



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

The Working Mind

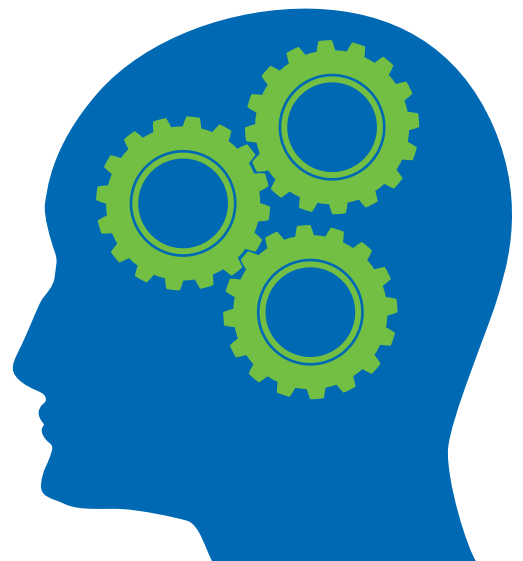


The Working Mind™

Workplace Mental Health & Wellness for the Legal Sector



VIRTUAL Training
Manager Session
Course Handout



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) Virtual 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 workplace;
- 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

A team member you've been working with for many years and are good friends with was assigned many complex files.

Lately, other team members and support staff have noticed changes in their appearance and mood. Your colleagues have commented that the team member seems to have a "shorter fuse" and that they look tired, even losing their cool while working the other day and yelling at another team member in a meeting.

When you spoke to this colleague about the incident, they confided in you that lately they have been thinking more and more about files from the recent cases. They feel stressed and anxious about the upcoming deadline. These thoughts are constantly on their mind and they're having a hard time focusing on other things, events, and people in their life. They have also started to withdraw from their co-workers, spouse, family, and friends. They have lost all interest in doing things they used to enjoy, like going to the gym, seeing movies, and reading. They confessed that they've noticed that their appetite has decreased a lot and as a result they've lost quite a bit of weight. They complain of feeling a mixture of exhaustion, hopelessness, and anger.

You're concerned about your colleague and want to support them.

Questions

1. What signs and indicators are you noticing?

2. Where might they be on the Continuum? (green - healthy; yellow - reacting; orange - injured; red - ill)?

3. If this were you, where could you go, what could you do, and who could you talk to?

4. What if a co-worker, family member, or friend was having these experiences? What could you do or say?

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

Compassion Fatigue Scenario A

You have been working with your colleague for a number of years. They're caring for two elderly parents with chronic health issues at home. They are divorced and have two young kids. Their mother has been in the emergency room multiple times recently due to extreme pain. They come to you for advice because they have trouble sleeping and eating and are having a hard time focussing on work. They have expressed that they are extremely tired and could use a break but feel they cannot take one, due to the workload and responsibilities at home. They are also constantly worried and feel guilty about not being able to do more for the family. They confess they are not inclined to speak to their manager as they don't wish to be perceived as weak and be taken off important projects. They are hesitant to get medical help as well.

What do you do?

Questions

1. What role is compassion fatigue playing in this situation? What signs are you noticing?

2. Where might the 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?

4. What might have been the reason behind their reluctance to speak to their supervisor and get help?

Compassion Fatigue Scenario B

A colleague and you have been working together for a number of years. Your colleague recently spent weeks with his team preparing the defence for a complex file that included reviewing evidence, including pictures, testimonies, and discussing the case with their client. It has been a number of weeks since the case has closed. Since then, your colleague has been withdrawn and is extremely irritable. They come to you for advice because they have trouble sleeping and eating and are having a hard time focussing on their current cases. They have even expressed that they are extremely tired and could use a vacation but feel they cannot take one, due to the workload. They are ashamed to feel so exhausted and weighed down after so many years in service. They confess they are not inclined to speak to their work provider as they don't wish to "ruin" the image they have in the office as someone who can handle anything thrown at them. They are hesitant to get medical help as well.

What do you do?

Questions

1. What role is compassion fatigue playing in this situation? What signs are you noticing?

2. Where might the 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?

4. What might have been the reason behind their reluctance to speak to their supervisor and get help?

Big 4 Scenario

You are usually a very patient and easygoing person who likes to make jokes. In the past few months, you've lost your sense of humour and you're feeling more frustrated about having to manage additional work while trying to take care of your family and worrying about your elderly parents. You would like to ask your manager for help, but with the increase in work for your department, the last thing you want is for your manager to feel like you're not able to do your job. You often catch yourself thinking negative thoughts such as "I'm such a failure," "I'm going to lose my job" and "I should be able to do more."

The constant worry is keeping you up at night.

The Big 4 Strategies



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 – Talking to an employee

A member on your team lost their spouse to a long-term illness two years ago, and they have been managing things alone at home since then. They often state that after they finish work, they have to go home to their second job: raising their children. They wish they had more time to get things done at home but can't cut back their work hours and still make all of their financial commitments. They are often forced to take time out of their workday to deal with personal matters. Their performance has been steadily deteriorating since their spouse's death, and they always come into work looking tired.

You sympathize with them, but you also have deadlines to meet, and the paralegal's under-performance is dragging down the team. You call the paralegal into your office and explain your concerns and suggest that they explore possible solutions more actively. They respond angrily that there are no solutions and say that you should be more sympathetic. They add they can manage without help and state that their situation will be much better six months from now, when their youngest child enters Grade 1.

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 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?

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/>

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

Due to unforeseen circumstances, your department is going through major changes which have resulted in non anticipated stress and anxiety. Team members are extremely stressed and frustrated with the situation, which seems to be getting worse every day. Many have been calling in sick and showing signs of burnout. One morning, you learn that a team member has had a severe anxiety attack during a video conference call, collapsed while working from home, and was immediately taken to the hospital. Everyone on the team is worried about their co-worker. They're now also stressed about the uncertainty surrounding their own jobs.

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.

Scenario – Helping an employee

You've noticed that a colleague in your department who has worked with you for over three years has not been their usual self these last few weeks. They seem to be struggling and you are worried. Lately, you noticed they have been withdrawing from colleagues and missing work. When you approached them about it, they blurted out: "I don't know why I bother to show up. Everyone would be better off without me."

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 they 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 – Employee returning to work

An employee is returning from short-term disability leave for a mental health-related problem. You don't know how they are doing now and 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 – Request for accommodation (work schedule)

An employee asks you for accommodation because they have been recently diagnosed with depression. They want a more flexible work schedule. You grant them permission for a more flexible work schedule, but once their depression is 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 their request for accommodation?

3. What other option(s) for accommodation would be available in this situation?

Questions

1. When/how would you use AIR to manage this incident and support the mental health and well-being of the employee as well as the other team members?

2. What questions would you ask? How would you start the conversation with your team?

3. What other tools and/or resources could you use?

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>

Online Resources

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

MindMatters (Gowling)
www.gowlingwlgmentalhealth.ca

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>

MindMatters (Gowling)
www.gowlingwlgmentalhealth.ca

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

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/help/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>