



Bell Let's Talk Day 2026 Toolkit

Taking a moment for mental health

This toolkit is designed to help you create meaningful moments that support mental well-being. Share these resources, start conversations, and encourage others to take a moment for their mental health.

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Some material in this toolkit was adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Message from Mary Deacon, Chair, Bell Let's Talk Mental Health Initiative

At a time when Canadians are struggling with so much uncertainty mental health is more important than ever. This toolkit provides practical and evidence-based information on how everyone can improve their mental well-being.

For me, in addition to having the support of a psychiatrist and the right medications to treat my treatment resistant depression, I find it empowering to know there are things within my own control that I can do to support my mental well-being. The evidence is strong, that simple and easy-to-do things like breathing exercises, practicing gratitude, physical activity, doing a digital detox and spending time with friends and family and many others can help build resilience, reduce stress and anxiety, foster social connection, improve mood and much more.

The mental health moments I take include exercise, painting, playing with my new puppy and breathing exercises. Find the things that appeal to you – there are so many ways to take a mental health moment.

I encourage everyone to read these resources and take a moment for mental health on Bell Let's Talk Day, and every day throughout the year.

Thank you to CMHA for providing these resources for the 2026 Bell Let's Talk toolkit.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Deacon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Mary" on the top line and "Deacon" on the bottom line.

1. Understanding Mental Health

Mental health is more than the absence of illness—it's about how we think, feel, and interact every day. It affects every part of life, from relationships to work performance.

Every person has their own mental health, just as we all have our own physical health. It is important that we take care of our emotional well-being just as much as we take care of our physical well-being. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual is continually taking care of and maintaining a healthy and functional emotional state. Mental health does not directly refer to an illness and is not merely the absence of a mental disorder.

Mental health care is essential at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Your mental health will not always stay the same. It is perfectly normal to have changes in your emotional state, we would not be humans without our emotions. Your emotional state can change as circumstances change and as you move through different stages of your life and can be impacted on by the way you think, feel and behave which are all very common.

Maintaining a mentally healthy lifestyle encompasses ones ability to handle emotionally difficult situations. This includes an individuals ability to cope with normal stresses of life, get on with daily tasks of life, practice healthy coping strategies and navigate difficult circumstances.



Take a Moment:

- ✓ Learn what mental health really means and why it matters.
- ✓ Share this definition with others to start the conversation.

2. Mental Health For Life

Mental health changes throughout life, and everyone can take steps to protect and strengthen it. Building resilience and coping skills helps us thrive at any age.

Mental health is key to our well-being. We can't be truly healthy without it. It involves how we feel, think, act, and interact with the world around us. Mental health is about realizing our potential, coping with the normal stresses of life, and making a contribution to our community. It may be more helpful to think of good mental health as thriving. Good mental health isn't about avoiding problems or trying to achieve a 'perfect' life. It's about living well and feeling capable despite challenges. Mental well-being is bigger than the presence or absence of a mental illness. People who live with a mental illness can and do thrive, just as people without a mental illness may experience poor mental health.

Mental well-being is bigger than the presence or absence of a mental illness.

Each of our paths to mental well-being will be unique. We all have our own goals, our own challenges, our own talents, and our own supports. But good mental health is in everyone's reach. Below, find tips and activities to help you take a look at your own well-being, discover your strengths, and take action.



Build a healthy self-esteem

Self-esteem is more than just seeing your good qualities. It is being able to see all your abilities and weaknesses together, accepting them, and doing your best with what you have. Self-esteem means recognizing your unique talents and abilities, and using that confidence to follow your goals and interests without comparing yourself to others.

Activity: Build confidence



Take a good look at your good points. What do you do best? Where are your skills and interest areas? How would a friend describe you? Now, look at your weak points. What do you have difficulty doing? What makes you feel frustrated? Now, which list was easier to write? Remember that all of us have our positive and negative sides. We build confidence by developing our weaker areas and regularly reminding ourselves of the things we're comfortable with and proud of.

Build positive support networks

Good relationships take effort, whether it's relationships with family members, friends, or other important supporters. It takes courage to reach out and time to build trust. But social support is a very important part of mental health. People in our networks can offer many different kinds of support, like emotional support, practical help, and alternate points of view. Support can come from family and friends, neighbours, coworkers or classmates, faith communities, clubs or support groups for specific problems.

Activity: Make time



Make time just to be with important people in your life. Make time for simply having fun and enjoying each other's company, and time for serious conversations.

Get involved

Being involved in things that really matter to us provides a great feeling of purpose and satisfaction. You make a difference, no matter how big or small your efforts. Getting involved connects you with others in your community who share similar interests or values and connects you to groups of people you might not normally meet. It can help you learn new skills, build confidence, and see your own experiences in a different way.



Activity: Volunteer

Be a volunteer. Read to children at your local library, visit people in a hospital or care facility, serve on a committee or board of your favourite charity, clean up your favourite park or beach, or simply help a neighbour.

Build resiliency

Resiliency means coping well with problems, stress, and other difficult situations. Problems and stress are a normal part of life. Situations like accidents or illness, unexpected life changes, and conflict happen to everyone. Resiliency is what helps you look at the situation realistically, take action when you can make changes, let go of things you can't change, and recognize the helpful supports in your life. Your resiliency toolkit might include skills like problem-solving, assertiveness, balancing obligations and expectations, and developing support networks. While some people learn these skills during treatment for mental health problems, we should really think of them as skills for everyone. You can learn more about these skills online, in books, through community organizations, or through your health care provider.



Activity: Build your own toolkit

Set aside time to think about the resiliency tools you already have. This might include skills like structured problem-solving or people who can help you during difficult situations. Remember to include strategies that have worked for you in the past. Keep your list on hand and use it as a reminder when you need help. It's also a good way to see where you might want to build new skills or supports.

Recognize your emotions

Emotional well-being is not about being happy all the time. Feeling sad, angry, and anxious at times is part of being human. Emotional wellbeing involves expressing our emotions in a way that respects everyone. Bottling up our feelings doesn't respect our own experiences, just as lashing out because we feel angry may not respect others. Emotional well-being also includes recognizing what influences our emotions, discovering how our emotions affect the way we think or act, taking action when our emotional response isn't helpful, and learning to accept our emotions—even the difficult ones.

Activity: Identify and deal with your moods



Find out what makes you happy, sad, joyful or angry. What calms you down? Learn ways to deal with your moods. Share joyful news with a friend, and find support when you feel sad. Physical exercise can help you deal with your anger or anxiety. Keep a stack of your favourite funny cartoons, stories, or videos for times when you need to laugh. And don't forget the power of music to lift you up or calm you down.

Spiritual well-being

Spiritual well-being means getting to know ourselves, discovering our values, and learning to be at peace with who we are. It also involves finding and connecting to something bigger than ourselves and living with purpose. Spirituality can give us meaning and solace, help us overcome challenges, and help us build connections with others. This may mean religion for some, but it doesn't have to—it's really about how we feel on the inside.

Activity: Connect with yourself



Set aside quiet, quality time to be totally alone. Try a breathing exercise: count your breaths from one to four, and then start at one again. Or do something you love to do, like dancing, going to a baseball game, building a bird house, going for a hike—whatever works for you!

Take a Moment:



- ✓ Explore strategies for maintaining mental health across life stages.
- ✓ Reflect on what resilience means for you.

3. Finding Balance

Work-life balance isn't just a buzzword—it's essential for mental well-being. Taking time to recharge helps prevent burnout and improves productivity.

If you're finding it difficult to balance the different elements of your life, you're not alone. 58% of Canadians report "overload" associated with their many roles – work, home and family, friends, physical health, volunteer and community service.

A moderate amount of stress improves our efficiency and our mental sharpness. But how do you know when your everyday juggling act has stopped being a motivating challenge and started being harmful to your health? Here are some signs:

- You feel like you've lost control of your life
- You often feel guilty about neglecting your different roles
- You frequently find it difficult to concentrate on the task at hand
- You're always tired.

Tips for Staying in Balance

At work



- Schedule brief breaks for yourself throughout the day. Your productivity and effectiveness will increase if you take even a ten-minute break every two hours and overall, you will get more 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.
- Only respond to email once or twice a day. Then, shut off your email program to avoid being distracted as messages come in.
- Make a distinction between work and the rest of your life. Protect your private time by turning off electronic communications. Don't be available 24/7.

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 shared or let go. Determine which household chores are critical and which can be done by someone else. Let the rest go.
- Exercise. Even if it's only for 15 minutes at a time, you'll feel more energized and refreshed.
- Create and implement a household budget. Start by setting aside some money from each pay cheque for the future.

In Your Community



- Make choices. Social, community and volunteer obligations pull us in many directions. Choose the ones that are most fulfilling and learn to say "no" to the rest.



Take a Moment:

- ✓ Identify one small change you can make today to improve balance.
- ✓ Share tips with others to encourage healthy boundaries.

4. Everyday Tips for Staying Mentally Healthy

Small habits make a big difference. From getting enough sleep to staying connected, these simple actions help protect your mental health.

10 Tips for Mental Health



- 1. Build Confidence**
Identify your abilities and weaknesses together, accept them build on them and do the best with what you have.
- 2. Eat right, Keep fit**
A balanced diet, exercise and rest can help you to reduce stress and enjoy life.
- 3. Make Time for Family and Friends**
These relationships need to be nurtured; if taken for granted they will not be there to share life's joys and sorrows.
- 4. Give and Accept Support**
Friends and family relationships thrive when they are "put to the test".
- 5. Create a Meaningful Budget**
Financial problems cause stress. Over-spending on our "wants" instead of our "needs" is often the culprit.



6. Volunteer

Being involved in community gives a sense of purpose and satisfaction that paid work cannot.

7. Manage Stress

We all have stressors in our lives but learning how to deal with them when they threaten to overwhelm us will maintain our mental health.

8. Find Strength in Numbers

Sharing a problem with others who have had similar experiences may help you find a solution and will make you feel less isolated.

9. Identify and Deal with Moods

We all need to find safe and constructive ways to express our feelings of anger, sadness, joy and fear.health.

10. Learn to Be at Peace with Yourself

Get to know who you are, what makes you really happy, and learn to balance what you can and cannot change about yourself.

Take a Moment:

- ✓ Choose one tip and commit to practicing it this week.
- ✓ Post your favorite tip on social media using #BellLetsTalk.



5. Mindfulness: Taking a Moment

Mindfulness is about being present and aware. Even a few minutes of deep breathing can reduce stress and improve focus.

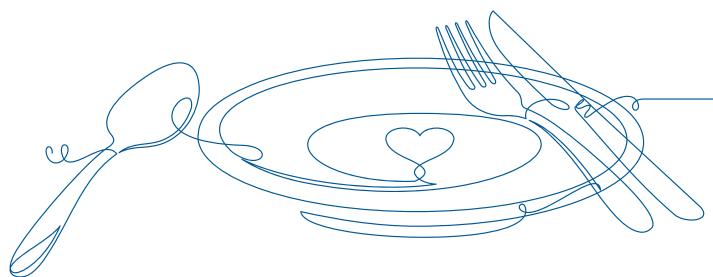
Many of us lead busy lives. We are busy thinking about yesterday and busy planning for tomorrow. When we focus on the past and future, we aren't paying a lot of attention to the present—where we are right now. Mindfulness is simply an invitation to step out of the clutter and really focus on what we are doing, thinking, and feeling in this moment.

Mindfulness is a skill developed by deciding to slow down and taking the time to pay attention and be curious about things that we're experiencing.

What can mindfulness look like?

Mindfulness can be practiced in many different ways, from formal groups or classes to a short check-in with yourself on the way home from work. There is no right or wrong, and what you experience is what you experience. Here are some quick mindfulness techniques you can practice anywhere:

- Eat a meal without distractions like TV or any other devices. Pay attention to what you're eating and the different sensations that come up, and notice how it makes you feel.
- Go for a walk and set out to really pay attention to the environment around you using all your senses. What do you experience?
- Talk with a friend face-to-face without any distractions like phones. Focus on the conversation and really listen without judgments or expectations. Notice how you feel.
- Check in with yourself at any time. What thoughts do you notice? How do they make you feel?
- Take a minute to sit quietly and focus on the sensation of your breath. When you find yourself distracted by a thought, acknowledge the thought and redirect your attention back to your breath.
- There is always a different way to try mindfulness. If sitting mindfulness meditations make you feel restless, try a walking practice



Take a Moment:

- ✓ Try a 2-minute breathing exercise today.
- ✓ Take a mindful break during your day.



6. The Power of Social Support

Connection matters. Reaching out to others strengthens resilience and reminds us we're not alone.

We all need to feel like we belong and that others care about our well-being. Social support is exactly that: the belonging and care we receive from other people. Those people—our social support network—can include many different groups of people, including partners, friends, family members, co-workers, neighbours or even professionals like doctors, counsellors, or peer support workers.

Social support can help us cope with setbacks, solve problems, improve self-esteem and even manage health problems and stress.

What does social support look like?

People can offer many different kinds of support:

- Emotional support—someone you contact when you just need to talk about a problem and share your thoughts and feelings. Emotional support isn't necessarily about finding solutions. It's really about empathy, knowing that someone else cares about you and feeling like you aren't dealing with everything on your own.
- Knowledgeable advice—someone you talk to when you need more information. For example, you might call a friend for advice about accessing a service or ask a co-worker how they dealt with a similar situation.
- New perspectives—someone you call when you need to look at a problem from different points of view—something that's hard to do yourself when you are right in the middle of a situation. Other people, however, can offer great insights that you might not have considered on your own. These perspectives can be powerful tools when you want to solve problems or understand something that's happening in your life.
- Practical help—someone you can call when your childcare provider calls in sick, someone who drops off a meal when you are sick, or someone who can help with your workload. Sometimes, even small tasks or chores can feel overwhelming. Practical help can make a big difference.

Be mindful of your expectations of others. For example, a friend may be an excellent person to talk to when you need another perspective, but they may not be able to offer a lot of practical help. A family member may be able to offer a lot of practical help around the house, but may not have the knowledge to share a lot of information with you. If you aren't realistic when you ask for support, you may not get the support you need and everyone involved can feel upset or hurt.

How can i build my own social support networks?

Social support networks usually change over time. Life situations can change, people can change, and some people lose an important person in their lives. Sometimes a person has a lot of people in their support network, but those people can't provide the support that is most needed. Others may find that they simply need more support than they currently receive. In any situation, you can take action to build a stronger support network.



Building existing networks:

- Connect with your networks and ask for help. Remember that reaching out takes strength!
- Take care of important relationships you already have. You need to contribute to relationships, too—you can't only ask for help or assistance. Offer support to others in your networks.
- Be clear about the kind of help you need. Tell people what you need—they may be able to offer better help when they know what you're looking for.
- Seek specialized support, like counselling, when it's needed. Make sure that you're asking for help in the right places.
- If you put work into a relationship but don't see the improvements you need, it may be time to let go of that relationship. People change and situations change. Sometimes it's best to go your separate ways and put your energy into healthier relationships.

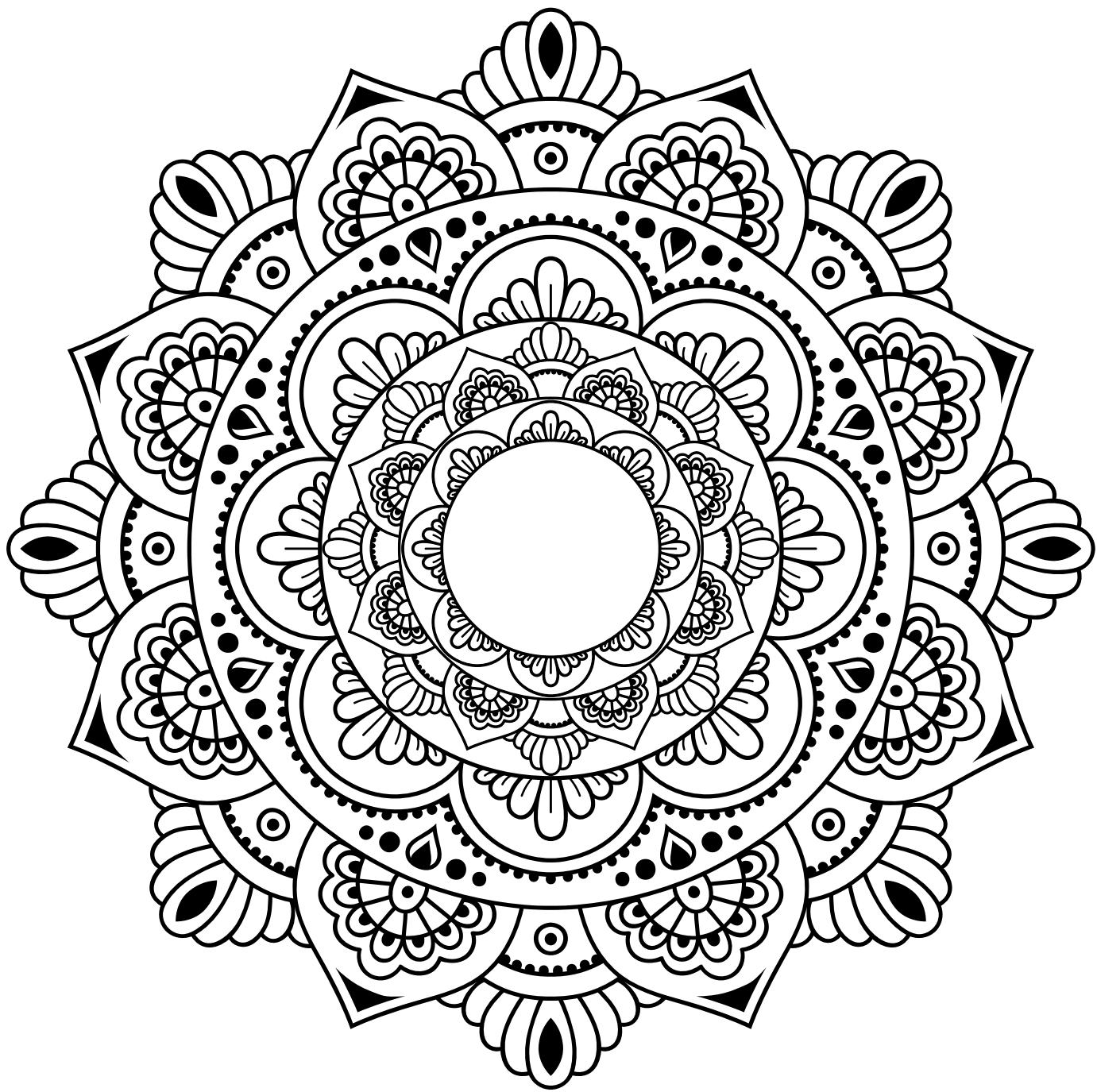
Building new networks:

- Make opportunities to meet new people. Join social activities, take classes or courses, volunteer, or get involved in an organization or group. You can also ask friends to introduce you to other people.
- Give relationships time. It takes a bit of work to build relationships. You won't be friends with everyone you meet, and when you do make a new friend, it will take time to strengthen your relationship.
- Reach out in person. If you're dealing with a specific problem like an illness, join a support group or try one-on-one peer support. A support group or peer support worker can be a great way to connect with others who can understand some of your experiences and can share hope, good information, and resources.
- Look online. If you don't have a lot of opportunities to find people in person, consider looking online for a community to join. (Just use your good judgement to choose options that are safe and helpful.)



Take a Moment:

- ✓ Send a quick message to someone you care about.
- ✓ Encourage others to do a check-in on someone in their network.



Practice mindfulness with the Bell Let's Talk mandala

Bell Let's Talk has designed a mandala that you can print out and colour in. Many mental health professionals recommend colouring as an effective way to practice mindfulness.

Mandala, meaning "sacred circle" in Sanskrit, is a circular art form often containing geometric and repeating designs. Similar to meditation, it focuses your attention on the present moment and away from worries and stress.

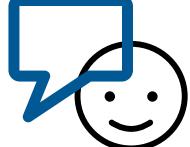
Share your creation on social media using [#BellLetsTalk](#)



Self-Care Activity

Practicing self-care means taking the time to participate in activities that bring you enjoyment or a sense of calm and peacefulness. Activities can include things you do on a day-to-day basis or new activities. Self-care can promote positive mental health and well-being, keep us grounded and reduce the effects of stress in our lives.

Challenge yourself to complete as many self-care activities as you can. For each activity completed, fill in the talk bubble in that square.

Cook a healthy meal	Head out on a nature walk or hike	Write a letter/email to an old friend	Head to bed early	Practice mindfulness
				
Enjoy a quiet moment over a cup of tea or coffee	Write a positive affirmation and recite it in the mirror	Connect with your community	Discover a new author or musician	Stretch or practice yoga
				
Discover a new podcast	Talk to a loved one about your feelings		Put on your dancing shoes	Make a vision or mood board
				
Paint or draw	Set a goal	Have a good laugh	Write in a journal	Create a gratitude list
				
Do a crossword or jigsaw puzzle	Take a warm bath or shower	Practice deep breathing	Make a to-do list	Cuddle a pet or look at a cute photo of one online
				

For additional mental health resources
visit bell.ca/letstalk

