

Mental Wellness 101

Below is a list of simple considerations that can have a positive impact on our mental wellness and well-being.

We all need to explore what works for us and everyone is unique in terms of what may or may not be helpful. Knowledge is power; so take the time to try a few new things and do some research. Even small adjustments can have huge impact.

We are not our thoughts

Automatic thoughts just happen, they do not define us and they do not control us, they are just thoughts.

Thoughts are not necessarily facts

We all interpret the information we take in based on our past experiences, our current well being, our priorities, what is relevant to us, and how we view the world. This will influence how we interpret what we experience.

The positive is like teflon, the negative like velcro

Our brains are naturally wired to pay more attention to what can harm us, it takes a concentrated effort to pay more attention to the positive.

We cannot stop or control emotions; they are hard wired

We can make a conscious effort around what we choose to do with them when they arise.

All emotions can be evaluated by asking ourselves: is it justified? and is it effective?

How we answer these two questions can help us to decide what we choose to do next; if it is justified and effective we may need to act on it; if it isn't justified we may need to pause before doing anything, if it isn't effective we may need to let it go.

The practice of being present 100% in the moment (Mindfulness) is like a mini vacation for our minds.

Research has been shown that mindfulness when practiced intentionally on a daily basis does reduce overall levels of anxiety and help to improve mood.

Normalization - The realization that experiences related to our mental wellness (or lack thereof) is a common experience.

In any given year, 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness. By the time Canadians reach the age of 40, 1 in 2 have or have had a mental illness.

(www.camh.ca) Being able to connect with others and hear about their experiences has tremendous healing power.

Validation - “The recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile” (Oxford dictionary).

Not just seeking validation from others, but also validating ourselves and watching the judgment. Self-compassion is a very difficult but beneficial skill.

Moving our bodies is just as important to our mental well-being as any other intervention

Most therapy will always start with some form of movement whether that be walking, more traditional gym-based exercise, gardening, dancing, swimming, yoga, or even housekeeping.

True connection with others is imperative to mental wellbeing

We are social beings and being vulnerable with select people is a key piece in the creation of authentic and meaningful relationships.

Change is inevitable and necessary. All change is stressful. Manageable stress keeps us well.

Uncontrolled stress will impact not just our mental health but our physical health as well.

Your body cannot physiologically tell the difference between a wedding and a funeral.

Our bodies and our brains are inextricably linked.

Physical health concerns will naturally impact our mental well-being and vice versa. Look after one and you benefit the other.

Absolutely none of us are perfect.

Making mistakes, failing at something, being embarrassed, or taking ownership when needed is how we learn and grow.