

If you are noticing signs and symptoms which last more than a few days, one suggestion is to record a daily “mood log” which captures the triggers throughout the day. Record what makes you really happy, upsets you, irritates you or makes you feel down. If you are noticing a pattern, it would be important to see your physician, talk to a counsellor or someone you trust.

Predictors of Good Mental Health

The struggles of every day challenges at home, at work and in our families can produce a great deal of mental strain in our lives. Research shows that to ensure our good mental health continues despite life pressures, we continue to keep these things in mind:

- Resiliency - the ability to bounce back from troubling situations.
- Self actualization - continuing to challenge yourself and learn new things.
- Balance - Maintaining balance between work and life.
- Flexibility - Go with the flow. Unpredictable things happen that you may not have control over, but that we come up coping strategies that do not let things bring you down.

Having positive, effective and immediate coping strategies allows us to maintain good mental health. Some strategies include:

- Surround yourself with support - whether family, friends or co-workers. Talking about your situation, problem or challenge with someone you trust is important to build resiliency.

- Make sure you leave time each week for a leisure activity, hobby or do something you enjoy. Check your date book and pre plan your schedule just as you would a doctor’s appointment and follow through.
- Create a set time for yourself to think about your concerns in life and do a self-check in for both your mind and body.
- Get moving. Take on a physical activity that is suitable to you. It doesn’t need to take a lot of time and could be as simple as just going for regular walks. Exercise is an important facet to good mental health.
- You are what you eat. The right foods are fuel for your body but also for your mind. Nutritious foods and snacks can make you more resilient to face the challenges at home and at work.

Moving Forward

Research shows 80% of mental health concerns are treatable. No matter what the mental concerns are, you are not alone. Connecting with someone you trust is important. Contact with your Employee Assistance Program, a friend, family member or a family physician is a great way to get you started.

Mental health concerns are not a sign of weakness and we need to reach out. Get help. Get better. Get back to life. Just as with a physical concern, mental health is just as important, and together they make life the best it can be.

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With over 20 years clinical experience Jung brings a broad range expertise to her work as an EAP Counsellor. She holds certifications in many therapeutic modalities, is a Registered Clinical Counsellor, and a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist.

How your EFAP can help

- ✓ Confidential services
- ✓ Information to help with work and life
- ✓ Immediate assistance 24/7/365

To access **fseap** services, just call
1.800.667.0993 | TTY 1.888.234.0414

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