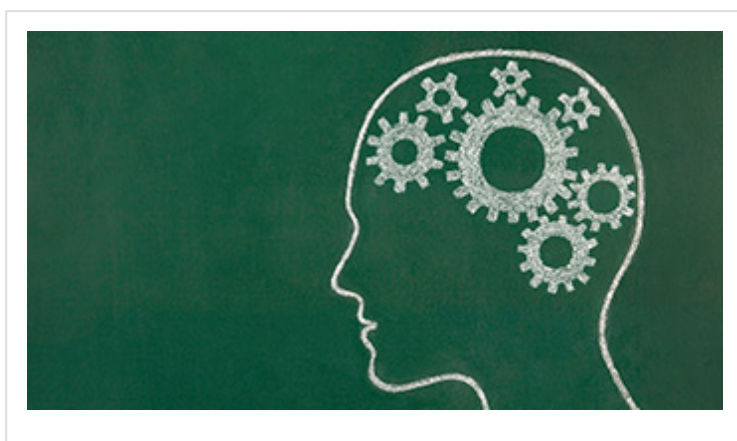




## 7 tips for addressing mental health in the workplace

Staff | October 2, 2015



In any given week, more than half a million Canadians will be absent from work because they're struggling with their mental health, says Mental Health Works.

Seventy percent of disability costs are related to mental illness. By the year 2020, depression will rank second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability worldwide.

The need to address mental health in the workplace is relevant now more than ever. But a big question employers and employees still have is, "how?"

To mark Canada's Healthy Workplace Month, Mental Health Works offers these tips for everyone in the workplace.

### For employers, managers, and supervisors

- 1. Look for signs** – Sudden behaviour changes, consistent late arrivals/absences, decreased productivity, making excuses for missed deadlines/poor work, and displays of anger/defensiveness may indicate a potential mental health issue.
- 2. Talk about it** – Arrange to meet an employee to raise concern and offer help. Beforehand, find out what resources—such as employee assistance programs (EAPs) or community services—may be available and have information handy when you meet.
- 3. Build comfort** – You want to minimize stress, not contribute to it. It's important to talk about how the employee is valued before raising concern. Think about an individual's strong points and contributions they've made. Be honest, upfront professional and caring in your approach.

### Read: [Celebrate Healthy Workplace Month](#)

### For employees

- 4. Talk to your doctor** – One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem this year but only one-third will seek help. Depression is treatable, and most people who receive the right supports recover fully.
- 5. Connect with a professional** – Combining professional counselling with medical treatment is generally more effective than only doing one or the other. A psychologist, a psychotherapist, or a social worker has specialized training to help you

learn new coping skills. Most EAP and benefit plans will provide access to these services.

**6. Reach out to those you trust** – Close personal connections are one of the most powerful healing and protective tools to combat depression. Tell a family member, friend, or co-worker exactly what you need. It may be simply to listen, provide encouragement when you're down, or doing things together that you enjoy.

**7. Live well** – Exercise, sleep, and healthy eating are some of the first things to be compromised when experiencing depression. However, research shows that it works the opposite way too. Making conscious choices to lead a healthier lifestyle—especially when you don't feel like it—can boost your mood.

“Stress, anxiety and mood disorders like depression are the most common mental health problems that impact the workplace,” says Mark Henick, program manager for Mental Health Works, a social enterprise of the Canadian Mental Health Association. “It's important for the employee to reach out and ask for help, but it's equally important for employers, manager and supervisors to better understand mental health issues and develop approaches to intervene at any stage of a problem.”

**Also read:**

[Chronic diseases connected to mental health issues](#)

[How Bell trains its managers in mental health](#)

[Is early detection in your mental health tool kit?](#)

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