

# IDENTIFYING PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS & NEEDS DUE TO COVID-19 PART 1

Work To Wellness Rehabilitation Inc.  
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**WORK**TO**WELLNESS**

 **BC MUNICIPAL  
SAFETY** Association





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*Welcome,*

What an interesting time we live and work in. Around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to radically different life and work experiences and challenges that many of us could not imagine. In organizations around the globe, people like you are solving unanticipated problems at breakneck speed without the luxury to pace change to allow for careful planning, review and evaluation. Suddenly organizations are accommodating health, home, and family needs, adjusting work schedules, locations, and tools in new ways. Many organizations are finding unexpected benefits to the changes they are making. And yes, the changes are not always suiting everyone.

For the first time in my career I am seeing unprecedented focus and attention to the mental health and wellness of everyone, including workers. The impacts of psychological safety, or risks to it, are playing out around us everywhere. And we are all experiencing the same things; workers, managers, leaders, experts, all of us are suddenly knowing how crucial psychological safety is. We have been on a roller coaster of change, uncertainty, learning, hope, fear, stress and of course resilience as we are surviving this interesting time.

I hope you find the materials in this toolkit helpful to you. Share the toolkit with anyone who may benefit and please connect with me to let me know how you used it and what other things could be included. I wish each of you a safe and healthy day,

Thank you for caring,

*Diana*

**WORK TO WELLNESS**

This toolbox was developed in partnership between Diana Vissers of Work to Wellness Rehabilitation Inc and the BCMSA and through a WorkSafeBC grant. It is intended as a free tool available for all workers in BC, and to be used in concert with the accompanying Virtual Summit series. This toolbox, and its contents may not be used for commercial purposes except with the express written permission of Diana Vissers. Recommended resources are limited to those freely available to BC residents or those provided by project participants.



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## Introduction to Psychological Impacts of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented personal and workplace impacts, including: shutdowns and layoffs ([Statistics Canada For BC](#)), changes in work location and procedures, blending of work/home life for workers, and constantly changing and expanding procedures and safety guidelines. Safety concerns extend beyond the risks of contracting and spreading the virus to the psychological impacts on workers. Research shows that the majority of people (56%\*\*) are experiencing significant psychological impacts such as increased anxiety. Of even more concern, is the impact of social isolation, social distancing, lack of connection, social support, and physical contact that was viewed by the World Health Organization as a loneliness crisis before Covid-19.

We have learned that there are higher psychological risks for some that warrant special attention from all of us individually and organizationally: women, primary caregivers, young workers, those having existing mental or physical health challenges, immigrants,



low

income families, and those having unsafe work and/or living arrangements or relationships.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial to know how to protect yourself from the psychological impacts of Covid-19, detect deteriorating mental health and wellness, know how to get help, and build up and promote your personal coping and resiliency so you can manage better in your workplace and at home.

This toolkit is designed to help you with these things, and above all, connect you with support from;

- Friends
- Family
- Co-Workers
- Mental Health Professionals

**1 IN 5**

IN A YEAR, 1 ON 5 CANADIANS WILL EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE.

**1 IN 2**

EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS DURING THE PANDEMIC (CCAMH)

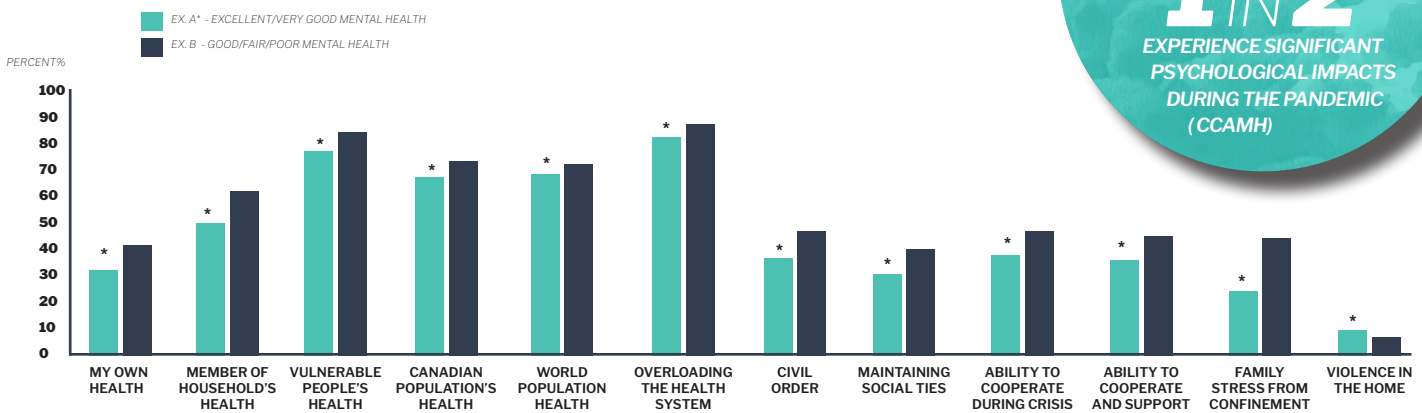


Figure 1 | Canadian's concerns about the impact of Covid 19  
www150.statcan.gc.ca

\* Significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )  
Source: Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 1, March/April 2020.

# MENTAL WELLNESS HACKS YOU CAN DO TODAY TO STAY EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY AT HOME AND WORK

.....

## 5 tips from Diana

### 1. Feed Your Brain

Healthy eating provides your body and brain the nutrients it needs to function

### 2. Move Your Body

Exercise gives you endorphins which will help reduce the impacts of increased stress

### 3. Create A Routine

Build a routine and schedule and stick to it.

### 4. Limit News to Trusted Sources

Limit media exposure to trusted news sources - Too much exposure and exposure to inaccurate information can increase the stress load your body has to deal with

### 5. Connect with Others

Humans are social beings, connecting with others virtually or while staying virtually distant can help reduce the effects of stress. Make your plan to stay connected.



## Awareness check

with how you feel page 6 -7



Calm yourself by breathing and

**meditation** page 11



Develop **your** recipe for **mental wellness** page 8-9



**Building support** at

work and at home page 12





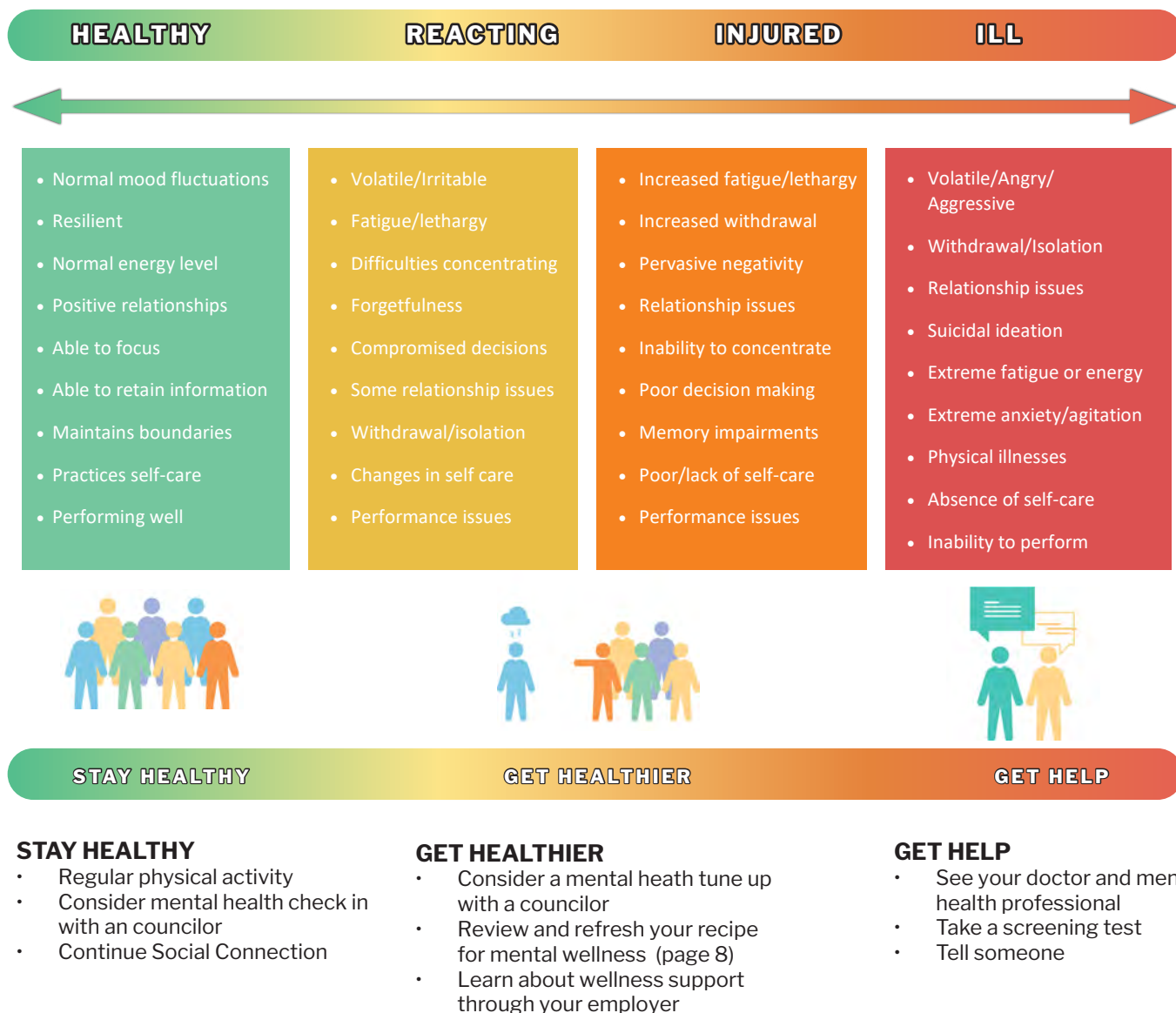
Our mental health affects our thinking, mood, and behaviours. This image reflects the observable clues through which we can assess our mental health. Our mental health and wellness fluctuate constantly within a period of hours, days, or even weeks or months.

There are actions we can take to help us move towards or stay in the green; it is helpful to learn what those are (refer to page 9). By learning

about possible signs and degrees of mental health, you may be able to support another person.



## Mental Health at Work



# Screening Tools

Screening self-tests are tools that look for signs or symptoms that can show up in some mental illnesses. These tools are not intended to provide you a diagnosis. If you're concerned about your mental health and wellness, talk to your family doctor or a mental health professional available through your workplace. Click on the links belows.

[Heretohelp.com](#)

***DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, SUBSTANCE ABUSE***

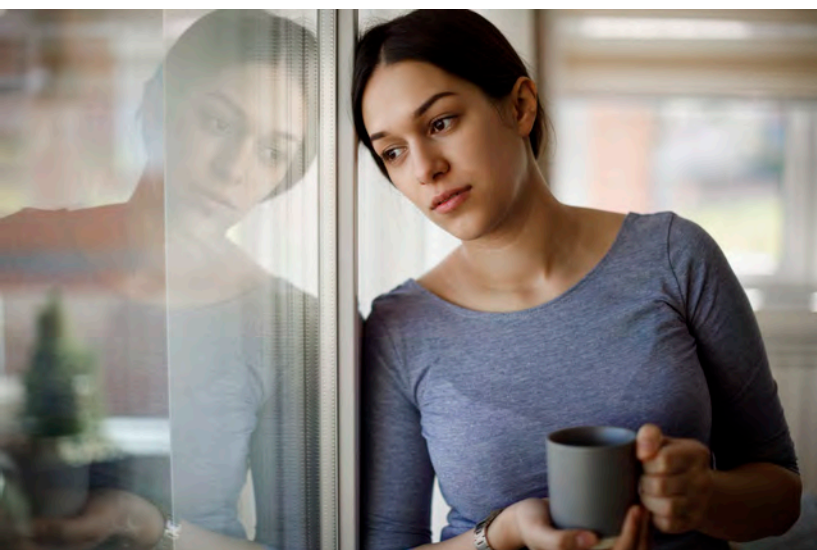
**Mental Health Check-In**

***PERSONAL WELLNESS***

**Mental Health Meter**

***MENTAL FITNESS***

The Mental Health Meter helps individuals to reflect on their unique strengths and identify areas where their level of mental fitness could be improved to help them cope with all of life's up and downs.



## SCREEN YOURSELF

Screening tools can identify your needs early so you can stay healthy and take steps to get healthier if you need to.

“My results showed me I wasn't okay; then I got help”

“My wife pushed me to take the test; I'm glad I did! She helped me get support and now I'm on the right track.”

“It was so easy and private. It took less than 5 minutes and now I'm not guessing anymore.”

# Creating Your Recipe for Mental Wellness



There are many ways to bolster your personal mental health and wellness and keep yourself, or move yourself, towards the left of the mental health continuum, into the green. Each person has a unique formula or recipe to stay healthy. In times of stress, such as during a pandemic, it is helpful to do more of those things that we know help us. The wellness wheel is one way of understanding the balance of different elements in your life needed to keep you well.

As one example, Kim's social needs represent a big piece of their wellness wheel. Due to the changes with Covid-19, many of their informal social interactions that helped them stay mentally healthy and well were no longer possible. By looking at this wellness wheel, which for them has a big piece devoted to social needs, and realizing how their social needs are not being met, they were able to identify new social activities such as scheduling weekly Facetime meetings with their close friends and creating a WhatsApp group to share experiences with their family.

If you have difficulty learning about your own recipe, try thinking about a time when you were feeling particularly mentally healthy and well; then think about what kinds of activities you had in the different areas on the wellness wheel. That often gives clues to what your needs might be. Or use this wellness wheel to talk about your mental health with a loved one and seek help to better understand your own needs. We hope you find it as useful as Kim does.





## CREATING YOUR RECIPE FOR MENTAL WELLNESS cont.

**Now that you have an image of how you are doing, reflect on your current recipe and ask yourself a few questions. WHY? WHAT? HOW?**

**WHY?** Why is a particular score low? What is causing you to prioritize other things over that piece of your life, or perhaps, what is getting in the way of you noticing the imbalance?

















































**WHAT?** What would help you to give more time, attention or resources to that area? What are

the resources – the people, the materials, the skills – that might help you to boost your well-being in that space?

**HOW?** How will you improve your life balance and how will your life look different if you choose to act on this new information? Come up with a few specific activities that you can do to improve your score.

**REFLECTION:** Reflect back after a period of time. Has anything changed? Do you feel different?

Try thinking about how satisfied you are with these different areas of life, and then plan specific activities to improve your experiences in those areas you are not satisfied with. Some areas may need more activities than others to really benefit you.

	NEEDING HELP	GETTING HEALTHIER			STAYING HEALTHY	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b> 						/5
<b>OCCUPATIONAL</b> 						/5
<b>SPIRITUAL</b> 						/5
<b>FINANCIAL</b> 						/5
<b>EMOTIONAL</b> 						/5
<b>INTELLECTUAL</b> 						/5
<b>PHYSICAL</b> 						/5
<b>SOCIAL</b> 						/5

**Step 1 – Assess** whether you are meeting your needs in each section

**Step 2 – Write** some simple things you can do to meet needs in each section

**Step 3 – Re-assess** after a time period to see if anything has changed

Rate how you feel you are meeting your personal needs in each subcategory. Consider any barriers you are experiencing as a result of COVID-19.

**CLINICAL COUNSELLOR (RCC)**  
PROVIDES TREATMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES, PROBLEM SOLVING, HELP BUILD PERSONAL WELLNESS

**REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER**  
ASSESSMENT, AND PROVIDE DIAGNOSES AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

**REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST**  
ASSESSMENT OF, DIAGNOSES AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

**PSYCHIATRIST**  
PHYSICIANS WHO SPECIALIZE IN MENTAL HEALTH. CAN DIAGNOSE MENTAL ILLNESS, PRESCRIBE MEDICINE AND MAY PROVIDE SPECIALIZED THERAPIES

**FAMILY PHYSICIAN**  
ASSESS AND PROVIDE DIAGNOSES AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

## How TO FIND A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

- Check with your employer for access to free mental health services.

### How to make the most of your meeting

**PREPARE:** Prepare to be **HONEST**

**GOAL:** What do you want to change or what needs to be different?

**BARRIER:** Consider what might be getting in the way of a honest conversation

**SHARE :** Share your burden confidentially with a health professional

**REFLECT:** How do you feel?

### SELECTION TIPS

Many mental health professionals have areas of special interest that their training and work experience shows. The type of treatment they are trained for should match with your needs. It is okay to ask questions and speak to several before selecting one that seems a good fit for you, here are some to consider:

- What are your credentials? Are you registered/licensed and what does that mean for me?
- How long have you been working in this field, and how much training do you have? What is your area of specialty? (How does it align with my needs?)
- What types of treatments do you offer, and are they the best kind for my problem?
- On average, how long would treatment take and how will I know it's working?
- How many people have you helped with problems like mine?
- How do your fees match with my resources? (Check your employee benefits as some have criteria for the credentials of the mental health professional they will fund.)

Finding the right mental health professional is an important part of getting healthy. If after 1 or 2 sessions you aren't sure if you made the right choice, talk to the mental health professional about your thoughts. Talking specifically about expectations and needs is a great way to assess together if you continue, or if you decide to work with someone else.



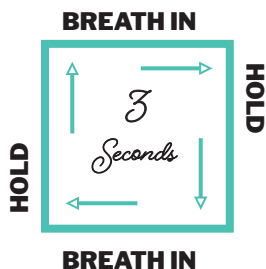
Nearly **7** in **10** workers indicate that covid 19 pandemic is the most stressful time of their career/workplace.

(American Journal of Managed Care April 2020)

# 4 EASY STRESS RELIEF SKILLS

Techniques that can help calm you

- Box Breathing



- 5 Step Grounding Technique

5 things to see, 4 things to feel, 3 things to hear, 2 things to smell, 1 thing to taste

- Progressive Relaxation

Progressive Relaxation" button"Click here and watch a video of Progressive Relaxation



- Take a Course

To learn more about staying mentally healthy. Such as:

**WORK TO WELLNESS**

## MANAGING STRESS SKILL BUILDER

### MIND SHIFT

Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, this app is designed to help with:  
Worry  
Panic  
Perfectionism  
Social Anxiety  
Phobias

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

### BOUNCE BACK

A free skill building site to help with mood and anxiety

[https://bouncebackbc.ca/#gf\\_3](https://bouncebackbc.ca/#gf_3)



# How to Build Your Support Network

Social support protects your mental health and wellness. Follow these steps:

1

What are my personal life demands?

*(childcare, elder care, medical caregiving, home schooling, partner working from home)*

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2

What kind of support is useful to me; how often, and how much?

*ie. Daily phone call/contact, someone to talk to about my day.*

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3

What are my practical support needs?

*ie. Quiet time, frequent breaks, child minding, shopping, recipe ideas and meal prep.*

---

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4

What are my work support needs?

*ie. Daily contact with supervisor, weekly goal setting review,*

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5

Who can best support me for each of these needs?

*Consider those who have been good support to you in the past; who cares about you; consider coworkers/supervisor.*

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6

Approach and ask for support.

*I'd like to have a discussion about how you can support me*

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7

I need \_\_\_\_\_ to feel supported.

*(SMART)*

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8

Response:

*Gratitude and consider offering support to others.*

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## OPTIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE SUPPORT:

- Talk to your doctor
- Ask your employer
- Check your local health region website for services

### Work To Wellness

<https://worktowellness.com/useful-links/>

### Screening Tools

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/screening/online/>

<https://cmhabc.force.com/MentalHealthCheckIn/s/>

[http://www.cmha.ca/mental\\_health/mental-health-meter/](http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/mental-health-meter/)

### Managing Stress Skill Builder

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

[https://bouncebackbc.ca/#gf\\_3](https://bouncebackbc.ca/#gf_3)

### Know how you are doing:

Here to Help BC has simple online tools to assess for depression, anxiety, and overall wellness

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca>

Mental health and substance use information and supports

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>

### General Mental Health Information

<https://cmha.bc.ca/document-category/mental-illnesses/>

### For youth:

Foundry self screening tools and information including specific Covid-19 self help: <https://foundrybc.ca>

Y-Mind- online support and education for 13-18 <https://www.gvymca.ca/mental-wellness>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis>

### For families:

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/info/parenting-during-covid-19>

Talking to children about Covid-19:

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

World Health Organization: Dealing with Stress during the 2019-nCoV toolkit for workers; to address conflict, distress, and know when to get help:

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf?sfvrsn=9845bc3a_2)

## DEEPER DIVE

Create an anxiety plan

<https://maps.anxietycanada.com/courses/my-anxiety-plan-map-for-adults/>  
StressStrategies.ca – “Take control of your mental wellbeing with a personalized stress management action plan”

<https://www.stressstrategies.ca/stress-tool>

Reliable information about Covid-19

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Mood Disorders Association of Canada

<http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/>

Antidepressant Skills Workbook – Self-Care Depression Program

<https://www.sfu.ca/carmha/publications/antidepressant-skills-workbook.html>

Antidepressant Skills at Work – Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace

<http://www.bcmhsus.ca/Documents/anti-depressant-skills-at-work-self-care-guide.pdf>

# WORK TO WELLNESS

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# Thank You,

Feeling and expressing gratitude and positive experiences are important ways to maintain and improve your mental health and wellness. There is much research to explain this and it just feels good. Consider a gratitude practice such as:

- keeping a daily journal where you write things you are grateful for
- acts of kindness to others that can help us feel a sense of purpose
- say “thank you” out loud to those around you who you know and those you encounter in your world

To that end, I am grateful for each of you who took time to read this guide, check out the resources, watch the corresponding Virtual Summit ([link](#)) and consider how these resources can help you or others around you. I am grateful for every worker who is navigating this strange time in history and saving some kindness and compassion for themselves. Thank you.

# Stay Safe