

**ENTREPRENEURS
ON THE
FRONT LINES**

**SOLE FOCUS
PROJECT**
Take A Stand For Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

TOOLKIT

FOR ENTREPRENEURS & SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS



IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTIONS RELATED CRISIS CALL 519-973-4435

THIS TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED TO HELP:

- Identify your mental health strengths
- Investigate areas of improvement
- Cultivate new ways of coping
- Access online & in-person mental health supports
- Prevent a mental health crisis
- Manage a mental health crisis



The funding for this toolkit and other resources are supported by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), the Government of Ontario, NORCAT, Communitech, and Invest Ottawa, this application of the Digital Main Street Future Proof Program is available online at <https://windsor-essex.cmha.ca/entrepreneurs-mental-health/> or at 519-973-4435.

We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Nous reconnaissons l'appui du gouvernement du Canada à travers l'Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario.



3-STEP MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

This worksheet outlines the 3-Step Mindfulness Exercise, a useful activity when formal mindfulness practice might not be practical. It is designed to be versatile, so you can practice these three steps throughout the day to bring your awareness to the present moment.

Use this guide to cultivate a mindful state that you can carry with you throughout the day.

1. STEP OUT OF AUTOPILOT

In this moment, try to bring your awareness to what you are doing, thinking, and sensing.

Pause. Take a comfortable, relaxed, but upright posture. And breathe. What thoughts come up in your mind? What feelings?

Give them your attention and acknowledge these natural experiences. Then, let them pass. Attune yourself to who you are and your current state.

2. BECOME AWARE OF YOUR BREATH

Right now, your only goal is become aware of your breath.

How does your body move with each breath in and out? How does your chest rise and fall as you let air in? Feel how your belly pushes in and out, how your lungs expand and contract.

Find the pattern of your breath and anchor yourself to the present with this awareness for six breaths or up to a minute.

3. EXPAND YOUR AWARENESS OUTWARD

Let your awareness spread outward. First to your body, then to your surroundings.

What physical sensations are you experiencing? Note feelings like tightness, aches, or lightness, then, let go of them. Keep in mind your body as a whole, as a vessel for your inner self.

Expand your awareness outward to your surroundings. Bring your attention to what is in front of you. What colours, shapes, and textures can you notice? Be present in this moment, in your awareness of your surroundings.

MENTAL HEALTH & ENTREPRENEURS/ SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

WHAT WE KNOW

While small business is considered the backbone of the Canadian economy, it often comes with big business headaches.

Yet we know that when entrepreneurs succeed, so does Canada.

According to the report *Going It Alone*, small and medium sized businesses are vital to our Canadian economy. Therefore, when they are experiencing amplified stressors, such as those being experienced due to COVID-19, mental health suddenly becomes a critical public health issue.

Stressors affecting entrepreneurs are well-documented and include, but are not limited to: worrying about the survival, success, and sustainability of their business, while also taking added steps to achieve their goals. This often involves risk-taking, income uncertainty, and having to make a variety of decisions with tight timelines.

According to a recent survey of entrepreneurs:

- *2 in 5 business owners experience depression once a week*
- *2 out of 3 entrepreneurs feel exhausted or low energy due to the demands of their work*

Going it Alone - The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Canada's Entrepreneur.
See page 29 for link to the full report.

Small business owners often rely on their own acumen to make these decisions; attempting to make the most of their personal experience, skill set, and drive to achieve success. COVID-19 has added complications to this decision-making process as entrepreneurs struggle to manage amplified financial concerns, competing roles in work and family, and a multitude of continually changing business restrictions.

All of this combined with the already long hours, tight deadlines, and internal performance pressure; it's no wonder the entrepreneur feels the weight of the world on his or her shoulders.

GOOD NEWS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Help and relief are closer than you think.

As a small business owner or entrepreneur, anonymity and loneliness are often costs of doing business.

YOU ARE SEEN. YOU ARE VALUED.

And thanks to a collaborative partnership between WEtech Alliance and CMHA-WECEB, there are cost-free resources designed to help improve your mental well-being and learn to cope with mental health struggles, addictions, grief, bereavement, and suicidal thoughts.

In addition to available online resources, professional personnel are available to assist.

You can talk to:

Pandemic Response Therapist

Available to assist with issues related to impacts of COVID-19.

Small Business Outreach Worker

Available to provide confidential individual consultation about your mental health needs by phone or video conferencing appointments.



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STEP 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

ONLINE QUIZZES

Each quiz, to be completed at your leisure, will help you assess your mental health strengths and struggles. Recommendations and resources will be provided that align with your current needs at the conclusion of each quiz.

Please keep in mind that while these exercises are a valued tool of self-assessment, they are not a diagnosis or substitute for the advice of a qualified healthcare professional.

TAKE THE MENTAL HEALTH METER

cmha.ca/mental-health-meter

My Score: _____

3-6: see page 10

Less than 3: see page 12

WHAT'S YOUR STRESS INDEX?

cmha.ca/whats-your-stress-index

My Score: _____

0-13: see page 10

14-25: see page 14

WORK/ LIFE BALANCE QUIZ

cmha.ca/work-life-balance-quiz

My Score: _____

See page 23

STEP 2: REVIEW RESULTS & ANALYSIS

CONSIDER THE RESULTS

- Did the assessments reveal any surprises?
- Did you agree with the recommendations based on your scores?

Here's a deeper look into those recommendations:

MENTAL HEALTH METER & STRESS INDEX:

If you scored **3-6 points** in the majority of the categories on the *Mental Health Meter* and/or **0-13** points on the *Stress Index*, this signifies that your current state-of-mind is **well-balanced**.

However, maintaining that well-adjusted state-of-mind is ongoing and one can always benefit from improvement.

“Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.”

~ PsychCentral, 2021

STEP 2: REVIEW RESULTS & ANALYSIS

CREATE OR IMPROVE YOUR SELF-CARE ROUTINE

SELF-CARE INVENTORY

Adapted from the work of Francoise Mathieu, M.Ed., CCC.

Review the suggested items and place a check mark next the ones you already do.

Then go back and star the ones you would consider implementing.

From those, circle the one(s) you will start with, and make a commitment to yourself!

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get preventative medical care
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some fun physical activity
- Get enough rest, sleep
- Wear your favourite clothes
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Reserve phone-free time
- _____

STEP 2: REVIEW RESULTS & ANALYSIS

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

- Schedule time for gratitude and self-reflection
- Engage in talk therapy or psychotherapy
- Start a daily journal
- Read for leisure
- Start an activity that is beyond your expertise and/or control
- Decrease stress through relaxation
- Listen to your inner self: thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes and feelings
- Let friends, lovers, relatives get to know you
- Challenge your intellect with a new interest
- Practice and accept help, input and charity from others
- Set your boundaries (including to refuse extra responsibilities)
- Exercise your curiosity
- _____

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time in and with nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope

STEP 2: REVIEW RESULTS & ANALYSIS

- Embrace the non-material aspects of life
- Occasionally relinquish control or command
- Realize that you may not have answers
- Identify the meaningful aspects of your life and their position in your life
- Meditate or Pray
- Sing or play music
- Play and meaningfully interact with children, yours or others
- See the world through a child's eyes
- Find awe in experience
- Contribute to meaningful, worthwhile causes
- Read inspirational literature, listen to music
- _____

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Spend time with company you enjoy
- Stay connected with important people in your life
- Practice positive self-affirmation, especially when it involves an accomplishment
- Revisit favourite books and movies
- Engage in intimacy where/when ever possible
- Allow yourself to cry
- Laugh, find things that make you laugh
- _____

STEP 2: REVIEW RESULTS & ANALYSIS

MENTAL HEALTH METER & STRESS INDEX

If you scored **under 3 points** in the majority of the categories on the Mental Health Meter, and/or scored **14- 25 points** on the Stress Index, this signifies that your mental health is **under considerable strain**.

The mental health meter evaluation categorizes you as “diminished” in the areas of “Ability to enjoy life, resilience, balance, self-actualization, stress management, and/or flexibility.”

It is normal for us to have moments when our mental health status is diminished, when we feel overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, saddened, angered, or burnt out.

There are many resources and tools available to you to help cope and handle these difficult emotions.

FIRST, YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Do I **need** to make changes in this area?
- Do I **want** to make changes in this area?
- Am I **ready** to make changes in this area?
- If the answer is “no,” **what are the barriers** preventing me from effectively dealing with this?

The key is to be gentle and empathetic to yourself. Forgiveness is crucial - nobody is perfect.

If you slip up, simply get back on track.

STEP 3: STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

A VARIETY OF IDEAS FOR RESPONDING TO STRESS

Participants in stress workshops frequently request a list of simple suggestions they can follow to reduce and cope with the stress in their lives.

Unfortunately, there are no simple or universally effective solutions to the dilemma of stress management. We are all unique. What works well for some, may be ineffective for others.

However, each technique listed below represents an approach that has worked for someone somewhere; some should be effective for you as well. Add to the list wherever you can.

EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THE TOPIC OF STRESS

- Understand its process and effects.
- Identify your major stress sources.
- Anticipate stressful periods and plan for them.
- Develop and practice a repertoire of successful stress-management techniques.
- Identify opportunities for personal growth during stressful times.
- Find an acceptable balance of stress, remembering that insufficient and excessive stress are both potentially harmful.

STEP 3:

STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

DEVELOP A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO PROBLEM SOLVING

- Delve beyond the symptoms and specifically identify your problem.
- Divide any manageable components into ones that can be easily handled.
- Gather sufficient information to put the problem in perspective.
- Review any previous experience in handling your present problem and compare.
- Develop a set of direct and alternative courses of action.
- Proceed with your preferred course of action.

ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS

- Separate your thoughts and your feelings.
- Do not suppress your feelings; acknowledge them and share them with others.
- Be flexible and adaptive.
- Appraise your personal liabilities honestly.
- Accept those feelings.

STEP 3: STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

CULTIVATE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOURAL SKILLS

- ❑ Do not substitute the word “can’t” when you actually mean “won’t”.
- ❑ Act on decisions.
- ❑ Be assertive.
- ❑ Manage conflicts openly and directly.
- ❑ Avoid blaming others for your situations.
- ❑ Learn to say “no”.
- ❑ Deal with problems immediately and avoid procrastination.
- ❑ Keep realistic expectations, avoiding the grandiose and the catastrophic.
- ❑ Learn to let go of stressful situations and take breaks.
- ❑ Provide positive feedback to others.
- ❑ Set SMART Goals:
 - ❑ Specific
 - ❑ Measureable
 - ❑ Achievable
 - ❑ Realistic
 - ❑ Time-limited

SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

S

SPECIFIC (Describe your goal)

M

MEASURABLE (How can you track progress?)

A

ACHEIVABLE (Is this possible? How?)

R

RELEVANT (Does this goal align with the bigger picture?)

T

TIMELY (What is the deadline?)

PERSONAL CHECKLIST

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

STEP 3: STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

ESTABLISH A STRONG SUPPORT NETWORK

- ❑ Ask for help directly, and be receptive to an offer.
- ❑ Honestly assess your needs for support and satisfaction with your current support.
- ❑ Drop dead or damaging relationships.
- ❑ Maintain high quality professional and personal relationships.
- ❑ Tell the members of your support network that you value them.



STEP 3: STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

DEVELOP A LIFESTYLE THAT WILL BUFFER AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

- ❑ Engage regularly in vigorous, stretching and recreational exercise.
- ❑ Engage regularly in relaxation.
- ❑ Drink alcohol in moderation or abstain from it altogether.
- ❑ Do not use tobacco.
- ❑ Obtain sufficient rest regularly.
- ❑ Maintain your recommended weight.
- ❑ Eat a balanced diet and avoid/limit caffeine.
- ❑ Avoid foods high in sugar, salt, white flour, saturated fats, and chemicals.
- ❑ Plan your use of time both daily and long-term.
- ❑ Seek out variety and change of pace.
- ❑ Assume total responsibility for your life.
- ❑ Maintain optimism.
- ❑ Identify the areas of your life you control and those you don't. Aim your focus on things within your control.



STEP 3: STRESS REDUCTION TIPS

FOCUS ON POSITIVE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Adopt the attitude that no problem is too monumental to solve.
- Engage regularly in prayer or meditation.
- Establish a sense of purpose and direction.
- Seek spiritual guidance.
- Learn to transcend stressful situations.
- Believe in yourself.
- Increase your awareness of the interdependence of all things in the universe.

PLAN AND EXECUTE LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Expect to succeed.
- Approach projects one step at a time.
- Keep change projects small and manageable.
- Practice each change vigorously for 21 days; then decide whether to continue.
- Celebrate your successes with self-rewards.

STEP 4: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

YOUR SCORE ON THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE QUIZ MEANS:

- 0 – 5:** Your life is out of balance – you need to make significant changes to find your equilibrium. But you can take control!
- 6 – 10:** You're keeping things only barely under control. Now is the time to take action.
- 11 – 15:** You're on the right track! You've been able to achieve work-life balance – now, be sure to protect it.

The following recommendations are for work-life balance adjustments:

AT WORK

- Schedule brief breaks throughout the day. Your productivity and effectiveness will increase even with a 10-minute break every two hours. More will be accomplished.
- At the end of each day, set your priorities for the following day. Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time you have available.
- Separate work from the rest of your life. Protect your private time by turning off electronic communications. Don't be available 24/7.

STEP 4:

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Allow yourself “rest time”. Step away from the business, particularly if you work alone. Create time to take a break, rest, and rejuvenate. It is vitally important that you remain fresh and this is how to accomplish it.

AT HOME

- Create a buffer between work and home. After work, take a brief walk, do a crossword puzzle, or listen to some music before beginning the evening’s routine.
- Decide what chores can be delegated or dumped. Determine which household chores are critical and which can be allocated to someone else. Let the non-essential tasks go.
- Exercise. Even for 15 minutes, you’ll feel energized and refreshed.
- Create and implement a household budget. Set aside some salary from each pay cheque for the future.
- Make healthy food choices. Healthy eating gives you and your family more energy.
- Pursue a hobby. Either with friends or family or for quality alone time.

STEP 4: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

WORKING FROM HOME

- Create a dedicated work space. Separate from other family members with minimal technical and personal distractions. The right space promotes productivity, privacy, creativity, comfort and efficiency.
- Stock appropriate tools of the trade. Ensure you have a company computer, laptop or tablet and whatever supplies you need to do the job. A stable internet connection, a Webcam, phone and headset are ideal for your home office.
- Ensure your office is ergonomically-friendly. The right chair to maintain your posture and support your back; a workstation that allows you to keep your elbows bent a 90-degree angles; a monitor height that keeps the top of the viewing area slightly below eye level; a keyboard positioned slightly below elbow height to keep your wrists straight; feet resting on the floor.
- Develop a family plan for infants and children. If they're at home with you during the pandemic, it's necessary to come up with a plan that involves your partner and includes plenty of activities, chores and setting them up with online schooling if they are old enough. Meal-planning and coordinated work breaks will also be needed.
- Incorporate and maintain a consistent schedule. Rise early, plan ahead, make a list of

STEP 4: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

the tasks to be accomplished and track them via calendar. Adapt your office routine to home. Dress accordingly, even at home. Clean up any unfinished tasks and your work station at the end of day.

- Establish and maintain boundaries. Keep dedicated work hours and connect with family and friends when the work is done.
- Maintain good communication with employers and co-workers. Self-explanatory.

Source: www.wechu.org/cv/mental-health-promotion-tips-working-home

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Make choices. Social, community and volunteer obligations pull us in many directions. Choose the ones that are most fulfilling and say 'no' to the rest.
- Manage expectations. Be clear at the outset about how much time or support you can contribute to community organizations or your children's school events.



STEP 5: ACCEPT HELP

Most entrepreneurs are poster children for independence and self-reliance. But as resilient and as much of a multi-tasker as you may be, everyone needs the occasional helping hand. Too much self-reliance can negatively affect your mental health.

No man (or woman) is an island. It is ok to not be ok - to reach out for help as you; even to consider it as part of a prevention plan as you would for teeth cleaning or an oil change: a mental health tune up.

EARLY INTERVENTION

In addition to your informal personal support network of family, friends, and associates, there is an entire community of formal support that is fully approachable and accessible.

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Tell your family doctor or primary care provider about any mental health struggles you may be experiencing. They may be able to provide options from psychiatric consultations to available medications, and assess any underlying physical health conditions that may be causing or contributing to your concerns.

If you do not have a Primary Care Physician:

Contact CMHA Health Centre to find out how one can be provided to you.

Online: cmhahealthcentre.ca

Phone: 519-971-0116

STEP 5: ACCEPT HELP

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

TSC Crisis & Mental Wellness Centre

744 Ouellette Ave. | 519- 973-4435

Walk-in Crisis: 8 am - 8 pm daily

Community Referrals: Weekdays 8:30-4:30

A coordinated access point run in partnership by Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare and CMHA-WECB. They are available to conduct intake assessments with potential clients to determine which community programs might be best for you.

Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Care Centre

744 Ouellette Ave. | 519-257-5111

Open Monday- Friday, 11 am - 7 pm

The clinic is a central access point for adults or youth aged 16 years or older who cannot safely wait for community mental health and addiction support. The service is intended for those experiencing an acute, at-risk mental health or addiction crisis that may require hospitalization.

STEP 5: ACCEPT HELP

COUNSELLING AND THERAPY

Clients of CMHA Health Centre have access to CMHA therapists.

Clients of Windsor Family Health Team have access to the Team Care Therapists.

Family Services Windsor-Essex: 519-966-5010

Check online for days/times of walk-in counseling clinics located in Windsor, Leamington, Kingsville and Harrow: familyserviceswe.ca/



STEP 6: MANAGING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

This is the step you may need to start at if you are in crisis.

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY, THE COMMUNITY CRISIS LINE IS AVAILABLE 24/7 : 519-973-4435

A person **SHOULD IMMEDIATELY HEAD TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT** if experiencing:

- Acutely suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviour
- Substance related intoxication
- Acute Psychosis
- Possible medical issues
- Severe alcohol dependency
- Aggressive or violent behaviour with risk to others

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CMHA-WECB has over 20 programs and services focused on supporting those with moderate to severe mental illness.

Programs include:

- Case Management
- Justice supports
- Housing
- Early Intervention
- Bereavement
- Addictions
- Education and Training

MENTAL HEALTH APPS

MindShift

For coping with anxiety

BeSafe by MindYourMind

Creating a mental health safety plan

Calm

Designed to reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and help you feel happier

Moodie

Designed to complement other mental health services. Users can give permission for professionals to view their mental health tracking data

Moods

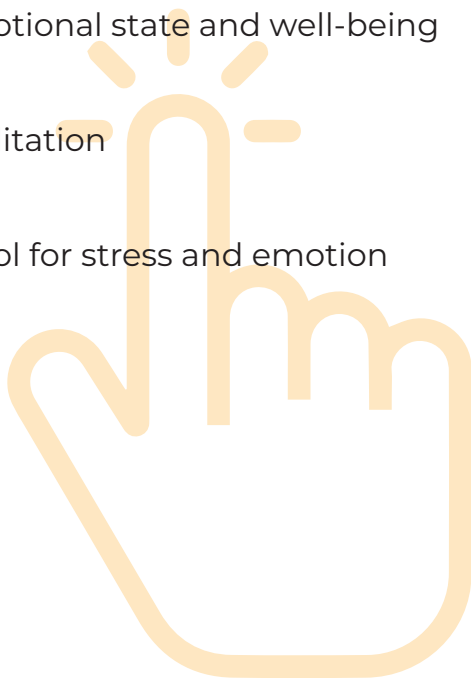
For tracking your emotional state and well-being

Headspace

Mindfulness and Meditation

Healthy Minds

A problem-solving tool for stress and emotion



ONLINE RESOURCES

CMHA, Windsor-Essex County Branch:

www.windsoriessex.cmha.ca

Windsor-Essex County Community Services

Information: Dial 211 or 211southwestontario.cioc.ca/record/WIN0235

CMHA – Ontario: www.ontario.cmha.ca

CMHA – National: www.cmha.ca

This site has fact sheets on many different disorders

BounceBack: bouncebackontario.ca

A free skill-building program managed by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild-to-moderate depression and anxiety, stress or worry.

Delivered over the phone with a coach and through online videos, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness.

Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:

moodgym.com.au

MENTAL HEALTH & WORK

Going it Alone - The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Canada's Entrepreneurs:

cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/GoingitAlone-CMHA-BDCReport-FINAL-EN.pdf

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health – Independent Professionals:

www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/independent-professionals



NOTES



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Windsor-Essex County

Community well-being is our sole focus.

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