



Group Benefits

What's on your mind?® Caring for your mental health

Nurturing your mental health is a bit like gardening. The same way a gardener waters and cares for their garden, you can care for your mental health. For most people, whether it's a garden or your mental health, your work, effort and choices matter.

It's important to remember, however, that it's not always just up to you. It's not a gardener's fault palm trees won't grow in a cold snowy climate. For some people it's like this with their mental health. You may do all the right things and try hard to follow healthy habits, but still have a tough time with your mental health.

Here are some tips that may help you maintain good mental health. Keep in mind that these may not work for everyone. If you think you are suffering from a mental health condition, you should consult with a doctor or health care provider.

- **Exercise** – Regular healthy exercise reduces stress, toughens up your stress hormone system, and can help in the treatment and prevention of some mental health problems.
- **Get an adequate amount of sleep regularly** – Try to get at least six hours of sleep every night.
- **Eat nutritious food** – Try to eat healthy meals in order to improve your energy, mood and concentration. For more information about healthy eating, see Canada's Food Guide.
- **Practise positive 'self talk'** – Try to make sure you practise a healthy, positive style of thinking or 'self talk'. Watch your 'self talk' for negatives and try not to always take things personally.
- **Get and stay socially connected** – It helps to be part of a social network and community. Your network may include family, friends, neighbours, clubs, or whatever interests you.
- **Build and invest in positive relationships** – It is important to surround yourself with positive people and to avoid or reduce destructive relationships.
- **Try to find balance** – Learn to find a balance by setting limits and boundaries in your life and with others. Sometimes this means being more assertive, or being able to say "no thank you" to things when you have the freedom and desire to do so.
- **Have a regular health care provider** – Have a family physician, nurse practitioner or other health care provider available to provide regular preventive care.
- **Don't abuse substances** – Abusing alcohol, using illegal drugs, misusing prescription drugs, and consuming excess caffeine energy drinks or even nicotine can cause or worsen mental health problems.

For more information, please visit www.manulife.ca/mentalhealth.

