



GUIDE TO STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

If the global pandemic has left you feeling uncertain, you're not alone. The rug's been pulled out from under you, and your expectations for school, work, and your social life have been turned upside down. In such conditions, worry, confusion, and frustration are normal reactions.

But you don't have to struggle alone... **HELP IS AVAILABLE.**



Mental Health
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FIVE SIGNS YOU MAY BE STRUGGLING

- 1** FEAR OR CONSTANT WORRY
- 2** ANGER AND IRRITABILITY
- 3** SLEEPLESSNESS OR TOO MUCH SLEEP
- 4** LOW CONCENTRATION OR INDECISIVENESS
- 5** INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



FIVE SELF-CARE TIPS

1

BUILD AND KEEP A NEW ROUTINE

Re-evaluate your expectations and set a realistic schedule. Go to bed at regular hours, and make time for the activities you enjoy every day.

2

EAT HEALTHY FOODS AND EXERCISE

Choose nutritious meals and drink lots of water. Get outside, stay active, and explore online workouts or meditations.

3

AVOID EXCESSIVE USE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Excessive use of substances can enhance feelings of hopelessness and should be avoided. Reach out for help if you're worried about your level of substance use.

4

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Physical distancing comes with the side-effect of social isolation. Use video chats, phone calls, texting, and email to stay connected with friends, classmates, co-workers, and family.

5

SET BOUNDARIES WITH EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Locate the most important communication channels, and manage how frequently you engage with them. Aim to be informed, not overwhelmed.



FIVE WAYS TO ADAPT TO WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

Right now, everything is changing day to day. Everything is being called into question, from how you learn to how you interact with instructors, friends, and classmates – even how you graduate. The best way to prepare for navigating the unknown is to flex your resiliency muscles. Here's how to do it:

1

Find out what resources are available at your institution – like mental health services, student life activities, financial services, academic accommodations – in case you need them.

2

Don't isolate. Share your feelings with someone you trust or feel connected to. Stay in contact with your instructors and let them know of challenges you may be encountering.

3

Stay positive by focusing on what you can control (e.g., your routine), not what you can't (e.g., the virus).

4

Stay grateful and help others. Focusing on what you have and finding ways to help others can improve your outlook.

5

Rest, recharge, restock. Know that change is difficult, but it will pass.



FIVE PLACES TO FIND HELP

1

The Government of Canada has partnered with Wellness Together Canada to create a mental health portal for anyone dealing with COVID-19-related mental distress. For youth and young adults, get direct access to educational resources, free text support and counselling.

2

Post-secondary institutions offer a range of supports on their websites, including wellness programs, crisis intervention, and culturally and gender diverse services. See the lists of Canada's Universities and Colleges.

3

Contact a national support line:

- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-456-4566
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310 or Indigenous Services Canada

4

No matter where you call home, resources are available. Here's a list of supports by province.

5

Students around the world can contact

- The LifeLine Canada Foundation e-counselling service
- International Association for Suicide Prevention's Crisis Centres
- Suicide.org hotlines
- CheckPoint's global mental health resources



FIVE AVENUES FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Worrying about how to pay for your school year and whether you'll find a job to help support your education can add to stress. Find out what financial resources and supports are available:

1

RESEARCH STAFF

2

STUDENTS AND NEW GRADUATES

3

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

4

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

5

SUMMER WORKERS



FIVE TIPS TO ADJUST AND THRIVE ONLINE

Many institutions are moving classes online. Whether or not that's a new experience, learning online can be challenging and isolating. Here's some tips to help you adjust:

1

Ask your instructor to make regular announcements on expectations, assignments, and deadlines.

2

Reach out to your instructor during virtual office hours to connect on a human level.

3

Engage with your classmates through online discussion boards, chat groups, or virtual study sessions.

4

Take a moment to focus on the new experience. Learning new skills is always a good thing, and it may improve your chances of success in the work world.

5

Above all, be kind to yourself and others.



OTHER RESOURCES



Coronavirus disease (COVID-19):
Outbreak updates



Coronavirus disease (COVID-19):
Travel restrictions, exemptions and advice



Risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events
operating during the COVID-19 pandemic

For more information, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19



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