

Supporting Someone in Distress

The following tool is designed as a quick check-in, support and resource guide to assist ourselves and our colleagues. We are all experiencing increased strain on our wellbeing as a result of the ongoing wear and tear of the pandemic.

The best way to get through challenging times is to recognize how we are and to take action to support each other and ourselves.

Reach out to someone today!

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Thank you London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Health Care London and The Working Mind for inspiring this tool and its adaption.

Step 1: Recognizing the Signs

Mental Health Continuum Model

Use the Mental Health Continuum to quickly determine when stress levels are climbing into zones of increasing concern that require additional supports and resources. Use the tool to self-assess or guide a discussion with someone you are concerned about.



Action Suggestions at Each Phase of the Continuum

- | Thriving | Managing | Struggling | Overwhelmed |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on task at hand• Break problems into manageable tasks• Identify and nurture support systems• Maintain healthy lifestyle• Regulate emotions well | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize limits, take breaks, maintain boundaries• Get adequate rest, food, exercise• Connect with supports• Identify and resolve problems• Engage in healthy coping strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tune into your own signs of distress• Talk to someone you trust• Seek help• Maintain social support instead of withdrawing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek consultation as needed• Follow healthcare provider recommendations• Know resources and how to access them |



Step 2: Actions & Words Matter

Do

- ▶ Start with your **heart** to adjust your emotions - what do you want for them and your relationship with them long term?
- ▶ Limit distractions, take time to ground yourself to be fully present and convey a compassionate tone
- ▶ Explain you're concerned about them and are here to listen as well as help them find the next step together
- ▶ Validate their feelings: "I can see you care for your patients deeply and how much this is affecting you."
- ▶ Help them identify their personal support people
- ▶ Highlight what they are already doing to cope with the situation
- ▶ Consider asking: "Sometimes when life is difficult and feels overwhelming, people may think about suicide. Are you having thoughts of suicide?" If they say yes, connect them with someone who can help them create a plan for safety (Step 3)
- ▶ Take the next step with them using the resources provided (Step 3 & 4), letting them know you are there to support them in finding the right help. Ensure you maintain appropriate boundaries of what you can and cannot do

Don't

- ▶ Ghost them, avoid them, ignore them
- ▶ Personalize their behaviour - how they are behaving right now is NOT an accurate reflection of who they are
- ▶ Blame or Shame - even if you have seen them make choices that you don't agree with
- ▶ Give immediate advice or attempt to solve the problem
- ▶ Presume to know what they are thinking or feeling
- ▶ Minimize their suffering by over sharing your own struggles or feelings
- ▶ Make decisions or take action without their consent



Step 3: Knowing your Resources

Healthcare, Physicians & Residents

- ▶ **CMHA – “Here for healthcare” (24/7)**
1-844-HERE-247
- ▶ **OMA Physician Health Program (24/7)**
1-800-851-6606
- ▶ **PARO Resident Helpline (24/7)**
1-866-HELP-DOC
- ▶ **HHS Employee Family Assistance Program (24/7)**
1-888-521-8300 or 905-521-8300
- ▶ **St. Joseph’s Covid 19: Mental Health Services for Health Care Workers (Mon – Fri 0800-1600)**
905-522-1155 x36499

Anyone

- ▶ **COAST Distress Lines (24/7)**
Hamilton 905-972-8338
Niagara 1-866-550-5205
Halton 1-877-825-9011
Brantford 1-866-811-7188
- ▶ **Wellness Together Canada (24/7)**
1-866-585-0445 or
Text WELLNESS to 741741
- ▶ **Mental Health/Addictions – REACH OUT SERVICES**
1-866-933-2023 or 1-519-433-2023
- ▶ **Crisis Support Canada – National Suicide Prevention Support (24/7)**
1-833-456-4566



Step 4: Knowing your Resources

Self Directed

Helpful Resources

- ▶ [HHS Resilience Support Toolkit](#)
- ▶ St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
[Tips & Tools for Mental Health for Health Care Workers](#)
- ▶ Working Mind (12-minute video)
[Staying Resilient During the COVID Pandemic](#) –
- ▶ Working Mind – [Self Care & Resilience Guide](#)
- ▶ Canadian Mental Health
[COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing](#)
- ▶ Canadian Mental Health Association
[lots of practical tips](#)
- ▶ Canadian Psychological Association -
[Psychological First Aid for Frontline Health Care Providers During COVID-19: A Quick Guide to Wellness](#)
- ▶ Royal Ottawa Hospital - [A Moral Injury Guide: Supporting Healthcare Workers During Covid-19](#)

Online Support

- ▶ [Wellness Together Canada](#)
- ▶ [Beacon](#)
- ▶ [BounceBack](#)
- ▶ [Togetherall](#) (*peer support*)





www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca

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For more information, please email resilience@hhs.ca