

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

## HOW DO I KNOW I NEED HELP?

Often, peers and family members are the first to notice behavioural changes such as increased anxiety, anger, sadness, negativity, avoidance and substance-use that could lead to mental health difficulties. Take stock of where you are right now on the mental health continuum—which of the items below describe your current state of mind and well-being?

HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<input type="checkbox"/> Normal mood fluctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Calm, take things in stride <input type="checkbox"/> Good sense of humour <input type="checkbox"/> Performing well <input type="checkbox"/> Good energy level <input type="checkbox"/> In control mentally <input type="checkbox"/> Few sleep difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Physically and socially active <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence in self and others <input type="checkbox"/> No/limited alcohol use/gambling	<input type="checkbox"/> Irritable, impatient <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous, anxious <input type="checkbox"/> Sad, overwhelmed <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced sarcasm <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination, forgetfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble sleeping, nightmares <input type="checkbox"/> Intrusive thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension, headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Low energy, decreased activity or socializing <input type="checkbox"/> Regular but controlled alcohol use/gambling to cope	<input type="checkbox"/> Anger, anxiety <input type="checkbox"/> Pervasive sadness, hopelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Negative attitude <input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty making decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Poor performance, workaholic <input type="checkbox"/> Restless, disturbed sleep, recurrent images, nightmares <input type="checkbox"/> Increased aches and pains <input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance, withdrawal <input type="checkbox"/> Increased alcohol use/gambling – hard to control	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry outbursts, aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive anxiety, panic attacks <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed, suicidal thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Overt insubordination <input type="checkbox"/> Can't concentrate or make decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Can't perform duties or control my behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Can't fall asleep or stay asleep <input type="checkbox"/> Constant fatigue, illness <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in going out or socializing <input type="checkbox"/> Inability to control frequent alcohol use or gambling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintain healthy lifestyle</li> <li>■ Focus on task at hand</li> <li>■ Break problems into manageable tasks</li> <li>■ Controlled, deep breathing</li> <li>■ Plan time for rest and fun</li> <li>■ Nurture a support system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Recognize limits, take breaks</li> <li>■ Get enough rest and exercise</li> <li>■ Reduce barriers to help-seeking</li> <li>■ Identify and resolve problems early</li> <li>■ Identify unhealthy coping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Talk to/confide in someone</li> <li>■ Tune into own signs of distress</li> <li>■ Make self-care a priority</li> <li>■ Get help sooner, not later</li> <li>■ Maintain social contact, don't withdraw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Know how to access help and resources</li> <li>■ Follow doctor's care recommendations</li> <li>■ Accept offers of help</li> <li>■ Focus on regaining health</li> <li>■ Don't give up on yourself</li> </ul>

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

### UNDERSTANDING, SUPPORT AND CARE

Many people find it hard to take the first step in asking for help. The CAF health care and support community is ready, willing and able to help you—they are experienced and knowledgeable and caring people who will provide assistance and connect you with the resources you need to get better. Know that many of your fellow military access mental health care and support every day. Here is what they say about connecting to mental health care:

*From my experience, I cannot be there for anyone – family or coworkers – unless I am mentally fit. Without a doubt, mental health treatment put me on a path which saved my life. – CWO Smith*

*They truly did help me navigate through the difficulties, guiding me back to a place that I could be comfortable and confident with myself again. – Capt Sylvester*

*It was the hardest decision I had to make in recognizing that I couldn't deal with my demons alone, but it was the best thing I ever did. The help I received helped me stay in the forces and avert bad decisions that were being clouded by my own issues. – Sgt Wittman*

*Seeking mental health care has made possible the past several years of my life and career. I am now able to enjoy time spent with my family and I can make a positive impact on my son. As for my career, early mental health care probably prevented the need for administrative and/or disciplinary action, and I have furthered my career goals beyond anything I could have imagined five years ago. – P02 O'Brien*

*It works. Not only will it help you, it will help those around you that your mental health issues are impacting. Take that step knowing that there are many others just like you, and we are working to overcome not only the stigma, but to positively change our lives. – WO Storing*

### CONFIDENTIAL HELP

All the resources listed provide **CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES**. It is important for you to know that CAF members' medical information is confidential. Access to this information is restricted to those involved in providing care to the service member. Commanding Officers have a right to know only the limitations imposed by a member's condition as it impacts on employability, **NOT** the nature of the problem or the course of treatment.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

If you are currently combating mental illness, don't delay accessing support and treatment.

- If it is an emergency, call **911** or go to your local **emergency room**
- Talk to health care providers, such as your doctor, or a mental health professional at the **Health Services Centre on base/wing**
  - simply walk in (sick parade)—you do not need an appointment to be seen by a care provider
  - will provide the assistance you need or a referral to the most appropriate resource
- Talk with a trusted colleague, seek help from family and friends
- Speak with a chaplain/padre at your unit
- Call **CAF Member Assistance Program at 1-800-268-7708 (24 hrs/7 days)—[www.forces.gc.ca/assistance](http://www.forces.gc.ca/assistance)**
  - a confidential advisory and referral service
  - can provide short-term external counselling
- Contact your local **Operational Stress Injury Social Support—[www.osiss.ca](http://www.osiss.ca)**
  - a peer-based confidential support program for CAF personnel, veterans, and their families coping with an operational stress injury
- Call/visit your local **Integrated Personnel Support Centre—[www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services-casualty-support/contact-info.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services-casualty-support/contact-info.page)**
  - support to CAF personnel, veterans, their families and the families of the fallen
- Learn more about mental health
  - **Road to Mental Readiness** [www.forces.gc.ca/r2mr](http://www.forces.gc.ca/r2mr)
  - **Addictions Support** [www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-wellness-addiction/index.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-wellness-addiction/index.page)

## WHAT CAN MY FAMILY DO?

There are resources ready to assist your spouse or family members.

- Call the **Family Information Line at 1-800-866-4546 (24 hrs/7 days)**
  - a confidential telephone service for families
  - can provide information, support, referrals
- Go to the **Military Family Resource Centre on base/wing—[www.familyforce.ca](http://www.familyforce.ca)**
  - can provide psychological support through counselling and referral services to community programs and resources

# HELP IS A CALL, VISIT OR CLICK AWAY