



No health without mental health:
IS IT TIME FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CHECKUP?

October 10th is World Mental Health Day.

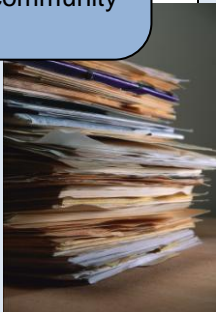
According to the World Health Organization, “**Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is ... a state of well-being in which every individual:**

- realizes his or her own potential,
- can cope with the normal stresses of life,
- can work productively and fruitfully, and
- is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

Most Canadians have difficulty finding time for all their responsibilities. In fact, **58% of Canadians report “overload”** as a result of the pressures associated with work, home and family, friends, physical health, and community service.

Signs of work/life imbalance include:

- Feeling overwhelmed, like you’ve lost control of your life
- Feeling guilty that you’re neglecting areas of your life
- Difficulty concentrating



Finding a “perfect” balance between work and life is rare. The nature of that balance is different for every person, and changes over time. Instead of striving for perfection, try to remain aware of how your choices affect the different aspects of your life.

Work-Life Balance Tips

At Work

- **At the end of each day, set your priorities for the following day.** Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have available.
- **Address concerns about deadlines and deliverables early.** As soon as you see that a deadline is unachievable, communicate your concern to your employer - don’t wait until the deadline passes.
- **Take your allotted vacation time.** Taking vacation allows you to come back to work refreshed and more productive.

At Home

- **Decide what chores can be shared or let go.** Determine which household chores are critical and which can be done by someone else. Let the rest go and do something you enjoy.
- **Exercise.** Even if it’s only for 15 minutes at a time, you’ll feel more energized and refreshed.
- **Create and implement a household budget.** Start by setting aside some money from each paycheque for the future – the “pay yourself first” concept.
- **Make healthy food choices.** Healthy eating will give you and your family more energy.
- **Pursue a hobby.** Either with friends or family, or for some quality time on your own.

In Your Community

- **Make choices.** Social, community and volunteer obligations pull us in many directions. Choose the ones that are most fulfilling and learn to say ‘no’ to the rest.
- **Manage expectations.** Be clear at the outset about how much time or support you can contribute to community organizations or your children’s school events.

Thankfulness

Food for Thought this Thanksgiving

*"In research done by Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough, those who kept a **daily gratitude journal** – writing down at least five things for which they were grateful – enjoyed **higher levels of emotional and physical well-being.**"*

*Each night before you go to sleep, **write down at least five things that made or make you happy** – things for which you are grateful. These can be little or big: from a meal that you enjoyed to a meaningful conversation you had with a friend.*

*If you do this exercise regularly, you will naturally repeat yourself, which is perfectly fine. The key is, despite the repetition, to keep the emotions fresh; **imagine what each item means to you as you write it down, and experience the feeling associated with it.** Doing this exercise regularly can help you to appreciate the positive in your life rather than take it for granted."*

From *Happier* (2007), by Tal Ben-Shahar, pp. 10-11



Halloween Safety

Halloween is a magical night when the young and young-at-heart can embrace the fun of make-believe! Coming up with a creative disguise for your children (and yourself) doesn't mean that safety needs to be forgotten. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- October 31 can be chilly, so make sure that costumes are loose enough to be worn over warm clothing but not so baggy or long that trick-or-treaters can trip.
- Choose brightly-coloured costumes that will be clearly visible to motorists. For greater visibility, add or incorporate reflective tape into the costume.
- Make-up and face paint are better than wearing masks, which can restrict breathing and/or vision. If you choose to use a mask, make sure it is one that allows the child to see and breathe easily.
- Swords, knives and similar accessories should be made of soft, flexible material.
- Look for costumes, beards and wigs labelled "Flame-Resistant" (this does *not* mean "fire-proof"). Avoid costumes with baggy sleeves or flowing skirts to minimize the risk of contact with candles.
- Think twice before changing the colour of your eyes with cosmetic contact lenses. These cosmetic lenses should be used only under the supervision of an eye-care professional. In addition, wear time should be limited to the shortest duration possible. The lenses must never be worn while asleep, and cosmetic contact lenses should not be shared with others.
- For adults planning to wear a costume to work, be mindful of your workplace's dress code. Ensure that your costume will not interfere with your ability to do your job safely and effectively!

Tips adapted from Health Canada - www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Seasonal Affective Disorder: Beyond the "Winter Blues"



Weather often affects people's moods, and some people are vulnerable to a type of depression that follows a seasonal pattern. For them, the shortening days of late autumn are the beginning of a type of clinical depression that can last until spring. This condition is called "Seasonal Affective Disorder," or SAD.

If you feel depressed for long periods during autumn and winter, if your sleep and appetite patterns change dramatically, or you find yourself thinking about suicide, you should seek professional help – for example, from your family doctor, or by working with a counsellor through PPC Canada. There is effective treatment for SAD.

Adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association – www.cmha.ca



We would be happy to answer your questions about our services.

Please call us:

1-800-663-9099

www.ppconline.info
username – healthy
password – living