

Solutions

Health and Wellness Information from
Family Services Employee Assistance Programs (FSEAP)

Fseap Ottawa



this issue

Your Mental Health

Your Mental Health: At Work and at Home

What is mental Health?

The week of May 1st - 7th is Mental Health Week 2017. It is an annual national event that takes place during the first week in May to encourage people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect and engage with others on all issues relating to mental health.

When you think about the terms mental health and mental illness, what comes to mind? Is it the more extreme issues of anxiety, depression, addiction, and burnout, or do you also take into consideration the seemingly smaller things like being 'stressed-out', 'losing it' and yelling at work, drinking to 'escape' from life's day-to-day pressures, or calling in sick when it all seems a bit 'too much'?

Mental health is about addressing all of these things. One helpful definition of 'mental health' from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, is "a state of well-being in which a person understands his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and successfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". Unfortunately, some surveys show that up to 58% of Canadians report they are experiencing "overload" as a result of the pressures associated with work, home, family, friends, physical health, and volunteer and community service.

Why should I care?

With today's trend of trying to do more with less, many jobs and work situations can challenge even the strongest person's wellbeing and coping due to long hours, overtime, and irregular schedules, all of which can lead to increased rates of stress and burnout. On top of this, other life stressors like relationship and family issues, workplace conflict, the roller coaster of seasonal work, as well as physical injuries and chronic pain can all chip away at our wellbeing and our ability to cope. These stresses can add up to the point where we start to break down.

Stress, of course, is a normal part of life and a normal part of any job. In fact, it is often what provides us with the energy and motivation to meet our daily challenges. In the workplace, we regularly experience stress-causing situations, react to them, and then return to a more relaxed state when the situation is resolved. However, as with most things, too much stress can have negative impacts. When challenges at work become too demanding, we begin to experience negative signs of stress. Learning how to deal with and manage stress is critical to maximizing our job performance, staying safe on the job, and maintaining our physical and mental health.

Warning Signs of Stress

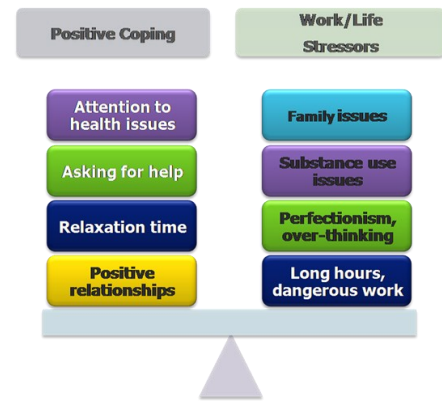
Difficulty concentrating	Anger/Irritability
Apathy	Negativism/cynicism
Low morale	Boredom
Anxiety	Frustration
Fatigue	Depression
Alienation	Absenteeism
Physical problems (headaches, upset stomach, sleep disturbance)	Poor relations with family and friends

fseap Now we're
talking.

WHAT THE EFAP CAN DO. If you are experiencing emotional or mental health issues, particularly if they are lasting and do not seem to resolve, it is important you talk to someone who can help. Your EFAP is just a call away. We can connect you with supports and services that can make a difference in how you feel and manage the challenges of daily life at home and at work.



The Positive Coping Scale - are you in balance?



What can I do?

Consider using some of these options for better managing stress at work:

- Ask for help from colleagues and supervisors at work and talk stressful situations out. Sometimes the best stress-reducer is simply sharing your stress with someone close to you. The act of talking it out and getting support and empathy from someone else is an excellent way of blowing off steam and reducing stress, and they may have helpful suggestions. Remember to reciprocate and help them when they are in need.
- Maintain a positive attitude (and avoid other people without one). Negativism sucks the energy and motivation out of any situation, so avoid it whenever possible. Instead, develop a positive attitude and learn to reward yourself for little accomplishments (even if no one else does).
- Take a few short 5-15 minute breaks in the day, and be sure to eat healthy foods throughout the day. Research has shown that eating well and at regular intervals during the day improves our mood and increases our productivity, which in-turn feels good.
- Try to balance work and play. The healthiest way to keep your mind and body relaxed is to take “mini-vacations.” On the weekends, or when you’re between shifts or contracts, plan fun activities with friends and family.
- Also, take a moment to look at the Positive Coping Scale Diagram and consider whether you have found a good balance between your work/life stressors and your positive coping resources. Is your life in balance? Are you coping well with the stresses and responsibilities of work and life? What could you do to help balance the scale?
- Whether you are struggling with anxiety, depression or addiction, or simply recognize that your life is out of balance and your life-stressors are outweighing your coping resources, help is just a call or a click away. Break the silence and reach out for help.

Resources to help you assess and support your mental wellness

If you are concerned about your own mental health & wellness, or that of friends, family or colleagues, or if you simply would like to know more about how to build your mental wellness, there are many free resources to help you.

If you have access to the internet, these websites are full of great information:

- Recognizing Workplace Stress Issues, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
- <http://www.ccohs.org/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>
- Work-Life Balance & Your Mental Health, Canadian Mental Health Association
- <http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/your-mental-health/worklife-balance/>
- FSEAP Online Health & Wellness Centre (call us for your organizations username and password <http://www.fseap.bc.ca/>)

How your EFAP can help

- ✓ Confidential services
- ✓ Information to help with work and life
- ✓ Immediate assistance 24/7/365

To access EFAP services,

just call

1.800.668.9920 | TTY 1.613.725.6175

