



The Working Mind™

Manager Course Handout



**Opening
Minds**

MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION
OF CANADA

About MHCC and Opening Minds

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) leads the development and dissemination of innovative programs and tools to support Canadians' mental health and well-being.

Opening Minds (OM) is the social enterprise division of MHCC with a focus on providing training programs such as Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), The Working Mind (TWM), and The Inquiring Mind (TIM). These programs seek to change Canadians' behaviours and attitudes toward people living with mental health and substance use problems and illness, helping to ensure people are treated fairly and as full citizens with opportunities to contribute fully to society. Opening Minds' mission is to be the leader of evidence-based programs that promote mental health and wellness, increase resilience and eliminate stigma around the world.

For more information about these courses, you can visit the Opening Minds website at <https://openingminds.org/>

What is The Working Mind (TWM) Course?

This evidence-based course is designed to initiate a shift in the way you think, feel and act with respect to mental health by increasing your awareness, reducing stigma and other barriers to care in the workplace, encouraging mental health conversations, and strengthening your resilience. By accomplishing these goals, TWM aims to help you maintain your wellness and support others living with a mental health problem or illness in a psychologically healthy and safe work setting.

Course Objectives

This course aims to help participants:

- increase awareness and ability to recognize signs of good mental health, declining mental health and mental illness.
- recognize the impact of stigma surrounding mental health and reduce stigma and other barriers to care in the workplace.
- recognize the factors and benefits of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
- use the Mental Health Continuum tool to notice changes in their mental health and well-being and know when to take appropriate actions.
- have conversations about mental health and suicide with colleagues, friends, and family members.
- recognize stressors in their life.
- use coping strategies and self-care to manage stress and build resilience.
- find available resources to support themselves.
- take care of their own mental health as a manager (Manager course only).
- support their team's mental health using available tools and resources (Manager course only).

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Stigma

Brainstorm and write at least 3 possible impacts and/or consequences of these types of stigma for individuals, workplaces and society in general.

Public	Self	Structural
Other people's negative thoughts/beliefs/statements about you	Your negative thoughts/beliefs/statements about yourself	Discriminatory rules, laws, policies, practices at the institutional/systemic level

Language Matters

What does “people-first” language mean and why does it matter?



Reference Guide – Safer Language

Combating stigma related to mental illness, suicide, and substance use starts with how we use language – something that continuously evolves. That’s why we must all be aware of any outdated language being used in the media and around us every day. Everyone can be a champion against stigma when advocating the use of accurate and respectful language. So, as you communicate with others, be mindful of the impact of your language.¹

Language Matters

Stigmatizing	Respectful
It drives me crazy .	It bothers/annoys/frustrates me.
This is nuts .	This is interesting/strange/peculiar/funny .
This individual suffers from depression.	They live with/are experiencing depression.
Mentally ill or insane person	Person living with a mental health problem or illness
Committed suicide, successful suicide	Died by suicide
Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
Substance abuse	Substance use or substance use disorder
Everyone who is a junkie...	Everyone who uses substances...
They used to be an addict .	They are in recovery .

¹ This brochure is a living document and is subject to regular updates.

Other Barriers to Care

Brainstorm and write at least 3 possible ways to prevent/reduce these other barriers to care.

Barriers to Care	Possible ways to prevent/reduce these barriers
Limited Knowledge	
Time	
Access to Resources	
Financial Costs	

Mental Health Continuum Self-Check

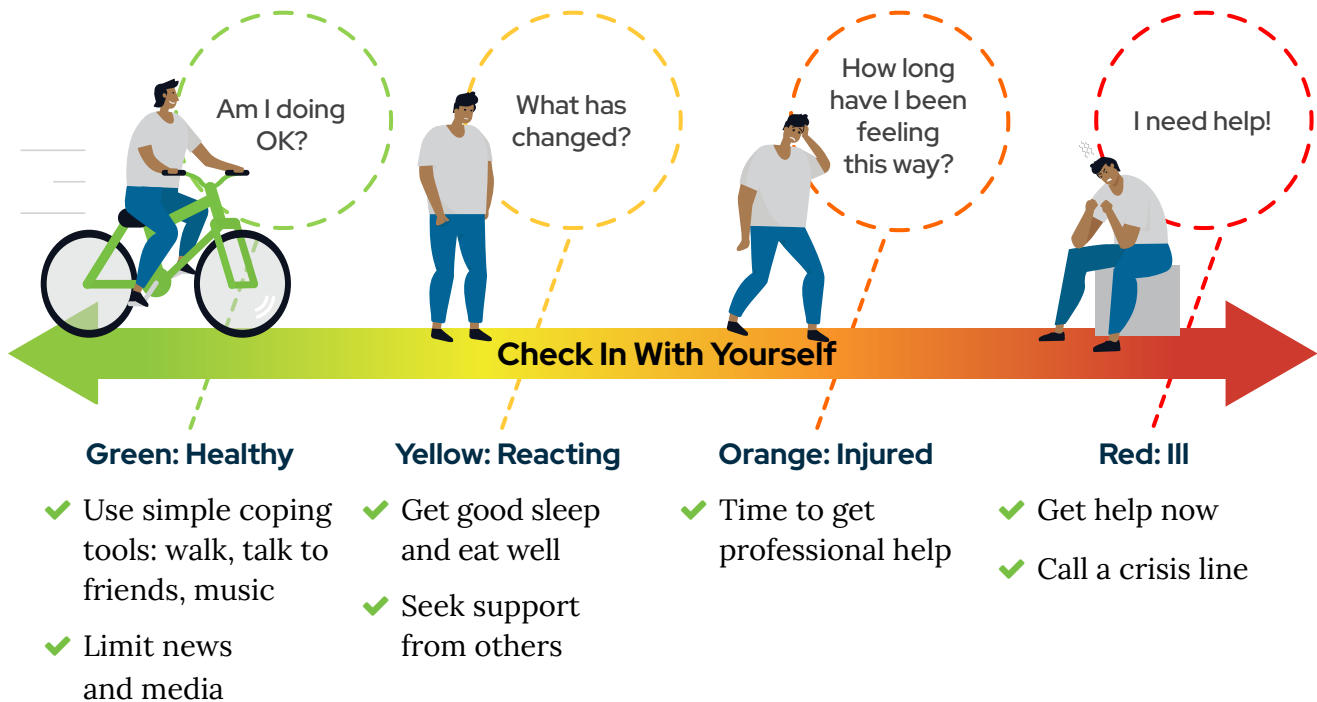
As you move from the left (green) toward the right (red) of the Continuum, you may notice changes in each of these areas. The dotted lines across the four colour zones indicate that some people may experience a linear progression (i.e., from regular-occasional-frequent to excessive) from healthy to ill but not everyone will experience it this way.

This is not a one-size-fits-all tool so everyone will experience these changes differently.

Your task: Take a moment to check the signs and indicators that reflect your changes in these five areas.

	Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Ill
Changes in Mood	Healthy mood fluctuations	Irritability/impatience	Anger	Excessive anger or rage
	Calmness	Nervousness	Feelings of anxiety	Feelings of excessive anxiety
	Confidence/optimism	Occasional self-doubt/pessimism	Loss of confidence/frequent pessimism	Feelings of depression, numbness, hopelessness
	Good sense of humour	Displaced sarcasm	Cynicism	Humourless
Changes in Thinking and Attitude	Healthy attitude and thinking patterns	Occasional negative intrusive thoughts	Frequent negative intrusive thoughts/suicidal ideation	Obsessive negative intrusive thoughts/suicidal intent
	Ability to concentrate and/or focus on tasks	Occasional distraction and/or loss of focus on tasks	Frequent distraction and/or loss of focus on tasks	Inability to concentrate and/or complete loss of memory or cognitive abilities
	Ability to cope and/or handle competing demands	Occasional inability to cope and/or handle competing demands	Frequent inability to cope and/or handle competing demands	Pervasive sense of incompetence and/or feeling completely overwhelmed
Changes in Behaviour and Performance	Healthy physical/social activity	Occasional avoidance of physical/social activity	Frequent avoidance of physical/social activity	Isolation and/or complete withdrawal from physical/social activity
	Good performance	Occasional performance issues and/or procrastination	Frequent performance issues and/or procrastination	Inability to perform duties and/or complete tasks
	Physically present and engaged	Occasional presenteeism	Frequent presenteeism/absenteeism	Constant and prolonged absenteeism
	Mentally present and alert	Occasionally distant/distracted	Frequently distant/distracted and/or pulling away from others	Not mentally present
	Healthy sleep patterns	Occasional trouble sleeping	Frequent trouble sleeping/restlessness	Inability to fall/stay asleep and/or insomnia
Physical Changes	Healthy appetite	Occasional gain/loss of appetite	Frequent gain/loss of appetite	Excessive food intake or complete loss of appetite
	Feeling energetic	Occasional lack of energy	Frequent tiredness	Constant and prolonged physical exhaustion
	Healthy and stable weight	Occasional weight fluctuations	Frequent weight fluctuations	Extreme weight fluctuations
Changes in Substance Use and Addictive Behaviours	Limited/no alcohol consumption and/or binge drinking	Occasional alcohol consumption and/or binge drinking	Frequent alcohol consumption and/or binge drinking	Excessive alcohol consumption and/or binge drinking
	Limited/no addictive behaviours (i.e., gaming, social media use, etc.)	Occasional addictive behaviours (i.e., gaming, social media use, etc.)	Struggle to control addictive behaviours (i.e., gaming, social media use, etc.)	Inability to control addictive behaviours (i.e., gaming, social media use, etc.)
	No trouble/impact due to substance use (i.e., smoking, vaping, etc.)	Limited trouble/impact due to substance use (i.e., smoking, vaping, etc.)	Frequent trouble/impact due to substance use (i.e., smoking, vaping, etc.)	Severe trouble/impact due to substance use (i.e., smoking, vaping, etc.)
My Personal Changes				

How am I Doing?



Use this quick tool to ask yourself *"How am I doing?"*

It will help you notice and be able to talk about changes in yourself, a co-worker, family member or friend.

You may notice:

- physical changes
- changes in how you think, feel and act
- changes in substance use

These changes may be normal reactions to stress.

How can I use it?

- ✓ Take a minute to see where you are on the colour continuum? Do this daily.
- ✓ Text or call a friend or family member and use the colours to talk about how you are feeling, coping or reacting in the moment.
- ✓ Do a "colour" check-in at team meetings or as a conversation opener with staff.

Access the Continuum Self-Check Tool



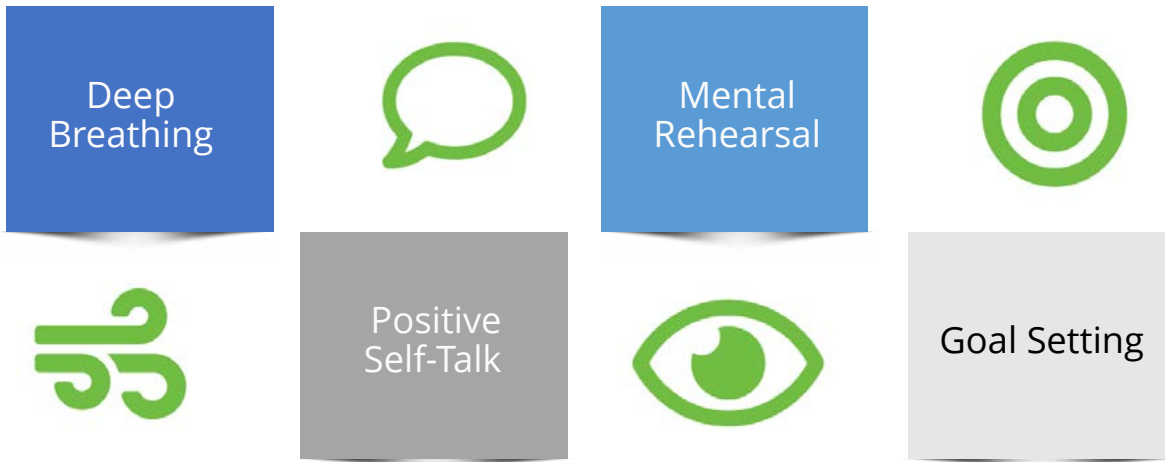
openingminds.org/continuum-self-check

Sources of Stress

Take a moment to think about and list some personal/work-related/other stressors. Be ready to share some of your answers with the group.

Work-Related	Personal	Other

The Big 4 Strategies



Self-Care Assessment

1. One thing I do on a regular basis to take care of myself is...

2. One thing I would like to do more often for myself is...

3. I know I need to pause and take care of myself when...

Healthy Conversations Guide

Actions	Looks/sounds like...
Approach the person Set a time when you are both available and able to listen to each other face-to-face, by phone or online. Ensure confidentiality.	<i>"I would like to put aside some time for us to have an informal chat. When would be a good time for you?"</i>
Share your observations Stick to the facts and remain objective. Use "I" statements to talk about the specific behaviour(s) you are worried about and show that you are concerned. This is a good way to say what you think/sense without blaming or criticizing.	<i>"I've noticed that..."</i> <i>"I feel..."</i> <i>"I'm worried about..."</i> <i>"You seem distracted/frustrated/exhausted lately."</i> <i>"I sense something is bothering you."</i>
Use open-ended questions/statements to encourage more conversation. These can help the person open up and help you understand the situation better. Ask them with a genuine interest in what's going on.	<i>"What changes have you noticed in yourself lately?"</i> <i>"What do you feel comfortable sharing?"</i> <i>"What's going on?"</i> <i>"How can I help you?"</i>
Listen without judgement Stop what you are doing and listen to what they are saying. Don't interrupt and let them say everything they need to.	<i>Relaxed posture, eye contact, nodding</i> <i>"I see...yes...hmm"</i> <i>"Okay. I see."</i>
Keep calm and objective Be open to what the person has to say. If you feel yourself getting impatient or upset, take some deep breaths or take a break.	<i>Calm, even tone of voice</i> <i>"I need some time to think about this. Can we continue this conversation later?"</i>
Acknowledge the person and try to understand it from their point of view (empathy) Recap what you've heard and acknowledge that you hear what they're saying/feeling.	<i>"I'm hearing that..." Is that correct?</i> <i>"It's normal to feel..."</i> <i>"I understand that you are feeling..."</i> <i>"It sounds like you feel..."</i>
Encourage them to find their own solutions if it's appropriate. Help them figure out what options they have and what will make them feel better.	<i>"What do you need right now?"</i> <i>"Is there anyone else you trust that you can talk to about this?"</i> <i>"What resources would help?"</i>
Check in often: Continue to check in with them to see how they are doing and let them know you are there to support them. Set a date to check back (within a week) to see how they are progressing and to work out a plan. Connect with the employee as planned to see how they are doing.	<i>"I'm here for you if you need to talk."</i> <i>"Let's check back in with each other next week."</i>
Take appropriate action(s): If the person is in distress and refuses help, offer to help them contact EAP or someone else they trust. If you think they might harm themselves or they express suicidal thoughts, get immediate help or call emergency services.	<i>"I'm going to call for help."</i> <i>"Let's contact EAP/other service/person together."</i>

Source: Adapted from <http://www.commonground.org.nz/common-support/healthy-conversations>

ALBRA Model

ASK

*“Are you thinking of killing yourself?” or
“Are you having thoughts of suicide?”*

LISTEN

without judgement

BELIEVE

*“I believe you.”
“I don’t want that to happen to you.”*

REASSURE

*“Thank you for trusting me.”
“I’m here with you right now.”*

ACT

*“Is there someone I can call?”
“I’m going to stay with you until emergency
services arrive.”*



Return to Work and Accommodation Checklist

Action items	
1. Connect with the employee during their leave to let them know everyone is thinking about them.	
2. Discuss how the employee would like information about themselves to be shared with co-workers, especially with regard to the changes in work that will affect co-workers as the person returns to work. When co-workers have adequate information, they can then be supportive during the individual's return to work.	
3. Respect the employee's wishes about what information is kept private and what is shared with others.	
4. Meet with the employee after they return to work to discuss their needs and understand how to support them. Ask if there are any functional limitations that could affect the person's ability to carry out the essential duties of their job and what accommodations would enable them to continue to do their job effectively.	
5. Discuss and provide any training, information or resources that the employee may need to get back up to speed.	
6. Provide information about extended health benefits, Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) services, disability benefits, sick days and other information about benefits as needed.	
7. Provide information about workplace policies or procedures including policies for return to work and accommodation.	
8. Participate in the development of the return to work plan.	
9. Help to address issues of workplace conflict or performance concerns.	
10. Initiate training and education programs.	
11. Follow up with the employee or designate someone who can follow up on your behalf.	
12. Keep your notes on the meeting in a secure location. A locked filing cabinet and password-protected computers are key to maintaining an employee's confidentiality.	

Source: Adapted from *Working Through it: A Leader's Guide*, Great West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

How Can I Help my Team?



“These are challenging times. Whatever you’re feeling is OK.”

Acknowledge and Listen

- ✓ Acknowledge that something happened.
- ✓ Review the facts without going into details.
- ✓ Listen and provide an opportunity for discussion.

“Here are some ways that can help keep us safe right now...”

Inform and Remind

- ✓ Help your team check-in with themselves about their mental health.
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of taking care of themselves.
- ✓ Remind them about using healthy coping strategies.
- ✓ Share available resources.

“How else can I support you?”

Respond and Follow-up

- ✓ Observe your team and follow-up with members in the upcoming hours, days, and weeks.
- ✓ Walk the talk by modeling healthy coping strategies and seeking help if needed.

When to use it?

Following exposure to any potential stressor or workplace incident.

Any time the stress level is high in the team after any immediate threat has passed.



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Get help now

Suicide & Crisis Helpline

Call or text: 988

Kids Help Phone:

1-800-668-6868

**Access more mental
health resources
on the hub**



r.openingminds.org

*Open camera on your phone to scan
the QR code and click on the link that
pops up to access the Resource Hub.*

**Explore
Opening Minds
courses**



The Working Mind

openingminds.org/training/twm



The Inquiring Mind

openingminds.org/training/tim



Mental Health First Aid

openingminds.org/training/mhfa



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