

# Mental health in the workplace

## Why it's important and how to tell when you're struggling

Mental health is an issue that impacts every workplace in Canada. Studies show that 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health issue or illness in any given year. We know that establishing a psychologically healthy work environment is beneficial for both employers and employees. To create a safe, positive workspace, everyone must come together to build a supportive environment that promotes mental well-being and open communication.

Whether you're personally dealing with a mental health concern or know a coworker who is struggling, it's important to address these issues as soon as possible. To do so, you need to know how to recognize the signs of mental illness and understand how best to approach it. That's where we come in. To help you get there, this article will outline common symptoms to watch for and how to reach out for support.

Let's get started.

### Recognize the signs

Stress, anxiety, depression and burnout are among the most common mental health issues reported in the workplace. It's important to recognize and deal with the signs of declining mental health as soon as you can. Some symptoms to look out for include:

- Social withdrawal
- Feelings of emptiness
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Inability to sleep
- Decline of energy and motivation
- Strong feelings of anger
- Thoughts of suicide

If you've been struggling, know that you are not alone. Mental health touches us all – you'd be surprised how many of your peers have experienced something similar.



Reaching out to your friends, family and coworkers is a natural first step towards acceptance and recovery, however professional treatment is crucial. If you're experiencing any or all of the symptoms listed above, please contact your family doctor for referral or treatment.



## Workplace Strategies for mental health

Work-related stress is recognized as a global issue that negatively impacts employees and organizations. As a large employer and a leading provider of group benefits in Canada, Great-West Life understands the significant impact mental health issues can have, including overall well-being, absenteeism and disability. As such, they have supported research and projects into mental health in the workplace since 2003, establishing the

Centre For Mental Health in the Workplace (Workplace Strategies) in 2007.

Workplace Strategies' nationally recognized website focuses on individual, leadership and workplace factors that affect psychological health or safety. It offers evidence-based and practical tips, tools and resources to help employers and employees address stress and other psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Visit [www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com](http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com) for access to a variety of materials designed to help you address personal mental health concerns, support a team member or implement policies and procedures to improve overall mental well-being in your workplace.

Some of the topics address are:

- Bullying, harassment, conflict and burnout
- Return to work and accommodation
- Depression, anxiety, grief and other conditions
- Managing caregiving responsibilities and work expectations
- Approaches to psychologically safe terminations, supportive performance management and other effective strategies for leaders

## Here to help

To ensure Government of Newfoundland employees have the support they need, The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has increased your calendar year covered maximum for psychology and social work services (under the group benefits plan administered by Great-West Life) to \$500.

Implemented as of April 1, 2019, this increase in calendar year maximum is available to all Government of NL employees with Great-West Life coverage and their dependents. For more information, reach out to Great-West Life's customer support centre toll-free at **1-844-349-5656**.