



Canadian Mental
Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all



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Tips for Good Mental Well-being

English



tips for good mental well-being

You have probably heard about different ways to take care of your body. Did you know that you can take care of your mind, too?

Mental health is the way you think and feel about yourself and the world around you. When you look after your mental health, it is easier to handle stress and other problems. By taking care of yourself first, you will be able to take better care of others.

In this booklet, you will learn different ways to build good mental health. You will learn how to:

- 1. Take care of your body**
- 2. Practice healthy thinking**
- 3. Slow down**
- 4. Have fun**
- 5. Reach out**

1. Take care of your body

Your body and mind are connected. When you take care of your body, you also take care of your mind.



Eat well

Food gives you important nutrients that help your body work well. Research shows that who you eat with and how you eat influences your mental and overall well-being. Try to eat with others and practice mindful eating.

Sometimes we don't prioritize ourselves. We may eat something that is the easiest to make or get. It is important to take care of yourself. Don't forget that your choices matter and you deserve a meal that you enjoy.



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Here are some tips on taking care of your body:

- Eat regularly, so your body has enough energy to feel good all day. Skipping meals can make you feel tired or irritable.
- Watch out for too much caffeine. Caffeine is part of coffee, chai, and some pop that gives you energy. It is also in other drinks and snacks, too. Caffeine can add to feelings of anxiety. It can also stop you from sleeping well.
- Watch how much sugar you eat. Eating sugar gives you a quick burst of energy. But when that energy is gone, you feel more tired. It can lower your mood and make you feel irritable.
- Watch your alcohol use. Alcohol may hide problems for a short time, but can make sadness, stress and other feelings harder to deal with later on.



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To learn more about eating well, talk to a dietitian. Dietitians have special training to help people eat well. In BC, you can call 8-1-1 to talk to a dietitian for free from Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. For an interpreter, say your language in English three times. Wait until an interpreter joins the call.

Exercise

Exercise is good for your body. But did you know that it is also good for mental health? Here are a few ways exercise can help:

- It helps you cope with stress.
- It lowers anxiety.
- It helps to improve your mood.
- It increases your energy.
- It helps you feel good about yourself.
- It helps you sleep well.



You do not have to spend a lot of time for you to feel these effects, either. Just 30 minutes a day, three or four days a week is enough to see changes. It does not matter what kind of activity you do. Here are some tips for boosting mental health through exercise:

- Next time you feel sad, worried or stressed, try going for a walk outside. Walking can be a fast and easy way to feel better.
- Pick an activity you enjoy. Remember, you can do any activity that gets you moving! If you like the activity, you are more likely to do it.
- Do activities with your family members and friends like playing badminton, soccer, hopscotch, jump rope or have a dance party.
- Exercise with a friend or family member. You will get the benefits of exercise and you will connect with someone else. You are also more likely to keep up with your exercise sessions if you plan them with someone else.
- Focus on how the activity makes you feel. You should feel improvements in your mood, reduced stress levels and increased confidence.
- Go to your local gym or community centre. Going to a gym can be intimidating and scary to some individuals. You can ask for a trainer to help you start.



If you have an existing health problem, talk to your doctor before you start a new exercise program.

Get enough sleep

Sleep has a huge effect on mental health. When you get enough sleep, it is easier to cope with stress, handle problems, concentrate, think positively and remember things.

The exact amount of sleep you need is based on your own body. Most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night.

It is easy to think that you can get more done if you cut back on sleep. But you actually may feel more tired getting things done when you do not get enough sleep.

Here are some things to try if you do not sleep well:

- Avoid exercising too close to your bedtime. Exercise gives you energy, which can make it hard to fall asleep. But slow and relaxing activities, like reading, can help you fall asleep.
- Avoid big meals, alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine before bed. Caffeine is the part of coffee, chai, or some pop that makes you feel awake.



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- Make sure your room is comfortable for sleeping. Many people find that they sleep best when their room is dark, quiet, and cool.
- Do quiet activities just before bed, like reading, meditating, stretching or journaling.
- Follow a routine. Try to go to bed around the same time every night and wake up around the same time every morning, even on weekends.
- Only use your bedroom for sleeping. Do work or watch TV in a different room.
- Avoid naps during the day if you have a hard time sleeping at night.
- Avoid sleeping pills unless suggested by your doctor. You may fall asleep faster, but they do not give you good, restful sleep.



Most people have trouble sleeping from time to time. If you often have trouble sleeping, it is best to talk to your doctor.

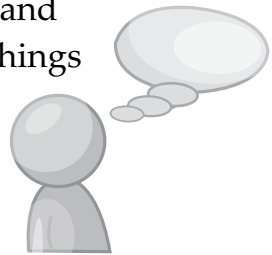
2. Practice healthy thinking

Good mental health does not mean that you only have happy thoughts. There is nothing wrong with feeling upset or sad about certain experiences because these are your emotions and it is part of life. Good mental health means looking at the situation for what it really is and understanding the difference between the things you can and cannot control.

Watch out for negative thoughts and “thinking traps”

The way you think about something has a big effect on the way you feel. If you feel like you can handle a problem, you often feel good. If you do not think that you can handle a problem, you often feel upset.

Sometimes, you have negative thoughts, even though they may not be true. These thoughts are sometimes called “thinking traps.” They are traps because they are easy to fall into and can make you feel stuck and upset.





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Here are some common “thinking traps”:

- Thinking that bad things always happen to you. “I wanted to go to the beach, but now it is raining. This always happens to me! Now my day is ruined!”
- Thinking that something can only be all good or all bad. “I did not do as well as I wanted on that last test. I am not smart enough for this course.”
- Focusing only on the negative part of a situation. “My team won, but I cannot believe I missed that shot. I must be very bad at soccer. Maybe I should stop playing.”
- Coming to negative conclusions before you know what really happened. “My friend did not call me back. They must not like me very much.”
- Coming to negative conclusions. “I was not invited to that party. I wonder what my friends and family were discussing while I was not there.”

You can challenge your “thinking traps” by looking at the facts. The next time you notice yourself falling into a “thinking trap”, ask yourself questions to find the facts. Here are some questions to ask:



- Is there any proof behind this thought?
- Have I thought about all sides of the situation? Is there anything I missed?
- Have I been in this position before? What happened then?
- If my friend was in the same situation, what would I say?

Once you have looked at the facts, you can replace the “thinking trap” thought with a more balanced, fact-based thought.

Solve problems

We face problems every day. We can fix some problems easily, but other problems are not as easy to solve. When we do not take action, stress can build up until we do not know what to do next.



Try to think of solutions. Instead of thinking “why is this happening to me”, think of what you can control about the situation and what changes you can make. This is an easy way to look at your problems and begin solving them. The next time you are facing a problem, follow these steps:

Step 1: Decide what the problem is. Try to be as exact as possible. It is easier to solve a problem when you know what needs to be fixed.

Step 2: Think of different solutions or end goals. Think of as many as you can. Write them all down, even if they seem silly.

Step 3: Pick the solution that you think will work best.

Step 4: Decide what you need to do to try your solution. This is your plan. You can break your plan into smaller steps if you need to.

Step 5: Put your plan into action. Remember to use your balanced, fact-based thinking skills.

Step 6: Look back to see if your plan worked. If it did not work, pick a different solution from your list in Step 2 and make a new plan. Keep going until you find a solution that works.

3. Slow down

We all need to take time out for yourself to slow down and relax. It is a big part of managing stress and enjoying our lives. We are sometimes taught to do everything for others and we often forget to do things that make us happy.

When we do not take time to slow down, stresses can add up until we feel too overwhelmed to do anything.

When we relax, it is easier to see problems and solutions clearly. It is easier to manage difficult feelings, and it is easier to see the good sides of things. It is easier to focus on what is happening now instead of worrying about the past or future.

How you relax and make time for yourself is up to you. Some of these activities could be very simple, such as:

- Yoga, meditating or breathing exercises
- Praying or visiting your place of worship
- Reading, doing art or gardening
- Spending time in nature, like going to the beach
- Eating something you enjoy
- Watching your favourite movie or show

These may be very simple things, but doing something you enjoy can instantly change your mood and help with your mental health.

4. Have fun!

Doing things you enjoy is good for your mental health. It helps you feel refreshed and helps you feel good about yourself. Then it is easier to cope with stress and other problems. When you feel sad or worried, it is easy to stop doing the little things that make you happy. This can make you feel worse.

Make a list of the things you can do each day that make you happy. Then give yourself time for these activities. Use your problem-solving skills to find ways to add more of these activities in your life.

- Here is an example: You may put reading books or knitting on your list, but you think that you do not have time. After doing some problem-solving, you might start bringing your book or knitting project to your lunch break at work or school.

5. Reach out

The people in your lives are a big part of your own mental health. We all help each other out, share the good times, and learn from each other.



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Connect with others

Social networks are a big part of mental health. Your social networks are the people in your lives who support you, celebrate your successes and help you deal with problems.

There are many different ways we can help each other.

- Some people are good at dealing with feelings. This can help you feel comforted.
- Some people are good at helping out, like babysitting or grocery shopping. This can help you manage day-to-day chores.
- Some people are good at sharing a different point of view. This can help you look at problems more realistically.
- Some people are good at sharing information. This can help you find better solutions.



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Most of us have networks of different people. It might include family members, friends, co-workers, classmates, neighbours and other important people.

Here are some tips for building a strong support network:

- Ask for help. Others cannot help you if they do not know what you need.
- Think of new ways to meet people. If you enjoy a particular activity, joining a group or class is a good way to meet others with the same interests.
- Join a support group. This is a good way to find help for a specific problem.
- Let go of bad relationships. Some people in our networks might not support us. It is hard, but sometimes we need to let go of these people.

Help others

Helping others helps you feel good about yourself. It is also a good way to meet other people and learn new skills. Try asking your favourite group or organization if they have volunteer work.

Get help when you need it

To stay healthy, you need to find help when you start to feel unwell. The same is true for mental health. Mental health problems are easier to care for when they are caught quickly. If you are feeling unwell and nothing seems to help, it is important to talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.



Phone line services available to you

All services below are free and available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

Language Assistance: For an interpreter, say your language in English three times. Wait until the interpreter joins the call.

310 Mental Health Support Line

Call 310-6789 (no area code needed)

Provides confidential emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information for anything that is causing you concern or worry, such as:

- Suicidal thoughts or feelings
- Mental health and addiction concerns
- Family and relationship conflicts and abuse
- Loss or loneliness

Community Services - BC 211

Call 2-1-1

Get help finding community and government supports and services. Examples of supports and services include employment help, financial help, legal help, housing, language classes, mental health services, newcomer supports, resources for parents, seniors services, support groups, victim services, youth services and more.

Health Link BC

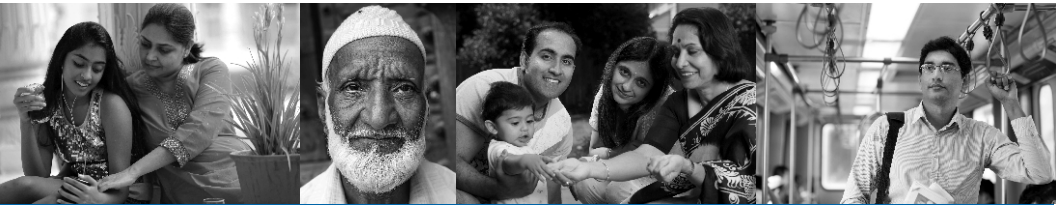
Call 8-1-1 or 604-215-8110

Provides the following services

- Advice from a nurse on any health issues or concerns
- Help finding health services in your community
- Advice from a physiotherapist on activity and exercise
- Advice from a pharmacist on medicines
- Help from a dietitian with food choices and nutrition

Disclaimer: This resource has been adapted by the South Asian Health Institute (SAHI) of Fraser Health Authority with permission from the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division and the BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information. The BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information were not involved in the adaptation process and cannot attest to the quality of the final product.

To see the original English version, visit www.heretohelp.bc.ca/plainer-language-series.



www.fraserhealth.ca/sahi

Have a question or need help accessing health services?
Want to get involved in supporting the South Asian community?



Text, WhatsApp, or Call 236-332-6455



Email us at SouthAsianHealth@fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider