



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

The Working Mind



The Working Mind™

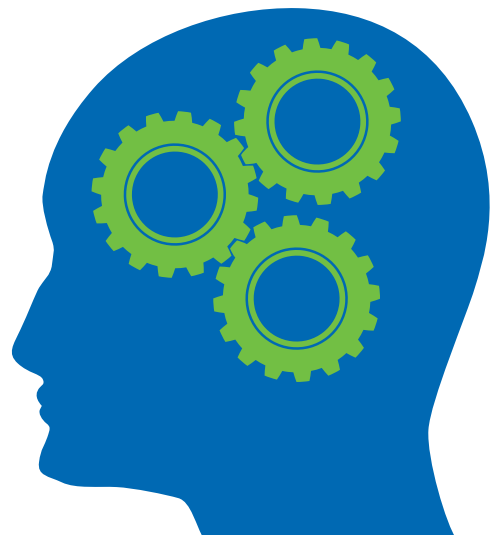
Long Term Care Sector



Manager Session
Course Handout



Created for the Canadian Association
for Long-Term Care



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) Training?

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 in the workplace, 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 work 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 healthcare sector;
- 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 colleagues, friends and family members;
- Identify and practice coping strategies to manage stress and remain resilient;
- Identify and use available resources to support self and others.

Stigma

Brainstorm and write at least 3 possible impacts and/or consequences of these types of stigma for individuals, workplaces and society in general.

Self	Public	Structural
Your negative thoughts/beliefs/ statements about yourself	Other people's negative thoughts/ beliefs/statements about you	Discriminatory rules, laws, policies, practices at the institutional/systemic level

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.

Other Barriers to Care

Brainstorm and write at least 3 possible ways to prevent/reduce these other barriers to care.

Barriers to Care	Possible ways to prevent/reduce these barriers
Limited Knowledge	
Time	
Access to Resources	
Financial Costs	

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 Poster* to help guide your discussion



Scenario C

You are the director at a long-term care home. Lately, you have found that you are often running behind schedule. You are constantly trying to manage staff shortages in all departments, and there have recently been delays in the delivery of medical and housekeeping supplies. You are also constantly receiving phone calls from family members of residents, who want to be more involved in their loved one's care. You feel exhausted and are having recurrent thoughts that things will only get worse. When you are at home, you avoid spending time with your family.

Discussion 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/work-related/other stressors. Be ready to share some of your answers with the group.

Work-Related	Personal	Other

The Big 4 Strategies



Big 4 Scenario

Scenario C

You are the food services director at a large long-term care home. Tomorrow afternoon, you have to attend a monthly regional meeting. All you can think about is how much work you will have to catch up on and how you won't be there to pitch in during mealtimes and help your team. You are constantly managing staffing situations. You have noticed that you have been impatient with some of your staff lately, interrupting them when they ask questions. Often, at the end of a workday, you think to yourself, "I can't do this anymore".

Discussion 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. Which of the Big 4 strategies would you use and in what order?

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.

Workplace Scenarios

Scenario A – Talking to an employee

You have noticed that a nurse, who usually arrives 20 minutes before the start of their shift, has been arriving on the hour. Yesterday, you saw this nurse arguing with a co-worker in front of several residents. Last week, a resident told you that they are worried about this nurse, who no longer engages them in conversation. You know that one of this nurse's longtime colleagues recently retired. Several weeks ago, this nurse told you that, at some point, they may have to take time off to care for their sibling who has a chronic illness.

Refer to the *Healthy Conversations Guide* on the next page to help in your discussion.

Questions

1. What signs and indicators are you noticing?
2. Where might this person 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?

Scenario B – Talking to an Employee

You have noticed that a personal support worker has been submitting charting that is incomplete and occasionally contains mistakes. You have also noticed that they are taking many more smoke breaks than they used to. When you say hi to them, it sometimes seems like they didn't hear you. You know that one of their favourite long-time residents recently passed away. You also know that this employee, outside of their full-time hours, is taking prerequisite courses in order to apply to a nursing program.

Refer to the *Healthy Conversations Guide* on the next page to help in your discussion.

Questions

1. What signs and indicators are you noticing?
2. Where might this person 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?

Healthy Conversations Guide

Actions	Looks/sounds like...
Approach the person Set a time when you are both available and able to listen to each other face-to-face, by phone or online. Ensure confidentiality.	"I would like to put aside some time for us to have an informal chat. When would be a good time for you?"
Share your observations Stick to the facts and remain objective. Use "I" statements to talk about the specific behaviour(s) you are worried about and show that you are concerned. This is a good way to say what you think/sense without blaming or criticizing.	"I've noticed that..." "I feel..." "I'm worried about..." "You seem distracted/frustrated/exhausted lately." "I sense something is bothering you."
Use open-ended questions/statements to encourage more conversation. These can help the person open up and help you understand the situation better. Ask them with a genuine interest in what's going on.	"What changes have you noticed in yourself lately?" "What do you feel comfortable sharing?" "What's going on?" "How can I help you?"
Listen without judgement Stop what you are doing and listen to what they are saying. Don't interrupt and let them say everything they need to.	Relaxed posture, eye contact, nodding "I see...yes...hmm" "Okay. I see."
Keep calm and objective Be open to what the person has to say. If you feel yourself getting impatient or upset, take some deep breaths or take a break.	Calm, even tone of voice "I need some time to think about this. Can we continue this conversation later?"
Acknowledge the person and try to understand it from their point of view (empathy) Recap what you've heard and acknowledge that you hear what they're saying/feeling.	"I'm hearing that..." Is that correct? "It's normal to feel..." "I understand that you are feeling..." "It sounds like you feel..."
Encourage them to find their own solutions if it's appropriate. Help them figure out what options they have and what will make them feel better.	"What do you need right now?" "Is there anyone else you trust that you can talk to about this?" "What resources would help?"
Check in often: Continue to check in with them to see how they are doing and let them know you are there to support them. Set a date to check back (within a week) to see how they are progressing and to work out a plan. Connect with the employee as planned to see how they are doing.	"I'm here for you if you need to talk." "Let's check back in with each other next week."
Take appropriate action(s): If the person is in distress and refuses help, offer to help them contact EAP or someone else they trust. If you think they might harm themselves or they express suicidal thoughts, get immediate help or call emergency services.	"I'm going to call for help." "Let's contact EAP/other service/person together."

Source: Adapted from <http://www.commonground.org.nz/common-support/healthy-conversations/>

Scenario – Helping an employee

A building maintenance worker has been leaving work 10 minutes before the end of their shift. There are several tasks that they said they would finish months ago that still have not been done. When you approached them about the unfinished tasks and about leaving work early, they replied, “What does it matter? My work goes unnoticed anyway. Everyone would be better off without me.” This person immigrated to Canada five years ago. You know that they have family members in their home country in which armed conflict is ongoing. You also know that a resident with whom the caretaker liked to play cards after work was recently transferred to a palliative care facility.

Refer to these steps to help guide your discussion

ASK

*“Are you thinking of killing yourself?” or
“Are you having thoughts of suicide?”*

LISTEN without judgement

BELIEVE

*“I believe you.”
“I don’t want that to happen to you.”*

REASSURE

*“Thank you for trusting me.”
“I’m here with you right now.”*

ACT

*“Is there someone I can call?”
“I’m going to stay with you until emergency
services arrive.”*



Questions

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

Return to Work and Accommodation Scenarios

Scenario A – How managers can support employees

An employee is returning from short-term disability leave for a mental health-related problem. You don't know how they are doing now or what their needs are at this time.

Refer to the *Healthy Conversations Guide* and the *Return to Work and Accommodation Checklist* to help guide your discussion.

Questions

1. When and how would you approach them? What can you say?
2. What steps would you take to accommodate and support the employee?
3. What would you say to the rest of your team?

Scenario B – How managers can support employees

An employee asks you for accommodation because they were recently diagnosed with depression. They require a more flexible work schedule. You grant them permission for the more flexible work schedule, but once their depression becomes more manageable, they continue to expect flexibility in their schedule.

Refer to the *Healthy Conversations Guide* and the *Return to Work and Accommodation Checklist* to help guide your discussion.

Questions

1. Is the accommodation reasonable? Why or why not?
2. How would you support this person's request for accommodation?
3. What other option(s) for accommodations would be available in this situation?

Scenario C – How managers can support employees

An administrative lead who works in the front office (where visitors must check in before going to the residents' rooms) comes to you with a request for accommodation because they were recently diagnosed with social anxiety disorder. Their doctor has recommended their workspace to be moved to a more private area where they do not have to interact with people as often.

Refer to the *Healthy Conversations Guide* and the *Return to Work and Accommodation Checklist* on the next page to help guide your discussion.

Questions

1. Is this a reasonable accommodation request? Why or why not?
2. How would you support their request for accommodation?
3. What other option(s) for accommodation would be available in this situation?

Return to Work and Accommodation Checklist

Action items	
1. Connect with the employee during their leave to let them know everyone is thinking about them.	
2. Discuss how the employee would like information about themselves to be shared with co-workers, especially with regard to the changes in work that will affect co-workers as the person returns to work. When co-workers have adequate information, they can then be supportive during the individual's return to work.	
3. Respect the employee's wishes about what information is kept private and what is shared with others.	
4. Meet with the employee after they return to work to discuss their needs and understand how to support them. Ask if there are any functional limitations that could affect the person's ability to carry out the essential duties of their job and what accommodations would enable them to continue to do their job effectively.	
5. Discuss and provide any training, information or resources that the employee may need to get back up to speed.	
6. Provide information about extended health benefits, Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) services, disability benefits, sick days and other information about benefits as needed.	
7. Provide information about workplace policies or procedures including policies for return to work and accommodation.	
8. Participate in the development of the return to work plan.	
9. Help to address issues of workplace conflict or performance concerns.	
10. Initiate training and education programs.	
11. Follow up with the employee or designate someone who can follow up on your behalf.	
12. Keep your notes on the meeting in a secure location. A locked filing cabinet and password-protected computers are key to maintaining an employee's confidentiality.	

Source: Adapted from Working Through it: Leader's Guide, Great West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Ad Hoc Incident Review (AIR) Scenario

Scenario A

Your long-term care home is going through an accreditation process. Staff members and managers are having to fill in numerous reports and surveys. There is a strong feeling of stress in the workplace. There has been an increase in the number of employees calling in sick. Yesterday, during a team meeting, a staff member had a severe anxiety attack and was rushed to the ER. Everyone is worried about their co-worker's health and about the outcomes of the accreditation process.

Refer to the *AIR poster* to help guide your discussion.

How Can I Help My Team?



"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.

Questions

1. When would you use AIR?
2. How would you start the conversation with your team? What phrases would you use?
What questions would you ask?

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/>

The State of Mental Health in Canada's Healthcare Workers
<https://www.starlingminds.com/the-state-of-mental-health-in-canadas-healthcare-workers/>

Safeguarding the Mental Health of Healthcare Workers
https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2017-01/Issue_Brief_workplace_mental_health_eng.pdf

Psychological Health and Safety in Canadian Healthcare Settings
https://www.healthcarecan.ca/wp-content/themes/camyno/assets/document/PolicyDocs/2015/HCC/EN/PsychHealthWork_EN.pdf

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>

Mental Disorder Symptoms Among Nurses in Canada - Andrea M. Stelnicki, PhD, R. Nicholas Carleton, PhD, Carol Reichert, MA
https://nursesunions.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/OSI-REPORT_final.pdf

Online Resources

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

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>

Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Resources

Free online training: Being a Mindful Employee: An Orientation to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/online-training-psychological-health-and-safety>

National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/workplace/national-standard>

13 Psychosocial Workplace Factors (Posters)
https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2019-02/13_factors_posters_eng.pdf

Exploring Two Psychosocial Factors for Health-Care Workers
<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/resource/exploring-two-psychosocial-factors-for-health-care-workers/>

National Guidelines for a Comprehensive Service System to Support Family Caregivers of Adults with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/drupal/Caregiving_MHCC_Family_Caregivers_Guidelines_ENG_0.pdf

Applying the Guidelines for Comprehensive Mental Health Services for Older Adults in Canada during COVID-19

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Supporting-Older-Adults-During-Covid-19-Crosswalk-EN-14-Sep-21.pdf>

Caring for Older Adults During COVID-19

https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/covid_19_tip_sheet_caring_for_older_adults_eng.pdf

Long-term care staffing study

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/long-term-care-staffing-study>

MindsMatter Online Assessment

This free tool is designed to help you assess where your workplace stands on mental health. It's confidential, easy to use and takes under three minutes to complete.

To get started, go to

<http://mindsmatter.openingminds.ca/>

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Assembling the Pieces Toolkit

https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/assembling_pieces/

Recovery Resources

Guidelines for Recovery-Oriented Practice

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2016-07/MHCC_Recovery_Guidelines_2016_ENG.PDF

Recovery Declaration

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/declaration>

Recovery Inventory

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/inventory>

Video "Hope Changes Everything"

(16:11 minutes)

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/media/3675>

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://thelifelinecanada.ca/suicide-prevention-crisis-centre-contact-information/crisis-centres/canadian-crisis-centres/>

Canada Suicide Prevention Service

Call Toll free number:

1-833-456-4566 Available 24/7

Return to Work and Accommodation Resources

Supporting Employee Success

https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/pdf/Supporting_Employee_Success_EN.pdf

Canadian Human Rights Commission Policy and Procedures on the Accommodation of Mental Illness

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/policy-and-procedures-accommodation-mental-illness>



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