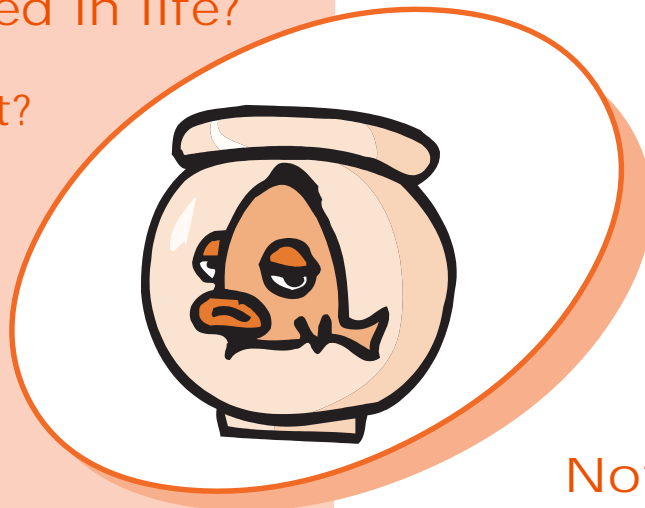


Disappointed in life?

Feeling worn out?



Not having any fun?
Unhappy with yourself?

If your answer is YES, you are not alone

It is *normal* to feel down on ourselves and life

Half of us will experience problems with mental health at some point during our lives

Mental health is just as important to our lives as our physical health

Mental health is not the same thing as the absence of a mental illness. How we feel about ourselves, the world and our lives are all part of mental health. In reality, no one experiences perfect mental health or well-being all of the time (if ever!). We don't wait until we are sick before we begin to care about our physical health. In the same way, it doesn't make sense to wait until you are suffering from mental health problems before you begin to value your mental health.

Are you among the Canadians most at risk for poor mental health?

- People coping with lots of stress or significant life events
- People with low levels of social support
- Teenagers
- Adults with low education or income levels
- Adults or children who have experienced traumas
- Women
- People with physical health problems
- People with personality traits that increase the likelihood of problems (e.g., having excessively high standards, taking excessive risks, etc.)

Our mental health can affect many areas of our lives:

Work, school, or home life

Relationships with others

Sleep

Appetite

Energy levels

Ability to think clearly or make decisions

Physical health

Life satisfaction and more...

Examples of positive thoughts

- I know I can get through these rough times
- I feel pumped up about life!
- I know I have friends who really care about me
- I feel good about the way my life is going these days
- I have some really cool talents and interests
- I want to do something that makes a positive difference
- I'm a good person even though I have some flaws
- Good things are going to happen to me

Examples of negative thoughts

- I feel like I'm losing my mind
- Life sucks!
- I'm never going to get through this
- I'm ugly and stupid
- They think I'm a loser
- It feels like something really bad is going to happen
- My flaws are too big to overcome
- Nothing good ever seems to happen to me

THOUGHTS

Thoughts include the ideas, images and urges that are constantly going through our minds. Changes in negative and positive thoughts often go along with changes in our mental health.

Examples of behaviours

- Working on a solution to a problem one step at a time
- Reaching out to a friend or family member for support and understanding
- Isolating ourselves and pulling away from friends and family
- Crying or tearfulness easily triggered
- Using alcohol or drugs to make the bad feelings go away
- Praying or other forms of meaningful spiritual practice
- Doing something relaxing like taking a bath, or doing yoga or meditation
- Avoiding the things that upset us
- Doing things that distract us from thinking about our problems (e.g., watching TV, working)
- Exercise or active recreational activities
- Engaging in hobbies or leisure activities
- Overeating, not eating enough, or purging food (e.g., vomiting, over exercising)
- Lashing out at other people (verbally or physically)
- Excessive dependency or clinging to loved ones

BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours include all of the helpful or harmful things we do. Other people can usually see our behaviours. Changes in our behaviour often go along with changes in our mental health.

BODY REACTIONS

Body reactions refer to changes in our body functions such as heart rate, breathing, digestion, brain chemicals, hormones and more. Changes in our body reactions often go along with changes in our mental health.

Examples of body reactions

- Muscle tension, muscle aches or headaches
- Upset stomach, nausea or urge to vomit
- Upset bowel or diarrhea
- Lack of appetite or increased appetite
- Urge to urinate or frequent urination
- Sweating, hot flushes or cold chills
- Chest pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Rapid heart beat or heart palpitations
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed
- Sense of unreality or being detached
- Aggravation of an existing health problem (e.g., acne, digestive disorders, migraines, chronic pain, etc.)
- Difficulties with sexual arousal or fulfilment

EMOTIONS

Emotions refer to how we feel and can be pleasant or unpleasant. Changes in emotions often go along with changes in our mental health.

Examples of pleasant emotions

- Happiness or sense of joy
- Contentment
- Sense of calm
- Excitement
- Feeling love or affection
- Feeling cheerful

Examples of unpleasant emotions

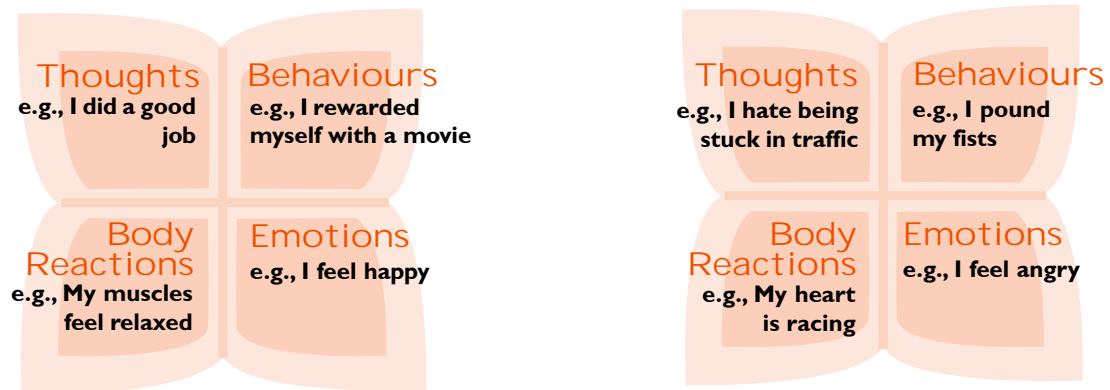
- Irritability or anger
- Frustration
- Anxiety or fear
- Sadness or feeling down
- Feeling empty or numb
- Hopelessness

4 Basic Dimensions

of Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental health is determined by our overall patterns of thoughts, emotions, behaviours and body reactions.

Each of the 4 mental health dimensions can influence all of the others.



Why should mental health matter to me and my family?

When our mental health suffers, it can become difficult to enjoy life and we begin to feel run down mentally and physically. Many of these changes can get in the way of us living a rewarding life. All of us can benefit from learning how to enhance and protect our mental health (whether we have experienced mental illness and/or substance use problems or not).

Where do I start?

The BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information have lots of information on how to improve your mental health and well-being. Check out our Wellness Modules and other useful resources for you and your family at www.heretohelp.bc.ca or give us a call at 1-800-661-2121. We're here to help.

You might also be interested in...

- **BC Mental Health Information Line** – Call (604) 669-7600 in the Lower Mainland, or 1-800-661-2121 elsewhere in British Columbia. For more details, see www.heretohelp.bc.ca/connectmeto/infoline.shtml
- **Health Canada Healthy Living** – Mental health information www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/lifestyles/mental_health.html
- **Authentic Happiness** www.authentichappiness.com
- **BBCi Health** – Emotional health information www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health
- **Bright Futures** – Tips for kids and families www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/pdf/tools.html#families

Select Sources

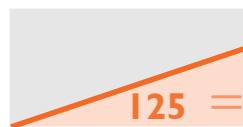
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What is your wellness level?

Read each statement and circle the response that best reflects how you have been feeling during the past month. Add up your circled responses to find out your Total Wellness Score.

	Never	Rarely	Half the Time	Frequently	Almost Always
I felt self-confident	1	2	3	4	5
I felt satisfied with what I was able to accomplish—I felt proud of myself	1	2	3	4	5
I was a “go-getter”—I took on lots of projects	1	2	3	4	5
I felt emotionally balanced	1	2	3	4	5
I felt loved and appreciated	1	2	3	4	5
I had goals and ambitions	1	2	3	4	5
I felt like having fun, participating in sports and all my favourite activities and hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
I felt useful	1	2	3	4	5
I smiled easily	1	2	3	4	5
I was true to myself, being natural at all times	1	2	3	4	5
I did a good job of listening to my friends	1	2	3	4	5
I was curious and interested in all sorts of things	1	2	3	4	5
I was able to clearly sort things out when faced with complicated situations	1	2	3	4	5
I found life exciting and I wanted to enjoy every moment of it	1	2	3	4	5
My life was well-balanced between my family, personal and professional activities	1	2	3	4	5
I was quite calm and level-headed	1	2	3	4	5
I was able to easily find answers to my problems	1	2	3	4	5
I got along well with everyone around me	1	2	3	4	5
I lived at a normal pace, not doing everything excessively	1	2	3	4	5
I had the impression of really enjoying life	1	2	3	4	5
I had a good sense of humour, easily making my friends laugh	1	2	3	4	5
I felt good, at peace with myself	1	2	3	4	5
I felt healthy and in good shape	1	2	3	4	5
I was able to face difficult situations in a positive way	1	2	3	4	5
My morale was good	1	2	3	4	5

MY TOTAL WELLNESS SCORE
(Add up all circled items)



What does my score mean?

Your score reflects the degree of balance you have across the different areas in your life, how well you are coping, and how good you feel about things. These are all important aspects of wellness and mental health. There is no magic score that guarantees perfect wellness so we have not included any guidelines regarding “high” or “low” scores and what they mean. Instead, we recommend using this self-test to track your own wellness status *over time*.

If you are actively working on ways to improve your health, then your score will probably go up over time. Increases usually mean we are feeling better about things and feel more able to cope with life’s challenges while still finding time for fun. If you are experiencing stress or changes in your overall health, then your score may go down for a period of time. Decreases usually mean it is harder to feel good about things and we are struggling to find a sense of balance. Decreases in scores can be an important sign we need to take action to make things better for ourselves. Most of us will experience ups and downs in our wellness scores over time. To track your own wellness and general mental health over time, we recommend taking this test once a month.

(Adapted from Massé, R., Poulin, C., Lambert, J., & Dassa, C. (1998). Élaboration et validation d’un outil de mesure du bien-être psychologique au Québec. *Revue canadienne de santé publique*, 89(5), 352-357).