

Supporting Well-being & Mental Healthy Environments

Understanding, Support and Resources during COVID-19

**WRHA Community Mental Health Program
April 2020**



Outline of Session

- Overview of well-being and mental health
- Helpful approaches & strategies
- Simple strategies for well-being
- Some resources and recommended websites during COVID-19



What is Well-being?

- Subjective Wellbeing = Happiness
- Health, comfort, security, safety, success
- Not a state...it's a journey towards better mental, emotional, social, spiritual and physical health
- Always in progress and not a place to reach and hold for good



What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.



What is Mental Illness?

Mental illnesses are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour and associated with significant distress with difficulties functioning in everyday life



General Overview

Some common mental illness experiences are:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Substance Use Disorders



Depression

Symptoms of depression may include:

- Sad or depressed mood
- Loss of enjoyment and interest
- Trouble concentrating/making decisions
- Constant fatigue, Trouble sleeping
- Feeling anxious, irritable, restless, or slowed down
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide



Anxiety

Symptoms of anxiety may include:

- Unrealistic and/or excessive fear and worry
- Mind racing or going blank
- Decreased concentration and memory
- Difficulty making decisions
- Irritability, impatience, anger, confusion
- Restlessness or feeling on edge, nervousness
- Tiredness, sleep disturbances, vivid dreams



Substance Use Disorders

Refers to the problematic use of a substance (like alcohol or drugs)

- can also be a behavior e.g. gambling, shopping

Can be represented by the four C's:

- **Craving**
- Loss of **control** of the amount or frequency of use
- **Compulsion** to use
- Use in spite of **consequences**



COVID-19 & Mental Health

Many people are scared right now and may be facing significant life challenges.

We recognize that this is an unsettling time as regular social, health and other services are disrupted.



Common feelings and responses:

- panic, anxiety, worry, fear
- anger, disbelief
- helplessness, despair
- sleeplessness
- lack of concentration
- exhaustion
- loneliness
- Increase use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- co-operation, teamwork
- generosity towards others
- inspiration
- strength in connecting with others/community

Source:

<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html>



What you might see



Welcoming Approach

If someone is having a hard time

Try to reinforce in a calm and kind way that:

- **They are in a safe place**
- **You have resources that they can explore**
- **You can connect them to helpers if needed and wanted**



stigmafree

See the person, not the illness.



Language Matters

Be aware of unhelpful language, such as:

- “It’s all in your head”
- “Just snap out of it”
- “Don’t worry, it’s just a phase”
- “You’re being a drama queen”
- “Crazy”

You’d never say, “it’s just cancer get over it.”



Helpful Strategies

- **Listen and validate their experiences and feelings.** You can say something like, "I hear you. That sounds really hard."
- **Eye contact.** Making eye contact can help the other person feel seen and like you're comfortable engaging with them.
- **Use a calm voice.** Try to refrain from yelling or raising your voice. A calm, even tone will help.
- **Breathe in and out slowly.** This often works better than telling someone to "just breathe." The body will often mimic the energy around it.
- **Ask what the person needs right now,** meet a basic need (offer a glass of water, blanket)
- **Offer ideas to calm** (music, focused breathing, take a walk)



Helpful Strategies

- **Become aware of your own distress.** If you are overwhelmed or showing signs of distress, it will disrupt the other person. Try to keep a pulse on your level of distress and recognize when you need to take a break or ask for help.
- **Take a time out when needed.** Supporting someone can be challenging. Take time out when needed. It is important to protect your own energy.



Helpful Strategies

If someone is talking about hearing voices and seeing things that others don't see or hear they are having a Hallucination

- Don't argue, or try to reason.
- Do not challenge the hallucinations, voices or fears.
This is the person's "truth."
- Call their support person or the Crisis Response Centre for some advice



When to call Crisis Response Centre:

Consult the Crisis Response Centre **PHONE: 204-940-1781** and they will help guide you through the next steps.

If someone starts to experience acute psychosis:

- “Acute” means new or recent onset of psychiatric symptoms. Acute symptoms may include the following;
 - Hearing voices
 - Confusion
 - Delusions - strong beliefs that are not true or based on reality
(E.g. being followed, spied on, being famous)
 - Increase energy
 - Disorganized speech
 - Agitation
 - Suicidal thoughts
 - Bizarre behavior



What about Suicide risk?

If someone has attempted suicide: call 911 immediately

Or

If someone is talking about suicide:

- Let them know you are concerned and want to help them.
- Call Crisis Response Centre - **PHONE: 204-940-1781** and they will give you advice
 - The message is “safety first” in these type of situations and consult CRC for advice



Taking Care of your Well-being During Covid-19

BE CURIOUS

- Engage in an activity that you enjoy (read, listen to music, watch documentaries)

BE ACTIVE

- Take breaks, go for a short walk or do some online exercises
<https://www.youtube.com/user/WinnipegInMotion?app=desktop>

BE PURPOSEFUL

- Cultivate your spirituality (prayer, meditation, reflection, start a journal, laughter)

BE POSITIVE

- Reflect on your strengths and how you have coped through difficult times in the past

BE SOCIAL

- Stay connected to others (friends and family) by phone, text, or through electronic means
- Share your feelings with people you trust and support each other

BE MINDFUL

- To calm yourself, use grounding techniques such as deep breathing
- Be kind to yourself and others



Nasal Breathing Technique



Optimism Activity- 3 good things

R_x for positive mental health

*Take time to think about and write down
3 good things about your day*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Recommended dosage:

*Do every day to bring more happiness and
health to your day - keep up the good work!*

Enjoy life more!

A message from the WRHA Mental Health Promotion Team



Additional Resources



Mental Health Phone Supports (Non-Crisis)

- **Sara Riel:** Seneca Services Peer Support **Warm-line** open 24 hours /day. If you want to talk to someone call **204 942-9276** or **204 231-0217**
- **ADAM:** has started a new **Anxiety support line** open Mon-Fri 9-9pm, Weekends 10 am-4pm. Please call **204 925-0040** and leave your name, phone number or email address and an ADAM representative will get in touch with you within a short period of time
- **First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line**
1-855-242-3310
 - Counseling available in English and French - upon request, in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktut



Additional Crisis Helplines:

- Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine (RAAM) – [204-940-2177](tel:2049402177)
- Manitoba Addictions Helpline: 1-855-662-6605
- [Manitoba Suicide Prevention & Support Line](tel:18774357170)
(confidential and 24/7): 1-877-435-7170
- For 24 hour assistance, [Klinik Crisis Line](tel:2047868686)
Phone: (204) 786-8686 / Toll free: 1-888-322-3019
TTY: (204) 784-4097



Recommended Websites

Reliable information

Government of Manitoba :Shared Health Services

- <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/>

Public Health Agency of Canada

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

World Health Organization

- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>





Thank you for your participation today!

