

# Mental Health Connections for Health Care Workers - Self-Care

As a health care worker you may be experiencing fear, anxiety, and a sense of powerlessness. There could even be aspects such as rage and anger toward those who have not followed public health advice. There can also be compassion fatigue.

Taking time to focus on self-care and your own mental health before the stress gets too high can help you cope during this time.

## Relax

- Take a mental break and sit quietly for a few minutes.
- Relax with easy and quick techniques (belly breath, stretches, visualization) to destress.
- Challenge “what if” thoughts and focus on the things you can control.



## Treat Your Body Well



- Take care of your body. When you can, drink water and eat healthy.
- Moving your body or getting some fresh air can improve your mood and decrease stress.
- Be aware of your level of substance use – including smoking, vaping, and alcohol.

## Connect and Connect Again

- Emotional support and healthy problem solving are vital to your health and well-being.
- Connect with people both in your personal and work lives (phone calls, virtual meetings, etc.).
- Explore, follow or join a new social network around a hobby or interest.



## Unplug, If That's Helpful



- Don't feel like you have to be constantly productive. Doing what makes you laugh or provides an escape (binge watch a show, listen to music you like, read a book) is good for your well-being. There is no shame in needing to relax, laugh or take time for yourself.
- Decide how much time you're going to devote to checking reliable news and social media sources. If media and news brings you down- consider giving it a time limit in your day.

## Still having difficulty coping. Now what?

**Mindwell U** is a free, mindfulness challenge that only takes five minutes per day. It challenges you to take a part out of your day to learn the basics in mindfulness, a practice that allows a person to focus their attention and be fully present in a moment.

If you still feel significant distress around COVID-19 and feel you are not coping well, you may need extra support.

Reach out to NSHA resources like:

- Our **Intake line**, call toll free **1-855-922-1122** self-refer to Community Mental Health and Addictions clinics, Withdrawal Management Services, or Opioid Replacement and Treatment Program,
- The **Provincial Mental Health Crisis Line** is available 24/7 by calling toll free **1-888-429-8167**.
- **Employee Assistance Programs** offer important support and assistance.