

HEALTHY MIND

Making mental health work

One in five Canadians suffer from mental illness at some point in their life—whether it be a mood disorder, anxiety disorder, eating disorder, psychotic disorder, personality disorder, substance dependency or other illness—mental illness can take its toll.

In fact, 16% of deaths of people aged 25 to 44 are caused by suicides stemming from mental health issues. Unfortunately, even though mental illness is commonplace and serious, the stigma associated with these types of disorders often prevents Canadians from seeking treatment and support.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

The source of mental illness can't be narrowed down to just one cause—mental illness develops from a variety of contributing factors including genetics, biology, personality, socio-economic status and life events.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

With so many factors making us susceptible to mental illness, early detection and treatment are key to keeping Canadians' minds as healthy as possible. While different forms of mental illness have different symptoms, some early signs of mental illness include:

- changes in mood, thinking, or behavior
- inability to function in regular activities over a period of time
- significant distress

WHAT IS THE COST TO THE WORKPLACE?

A recent report released by the Great Place to Work Institute of Canada determined that the cost of untreated mental illness in the workplace was high to both employees and employers. Improved mental health awareness and support at work can improve employee's quality of life, reduce their stress and improve workplace productivity.

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

While work can often be difficult for those affected by mental illness, the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans suggests that it can also be an outlet for helping people recover. Social support, meaningful employment, adequate income and physical activity—factors that are associated with a healthy workplace—contribute to improved mental health.

Mental health matters.

1/5 Canadians are living with mental illness

If the number of people experiencing a new mental illness was reduced by **10%** in a year, the economy would save **\$4 billion.**

Source: Mental Health Commission of Canada

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HEALTHY LIVING

Achoo!

It's April, which means that tree pollen levels are at their peak for Canadians—and so are seasonal allergies. This year, don't suffer the whole season with a runny nose, itchy eyes, sneezing and general miserableness: try out some of these tips for preventing or alleviating the symptoms of seasonal allergies.

Commute smart

As tempting as a fresh spring breeze on your drive to the office may seem, keep those car windows closed. Opening the windows on your morning drive exposes you to tons of pollen—pollen counts are usually highest between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Dehumidify

Consider using a dehumidifier in your office. A dehumidifier is an easy way to keep the air clean and dry in a small room, like an office.

Clean up the clutter

Whether full of files or stacked with décor, an office desk is always susceptible to plenty of clutter. Unfortunately clutter is a breeding ground for dust and dust mites, which will only add to your allergy woes.

HEALTHY HEART

Dial 9-1-1 for life

According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Stroke Network, adults under the age of 50 are risking their lives, and their quality of life, by not calling 9-1-1 at the first sign of a stroke.

With 50,000 Canadians suffering from strokes each year, this could be a dangerous hesitation.

Experts say that when it comes to strokes, time is of the essence: "Canadians need to understand that the clock starts ticking at the first signs of a stroke, and every second of delay leads to more brain cell death and greater risk of death or disability," said Dr. Michael Hill. Two-thirds of Canadians having a stroke don't arrive at the hospital until after the three-and-a-half hour treatment target—a critical window of time which greatly increases the chances that doctors can minimize the effects of the stroke. The average person loses two-million brain cells each minute they are delayed in treating a stroke; every hour untreated, the average brain loses as many neurons as they would in three years of normal aging.

So what are some of the warning signs that mean you should call for help?

- 1) Sudden weakness or loss of strength
- 2) Numbness in the face, leg, or arm
- 3) Difficulty or confusion while speaking
- 4) Sudden vision trouble
- 5) Severe and unusual headache
- 6) Dizziness