



# Mental health continuum

## Self-Awareness Tool

Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness and the old notion of there being only two possibilities, “healthy” or “ill”, has evolved. Today we recognize that there are different stages between the two extremes and where we are on the continuum can change with time (days, weeks, months) or because of life’s circumstances.

The Continuum can help you identify the signs of good and poor mental health, and find strategies to stay healthy or return to good health.

As well, this tool can help you better understand what others may be experiencing.

### Examples of signs and symptoms to pay attention to

HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal mood fluctuations</li> <li>Calm</li> <li>Takes things in stride</li> <li>Good sense of humour</li> <li>Consistent performance</li> <li>In control mentally</li> <li>Normal sleep patterns</li> <li>Physically well</li> <li>Good energy level</li> <li>Socially active</li> <li>No or controlled alcohol use or gambling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irritable or impatient</li> <li>Nervousness</li> <li>Sad or overwhelmed</li> <li>Sarcasm</li> <li>Procrastination</li> <li>Forgetfulness</li> <li>Trouble sleeping</li> <li>Muscle tension or headaches</li> <li>Low energy</li> <li>Decreased social activity</li> <li>Increased use of alcohol or gambling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angry</li> <li>Anxious</li> <li>Feeling of hopelessness</li> <li>Negative attitude</li> <li>Decreased performance</li> <li>Poor concentration</li> <li>Disrupted sleep</li> <li>Increased aches and pains</li> <li>Increased fatigue</li> <li>Social avoidance</li> <li>Hard to control alcohol use or gambling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angry outbursts</li> <li>Excessively anxious</li> <li>Depressed</li> <li>Overt pessimism</li> <li>Unable to perform duties</li> <li>Cannot concentrate</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Physical ailments</li> <li>Constant fatigue</li> <li>Isolation</li> <li>Alcohol, gambling or other addictions</li> </ul>

# COPING STRATEGIES

Mental health means striking a balance in all aspects of your life. At times, you may tip the balance too much in one direction and have to find your footing again. Your personal balance will be unique, and your challenge will be to stay mentally healthy by keeping that balance. It is possible to take action at any time to return to a more functional state of health. The sooner you act, the better!

What you can do for yourself			
HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain healthy lifestyle</li> <li>Focus on task at hand</li> <li>Break tasks down to small steps</li> <li>Nurture a support system</li> <li>Plan for rest and fun</li> <li>Set your limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize your limits</li> <li>Take breaks</li> <li>Apply healthy coping strategies</li> <li>Identify and minimize stressors</li> <li>Keep lines of communication open</li> <li>Ask for help when you need it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek help</li> <li>Join a support group</li> <li>Talk to someone</li> <li>Recognize own signs of distress</li> <li>Maintain social contact instead of withdrawing</li> <li>Accept offers of help from friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult a health professional, as needed</li> <li>Make self-care a priority</li> <li>Focus on regaining health</li> <li>Follow health professionals recommendations</li> </ul>

Source: National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (adapted to ESDC's context by the HRSB).

Work is important to our well-being. In addition to the income it brings, it can be a big part of our identity, how we understand our skills, and a way to contribute to something bigger.

When you have issues that may affect your work (e.g. attendance, performance or interpersonal relations in the workplace), it is wise to talk to your supervisor so they know what is happening and can provide support.

## Don't be afraid to ask for help...

Remember to take advantage of your employee services and benefits. Finding help early will get you on the road to recovery faster and may even reduce the risk of problems in the future.

### Employee Assistance Program

Toll free: 1-800-268-7708

☎ 1-800-567-5803

### Office of Informal Conflict Management

819-654-5727

Toll free: 1-866-382-7502

NC-OICM-BGIC-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

## To learn more...

Visit the iService site on mental health: <http://iservice.prv.mentalhealth> to access our online resources: **Mental Health Passport**, different learning options, etc.