

# Mental Health Resources



If you are struggling with any symptoms of anxiety (worry that interferes with your function and quality of life) or depression (sadness that impacts your function and quality of life) or suicidal thoughts please reach out to your doctor to discuss the best management plan for you.

A mental health toolkit is a set of resources you can utilize to help you manage any symptoms of anxiety or depression including any changes in sleep, appetite, self worth, focus and general enjoyment in life.

Your mental health toolkit should include the following:

## **1. Regular exercise**

- a. 30 mins of movement most days of the week that gets your heart rate elevated.
- b. This can be broken up into 10 min intervals.
- c. Having a friend/partner to help you do the exercise can make it easier to do.
- d. Try not to leave exercise to the end of the day as often it's much harder to do at the end of a day.

## **2. Good quality sleep**

- a. Sleep Hygiene is a set of 'rules' that help to improve sleep quality and quantity
- b. Key parts of sleep hygiene are consistent wake up times and bedtimes, not staying in bed if you haven't fallen asleep after 30 minutes, being off all screens one hour prior to bed and using a consistent 'winddown' routine (ie. guided breathing exercise, journaling, adult coloring book, gentle yoga stretches etc) to help train your brain that it's time to get ready to sleep.

## **3. Healthy Eating**

- a. Eating foods that are from the Canada food guide, with a balance of either protein or fat containing foods paired with a carbohydrate help to improve your energy and mood and ensure stable blood sugars.
- b. Caffeine can interfere with sleep and can increase anxiety so if you are having caffeine try to limit this to the early morning only.

## **4. Social supports**

- a. Reach out to trusted family and friends to share how you are feeling and see if there are things they can help you with (ie. meal support, walking buddy, help with childcare).
- a. For many people social media can worsen their mental health so consider taking a break and connect in person instead of through social media.

## 5. Talk with a Professional

- a. Psychologists, Social Workers and trained mental health support workers can help you navigate the various uncertainties that can occur in life.
- b. No cost **self referral** resources include:
  - Access Mental Health: call 403-943-1500 to access fully funded counselling, offered through Recovery Alberta.
  - Distress Centre: 403-266-4357, 300-1010 8th Ave SW, <https://distresscentre.com>, 6 funded sessions plus drop in crisis counselling)
  - Eastside Family Counselling: drop in counselling, first come first serve [www.woodshomes.ca/eastside-community-mental-health-services/](http://www.woodshomes.ca/eastside-community-mental-health-services/)
  - Employee Assistance Programs (if this is often offered through your job as part of your benefits)
  - One Step At a Time Counselling through Calgary Foothills PCN: call 587-774-9736 to have fully funded counselling session funded by the PCN
  - Eunoia Virtual Counselling - <https://www.eunoiamedical.ca/new-patients>
  - Families Matter has many counselling options as well as supports groups including for Dads <https://familiesmatter.ca/resources-2/>
- c. No cost **physician referral** Resources
  - Perinatal Mental Health Program offered through Access Mental Health (24 weeks of pregnancy to 12 months postpartum), your doctor can refer you.
  - Owl Pod - funded virtual counselling, your doctor can refer you.

## 6. Mindfulness

This is an evidence based skill that improves mental health and is great for managing labor pain too. The more you practice this the better it works.

Apps we recommend include:

- MindShift CBT- Anxiety Relief (free App store)
- Smiling Mind: Mental Wellbeing ([www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au), free App store)
- Headspace (limited content through Netflix for free, or full access through the App store for a monthly fee, 14 day free trial)
- Calm ([www.Calm.com](http://www.Calm.com)) If guided breathing isn't for you this has relaxing bedtime stories to keep your brain distracted while you fall asleep, this has an annual cost but the app can be shared with up to 6 people through your family app account.

## 7. Use trusted websites for good quality information

[www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com)

[www.psychologytoday.com/ca](http://www.psychologytoday.com/ca) to search for registered psychologists

[pregnancyinfo.ca](http://pregnancyinfo.ca) (general pregnancy information from the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada, has a section on mental health under postpartum category)

[mothertobaby.org](http://mothertobaby.org) (medication and environmental exposure information in pregnancy and breastfeeding)

<https://cmha.ca> (Canadian Mental Health Association)

## 8. If you are in Crisis you can get free 24 hour supports at:

- a. Distress Centre (call or text 403-266-4357, <https://www.distressentre.com>)
- b. Calgary Women's Shelter: call 403-234-SAFE (2733), text 403-604-6689, [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com)

- c. Alberta Mental Health Line: call toll free 1-877-303-2642)
- d. 2-1-1 (call 2-1-1 toll free, 170 languages offered, can text INFO to 211 if this is better than a call)
- e. National Suicide Crisis Helpline (call 9-8-8 toll free)