



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

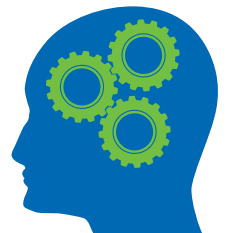
The Working Mind



The Working Mind™

For Sports Coaches

Course Handout



Purpose

The purpose of this handout is to give you a space to reflect on what you are learning during the course. Except for the group scenarios, your responses are completely private and do not need to be shared with anyone. The facilitator will direct you to answer the questions throughout the course. Feel free to write or to just read the question and think about it.

About MHCC

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) leads the development and dissemination of innovative programs and tools to support the mental health and wellness of Canadians. The MHCC offers several mental health training programs including The Working Mind and Mental Health First Aid.

For more information about these courses, you can visit the MHCC website at <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca>

What is The Working Mind (TWM)

This evidence-based training is designed to initiate a shift in the way you think, feel and act with respect to mental health by increasing your awareness, reducing stigma and other barriers to care, encouraging mental health conversations, and strengthening your resilience.

By accomplishing these goals, TWM aims to help you maintain your wellness and support others living with a mental health problem or illness in a psychologically healthy and safe setting.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be better able to:

- Define basic concepts related to mental health and mental illness;
- Recognize the impact of stigma and discuss how to reduce stigma and other barriers to care in the sports community;
- Recognize and keep track of changes in your mental health and well-being and know when to take appropriate actions;
- Have conversations about mental health and mental illness with friends, family, coaches and team members;
- Identify and practice coping strategies to manage stress and remain resilient;
- Identify and use available resources to support self and others.

Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination

Stigma is the overarching term that covers the processes of labelling, separation, prejudice and discrimination. Stigma spreads fear and misinformation, labels individuals and perpetuates stereotypes, leading to discrimination.

Prejudice refers to enduring negative attitudes towards people and is sometimes associated with being judged unfairly or unkindly. People living with mental illness or substance use disorders experience prejudice in their day-to-day lives.

Discrimination refers to actions or policies directed towards people that may deny basic rights. People living with mental illness and substance use disorders are subject to discrimination, which keeps them from accessing valued social roles, opportunities and resources.

Examples of stigma in sports

These are a few examples of how stigma, prejudice and discrimination may affect members of the sports community:

1. A team captain/player outwardly showing reluctance to coach/play with someone who has self-identified as living with bipolar disorder.
2. Avoiding someone on the team who returns after taking time off to deal with a mental health challenge.
3. A coach regularly passing over an athlete living with a mental illness when opportunities come up that would advance their professional/amateur career.
4. Tolerating a team member describing another athlete living with anxiety as 'not being able to take the pressure'.

Write your examples in the space below.

Language Matters

Question

What does “people-first” language mean and why does it matter?

Example: Instead of saying “This person is mentally ill,” say, “This person lives with mental illness.”

Everyone can be a champion against stigma when advocating the use of accurate and respectful language. So, as you communicate with others, be mindful of the impact of your language.

For more information refer to the MHCC Language Matters Reference Guide included in this course.

Stigmatizing	Respectful
It drives me crazy .	It bothers/annoys/frustrates me.
This is nuts .	This is interesting/strange/peculiar funny .
This individual suffers from depression.	They live with/are experiencing depression.
Mentally ill or insane person	Person living with a mental health problem or illness
Committed suicide, successful suicide	Died by suicide
Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
Substance abuse	Substance use or substance use disorder
Everyone who is a junkie...	Everyone who uses substances...
They used to be an addict .	They are in recovery .

Mental Health Continuum Self-Check

Check the signs and indicators that really speak to how you experience stress and write any additional changes you might notice in the “my personal changes” section.

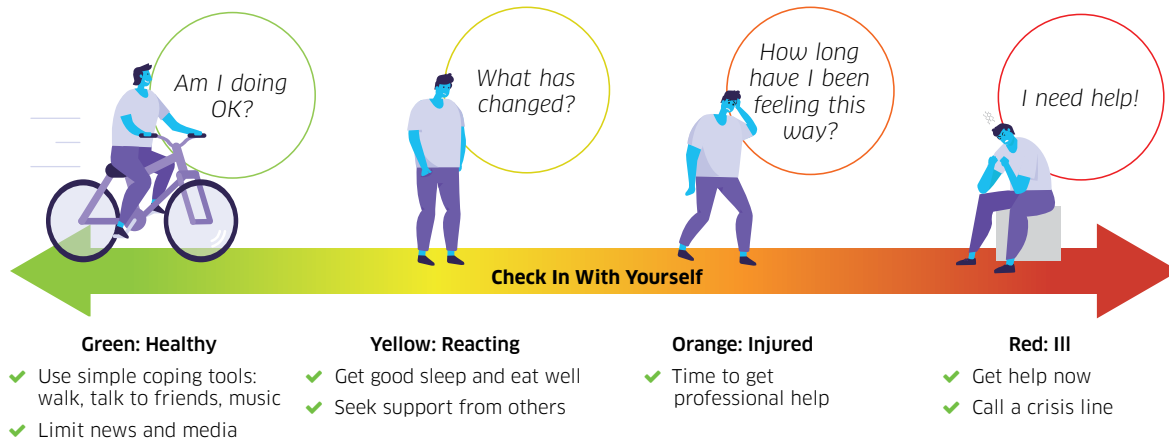
	Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Ill
Changes in Mood	Normal mood fluctuations Calm Confident	Irritable Impatient Nervous Sadness	Angry Anxious Pervasive sadness	Easily enraged Excessive anxiety/panic Depressed mood, numb
Changes in Thinking and Attitude	Good sense of humour Takes things in stride Ability to concentrate and focus on tasks	Displaced sarcasm Intrusive thoughts Sometimes distracted or loss of focus on tasks	Negative attitude Recurrent intrusive thoughts/images Constantly distracted or cannot focus on tasks	Noncompliant Suicidal thoughts/intent Inability to concentrate, loss of memory or cognitive abilities
Changes in Behaviour and Performance	Physically and socially active Performing well	Decreased activity/socializing Procrastination	Avoidance Decreased performance Tardiness Begins to pull away from family	Withdrawal Can't perform duties/tasks Absenteeism Is not mentally present at home
Physical Changes	Normal sleep patterns Good appetite Feeling energetic Maintaining a stable weight	Trouble sleeping Changes in eating patterns Some lack of energy Some weight gain	Restless sleep Loss of appetite Some tiredness or fatigue Fluctuations or changes in weight	Cannot fall/stay asleep No appetite Constant lasting fatigue/exhaustion Extreme weight gain or loss
Changes in Substance Use and Addictive Behaviours	Limited alcohol consumption, no binge drinking Limited/no addictive behaviours No trouble/impact (social, economic, legal, financial) due to substance use	Regular to frequent alcohol consumption, limited binge drinking Some regular to addictive behaviours Limited to some trouble/impact due to substance use	Frequent alcohol consumption, binge drinking Struggles to control addictive behaviours	Regular to frequent binge drinking Addiction Significant trouble/impact due to substance use
My Personal Changes				



Mental Health Continuum Scenario

Refer to the *Mental Health Continuum Tool* to help guide your discussion

How am I Doing?



Scenario

You...

- Work as a full-time coach with a Canadian Varsity Team.
- Are always travelling for games and/or competitions.
- Miss your family but have no time to see them.
- Rarely have time to eat well or exercise.
- Have put on some weight and struggling to keep your energy and focus.
- Have trouble sleeping at night because your mind is so busy.
- Feel frustrated and overwhelmed by your workload.
- Hesitate to take time off from coaching because you're afraid to jeopardize your career.

Lately you...

Questions

1. What signs and indicators are you noticing?
2. Where might you be on the Mental Health Continuum (green – healthy; yellow – reacting; orange – injured; red – ill)?
3. Where can you go, what can you do and who can you talk to at this time?

Sources of Stress

Take a moment to think about and list some personal/organizational/sport-specific stressors. Be ready to share some of your answers with the group.

Personal	Organizational	Sport-specific

SMART Goals

Think of a challenge you have right now and identify one short-term goal that will help you with your challenge and how you will achieve it. For example, it could be setting a goal related to your role as a coach. It could also be a personal wellness goal, e.g., around setting time aside every day or every week for self-care or connecting with friends or family.

Specific: WHAT do I want to accomplish?

Measurable: HOW will I know when I've accomplished it?

Attainable: WHICH skills are required to achieve this goal?

Relevant: WHY is this important?

Time-bound: WHEN do I want to achieve this goal?

Big 4 Scenario

- You have a big presentation next week and you are expected to present on how you will align your program vision with the National Sports Organization strategic plan for the upcoming quadrennial.
- There will be a number of key stakeholders and system partners at the presentation.
- Given who's in the room, this presentation could open doors to future career opportunities for you.
- While you are confident in your program, you feel overwhelmed about speaking in this environment.
- You are nervous that you may lose your composure and do or say the wrong thing.

The Big 4 Strategies



Questions

1. Which of the Big 4 strategies would you find helpful and in what order would you use them?
2. How else can you take care of yourself and stay healthy and resilient during stressful times?

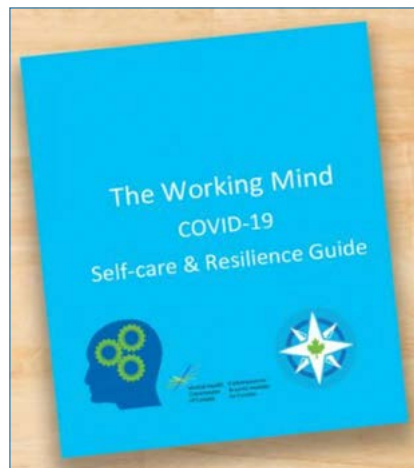
Self-Care Assessment

1. One thing I do on a regular basis to take care of myself is...

2. One thing I would like to do more often for myself is...

3. I know I need to pause and take care of myself when...

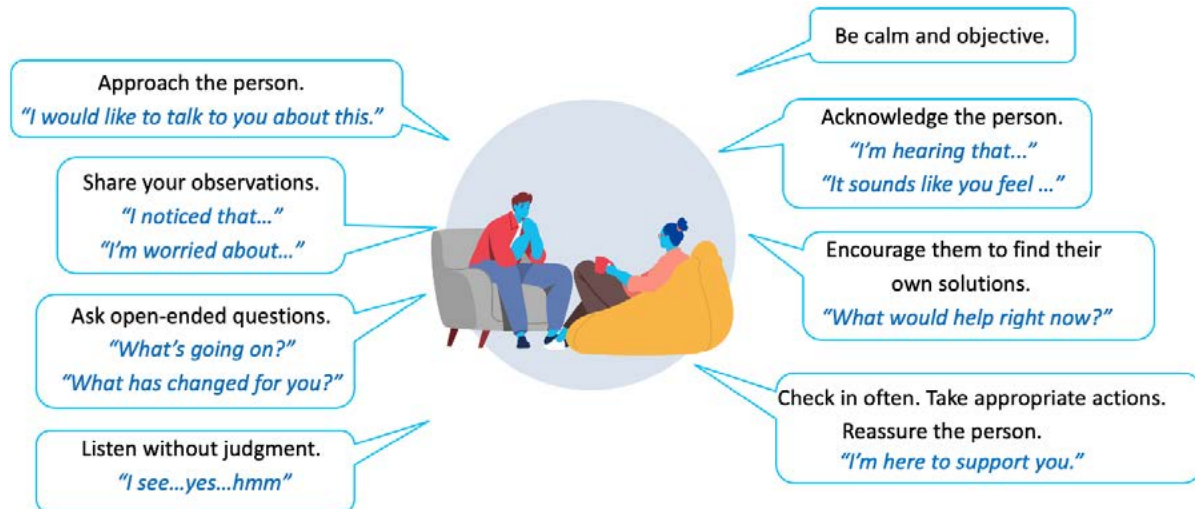
For more information refer to the *MHCC Self-Care & Resilience Guide* included in this course.



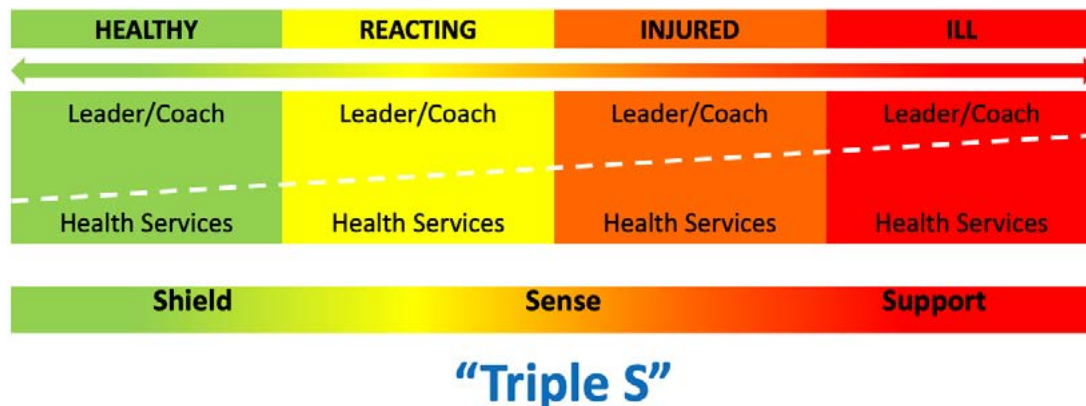
<https://theworkingmind.ca/blog/working-mind-covid-19-self-care-resilience-guide>

Supporting athletes

Having Healthy Conversations



What Can You do to Help?



Triple S Activity

What could you do to support athletes or team members in each phase? Write your responses in the space below.

Shield	Sense	Support

Scenario

Helping an athlete

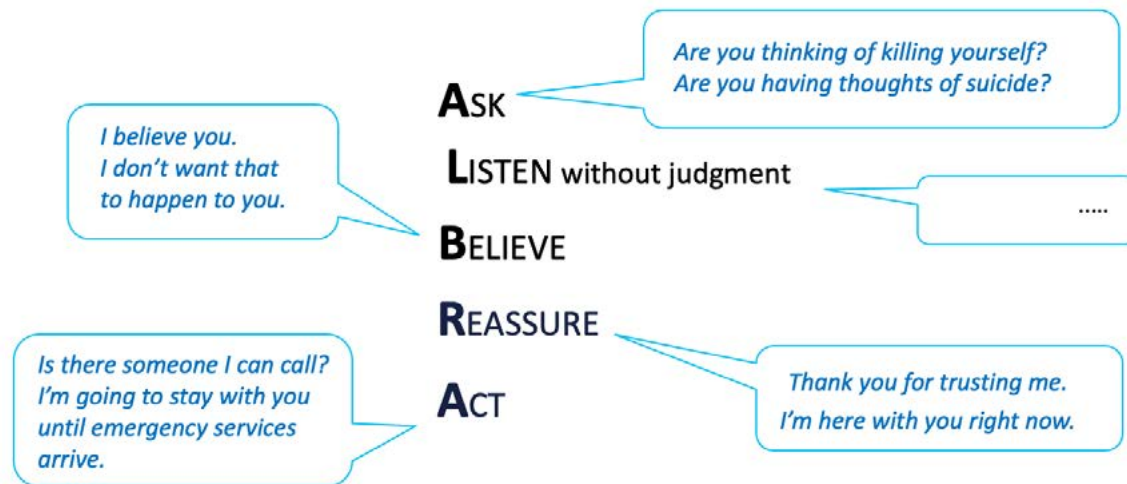
- An athlete has not been their usual self these last few weeks.
- They seem to be struggling; they have been withdrawing from others and missing practice.
- When you approached them about the changes you noticed, they blurted out: “I don’t know why I bother to show up. Everyone would be better off without me.”

Refer to the Triple S model as well as the Healthy Conversations Guide to help in your discussion.

Questions

1. What signs and indicators are you noticing?
2. Where might they be on the Mental Health Continuum (green – healthy; yellow – reacting; orange – injured; red – ill)?
3. How would you approach them? What can you say and do?

What can you say and do if someone is thinking of suicide?



Looking out for one another is important to everyone.

- **Asking** is the only way to know if someone is thinking of suicide.
- **Not talking** about suicide makes it impossible to prevent.
- **Get help** if someone answers YES to your question.



Ad Hoc Incident Review (AIR)

AIR is:

- A leadership tool you can use to reduce distress in your team following exposure to any potential stressor or incident or any time stress levels are high in the team after any immediate threat has passed.
- An informal way of checking in with your team and seeing how they are doing, supporting them and taking action if required.
- An opportunity for individuals to reflect on how they are reacting and to take appropriate steps to take care of themselves.



"These are challenging times. Whatever you're feeling is OK."

Acknowledge and Listen

- ✓ Acknowledge that something happened.
- ✓ Review the facts without going into details.
- ✓ Listen and provide an opportunity for discussion.

"Here are some ways that can help keep us safe right now..."

Inform and Remind

- ✓ Help your team check-in with themselves about their mental health.
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of taking care of themselves.
- ✓ Remind them about using healthy coping strategies.
- ✓ Share available resources.

"How else can I support you?"

Respond and Follow-up

- ✓ Observe your team and follow-up with members in the upcoming hours, days, and weeks.
- ✓ Walk the talk by modeling healthy coping strategies and seeking help if needed.

One thing

1. List one thing that you will start doing after this course:
2. List one thing that you will stop doing after this course:

Suggested Reading

Leadership Behaviours to Support Mental Health – by Bill Howatt and Louise Bradley <http://www.ceohsnetwork.ca/blog/psychological-safety/leadership-behaviours-to-support-mental-health/>

Empathy is both a trait and a skill. Here's how to strengthen it <https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/empathy-is-both-a-trait-and-a-skill-here-s-how-to-strengthen-it-1.4997546>

Article: Coaches and Mental Health
<https://theconversation.com/more-than-40-of-elite-sport-coaches-we-surveyed-suffered-mental-ill-health-they-need-our-support-not-stigma-188728#:~:text=Our%20research%20in%202020%2C%20published,seeking%20treatment%20at%20the%20time>

Online Resources

MHCC Resource Hub:

Mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19>

Cultivating Resilience Tip Sheet:

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/drupal/2020-09/covid_19_tip_sheet_resilience_eng.pdf

Mental Health Continuum Tool Self-Check:

<https://theworkingmind.ca/continuum-self-check>

The Working Mind Self-Care & Resilience Guide: <https://theworkingmind.ca/blog/working-mind-covid-19-self-care-resilience-guide>

Tips on Talking to Someone in Crisis:

https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Tips_Active_Listening_COVID_eng.pdf

Game Plan Mental Health Resources:

<https://mygameplan.ca/resources/health>

IOC mental health in elite athletes toolkit. International Olympic Committee:

<https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/IOC-Mental-Health-In-Elite-Athletes-Toolkit-2021-1.pdf>

Work Health Life

<https://www.workhealthlife.com/>

Suicide Prevention Resources

Living Works course on suicide intervention:

<https://www.livingworks.net/asist/>

Mental Health First Aid Training:

<https://www.mhfa.ca/>

Canadian Crisis Centres:

<https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/>

Canada Suicide Prevention Service:

Call Toll free number:

1-833-456-4566 - Available 24/7

Text 45645 - 4pm-midnight ET



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