What is Mental Health?

Mental health involves achieving balance in all aspects of your life: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is the ability to enjoy life and deal with the day-to-day challenges you face. Mental Health is as important as physical health to daily living.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as:

… a state of well-being in which the 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 his or her community.

Mental Health refers to a broad array of activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being component included in the WHO’s definition of health: “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease”. It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders.”

The Canadian Mental Health Association describes mental health as:

… striking a balance in all aspects of your life: social, physical, spiritual, economic and mental. Reaching a balance is a learning process… Your personal balance will be unique, and your challenge will be to stay mentally healthy by keeping that balance.

Mental Health in the Canadian Workplace

The Canada Safety Council reports:

Mental health claims are the fastest growing category of disability costs in Canada. They account for an estimated 30 to 40 percent of the disability claims recorded by Canada’s major insurers and employers. Three-quarters of employers say mental health issues are the leading cause of short and long-term disability claims in their organization.

Mental Health Works informs employers:

Mental illness affects everyone sooner or later—one in five people will experience a mental illness directly. Those of us who do not have a mental health problem ourselves, will have a friend, colleague, or family member who is dealing with a mental health issue.

Workplaces are heavily impacted by mental health issues according to the 2011 report, Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces: Perspectives of Canadian Workers and Front-Line Managers. Forty-four (44) per cent of the employees surveyed reported they were either currently (12 per cent) or had previously (32 per cent) personally experienced a mental health issue.
Helpful Resources

1. www.mentalhealthworks.ca
   Mental Health Works is an initiative of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. Along with mental health facts, you will find training tools, and resources to help address mental health issues in the workplace.

2. www.mentalhealthcanada.com
   Provides links to information on a variety of topics related to mental health and resources across Canada.

3. www.cmha.ca
   The Canadian Mental Health Association - is a nation wide charitable organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. The Alberta division of the Canadian Mental Health Association, http://www.cmha.ab.ca/, provides direct services, programs and resources to the public in communities across Alberta.

4. www.camh.net
   The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is Canada's leading addiction and mental health teaching hospital in Toronto. This site contains useful information about mental health in general, addictions and mental health issues, concurrent disorders, resources, and education.

5. www.suicideinfo.ca
   The Centre for Suicide Prevention is a registered charitable non-profit organization serving Alberta and Canada. The centre has a special library on suicide and suicidal behavior, provides training workshops for Albertans including Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and other workshops across Canada.

6. www.anxietycanada.ca
   Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada is registered Canadian non-profit organization whose aim is to promote the prevention, treatment and management of anxiety disorders and to improve the lives of people who suffer from them. This website provides information on anxiety disorders, links to provincial societies and other useful organizations.

7. www.mooddisorderscanada.ca
   The Mood Disorders Society of Canada is a registered non-profit organization, volunteer driven organization that is committed to improving quality of life for people affected by depression, bipolar disorder, and other related disorders. The links and resources on this site direct you to reports and resources on a variety of mood disorder related topics.

8. www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca
   The Mental Health First Aid Canada program goals are to improve mental health awareness and provide individuals with skills and knowledge to help better manage potential or developing mental health problems in themselves, a family member, a friend or a colleague.

   Mental Health First Aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.