

Independent Living Resource Centre

est. 1984





Stress, Support and Self Care

COVID-19 Pandemic

Today's workshop is not about...

Theories and conspiracies.

Working out personal or professional grievances.

Shaming those who don't agree with us.

Disseminating government, healthcare or scientific (i.e. COVID 19) news.





Today's workshop is about...

Caring for ourselves, our families, our friends
and our colleagues.

Prioritizing our mental health.

Creating stability and control where we can.

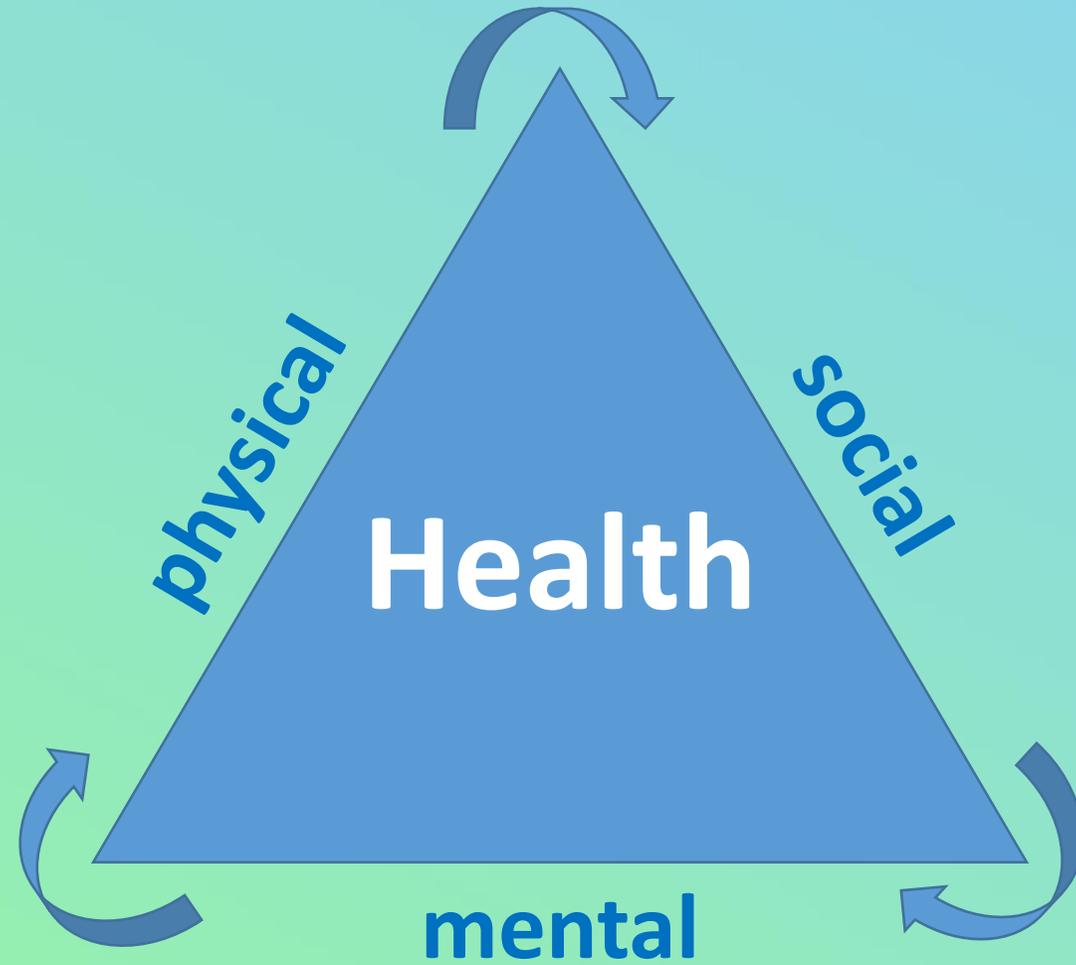
Getting through this together.



What is health?

Health is “a state of (complete) physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

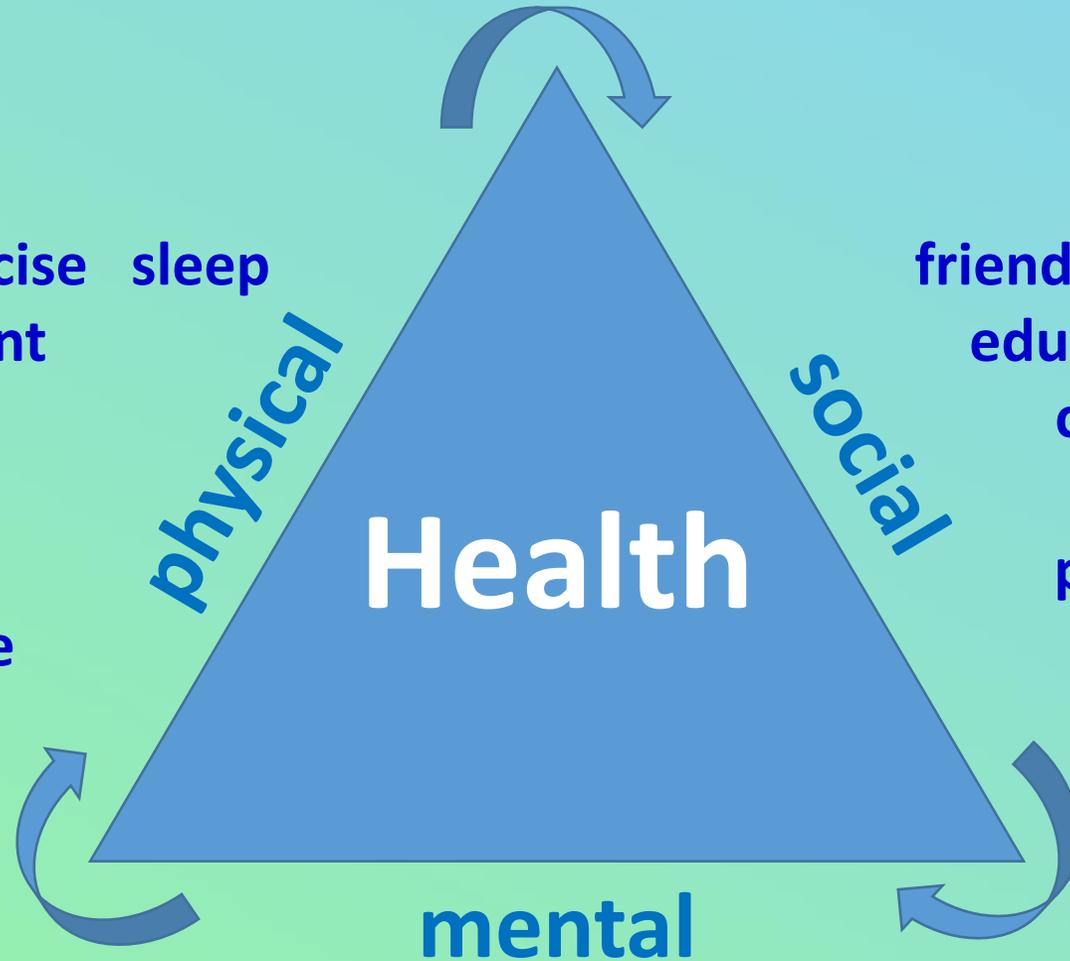
World Health Organization



diet & nutrition exercise sleep
medicine environment
housing disability
weather healthcare
substances illness
accessibility sunshine
transportation

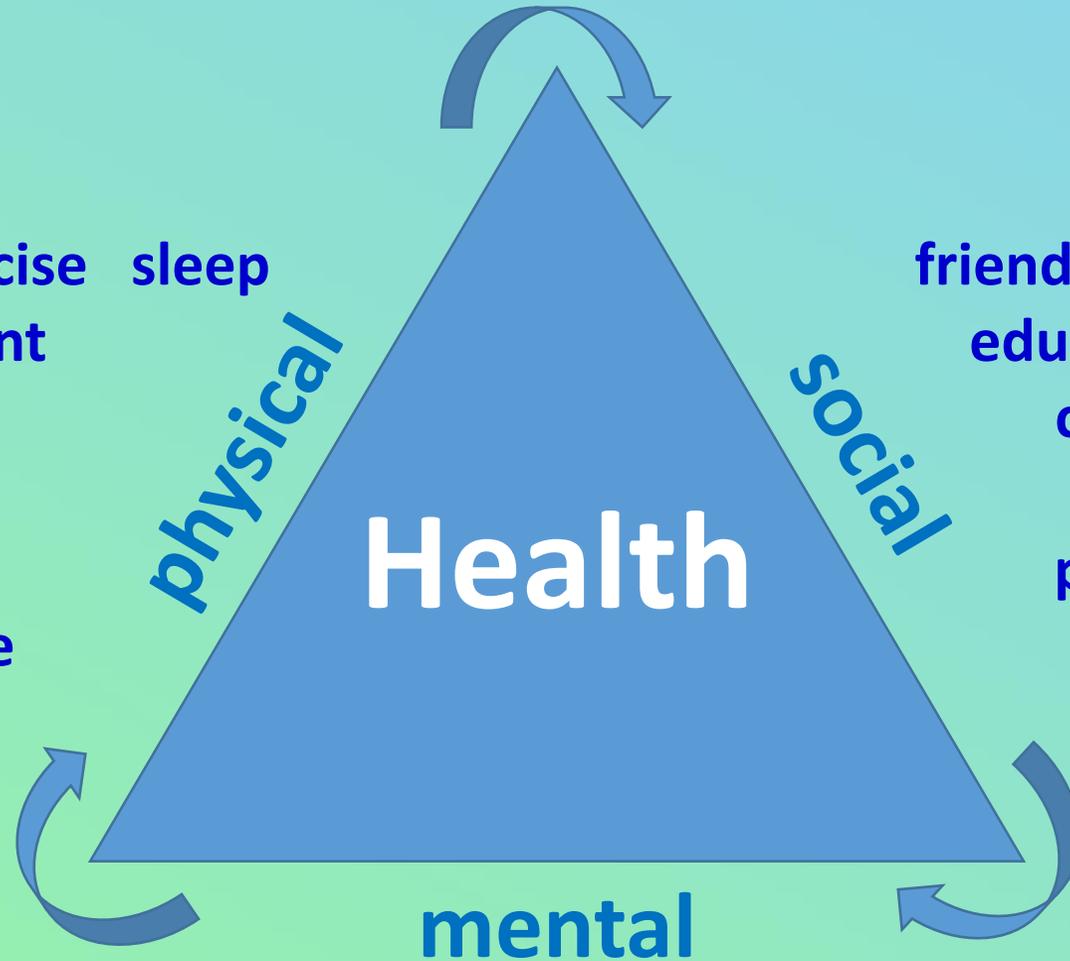


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friends family facetime pets
education sexuality money
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balance stress venting therapy sharing isolation self-esteem connection
support routine success mental health literacy self-care cognition breaks
medication spirituality awareness culture efficacy and belief...

Mental Health is “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Public Health Agency of Canada

What is challenging our capacity?

Social isolation... “we are feeling creatures who think.”

Fear for our loved ones and ourselves becoming sick.

Financial stress and job uncertainty.

Increased responsibilities and dependencies.

Harder (or impossible) to access community resources.

Confines of a sedentary lifestyle.



Our universal need for safety, security and connection is being challenged, but we will all react differently...because our fears are unique to us.

Group question #1:

What are your greatest fears?



I CANNOT CONTROL

(So, I can LET GO of these things.)

IF OTHERS FOLLOW THE RULES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

THE AMOUNT OF TOILET PAPER AT THE STORE

I CAN CONTROL

(So, I will focus on these things.)

THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS

MY POSITIVE ATTITUDE

TURNING OFF THE NEWS

FINDING FUN THINGS TO DO AT HOME

HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST

HOW I FOLLOW CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITING MY SOCIAL MEDIA

MY OWN SOCIAL DISTANCING

MY KINDNESS & GRACE

PREDICTING WHAT WILL HAPPEN

HOW OTHERS REACT

OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTIVES



Anxiety is our mind and body preparing to cope with some sort of future problem that we anticipate is going cause us harm.

Anxiety is a normal and helpful part of being a human being. It helps us to plan, prepare and protect ourselves. It can cause harm and become a disorder if...

- ...it causes us to avoid participating in the things that give our life meaning.
- ...we need to use alcohol/substances to change our feelings.
- ...we experience panic attacks.
- ...experienced with great intensity and duration.



Stress:

“A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.”



Anxiety: It's a bear!

- Neurological: fight, flight or freeze (emotional response).
- Cardiovascular (heart rate, blood pressure, sticky blood).
- Weakened immune system.
- Skin and bodily fluids.
- Digestive system.
- Acute and chronic states.

Cabin Fever



Restlessness

Impatience

Low mood

Forgetfulness

Sleep issues

Food cravings

Lethargy

How can we alleviate stress?

- **Structure:** sleep, meals and living space.
- **Connection:** community awareness, online and our inner circle.
- **Activity:** physical, eco-immersive and diverse.
- **Self-care:** prioritize your wellbeing, fun and therapeutic.

Structure

- Ensure days have a beginning, middle and end.
- Family/team meetings help everyone get on the same page.
- Find a ritual that makes you feel good.
- Nutrition = fibre, vitamins and fatty acids.
- Try 15 mins of tidying up.
- Take breaks and end your day with kindness.
- Practice good sleep hygiene.



Connection

- Physical distancing not social distancing.
- Get your oxytocin (you deserve it)!
- Lean into your inner circle.
- Reconnect with old friends.
- Be self-aware with social media.
- Watch the news to get informed (not afraid).
- Your phone can also make phone calls.



Activity

- Physical exercise is an effective treatment for anxiety and depression.
- Find something fun, social and multifunctional if possible.
- Your hobbies are now a priority!
- It's a good time to try something new (diversify).
- There's plenty of online help and tutorials available.
- Get back to nature.



Self Care

- It's okay to put your oxygen mask on first.
- If it feels good and doesn't cause harm then it's self-care.
- Reading, music, art, napping, television, family time, alone time, walking, sitting, doing, not doing, cooking, meditating, taking a super relaxing hot bath, cuddling, breathing, (and lots of other good stuff).
- It often takes intention.





Our lifestyles have all changed dramatically and we need to find new ways to ensure vitality.

Group question #2:

What is bringing you joy and peace of mind?



Living with People

Children

- Create a schedule...try breaking the day into chunks.
- Learn more about their interests.
- Have them help with meals, chores and other things.
- Let them know they are safe, and that they are helping to save lives.

Adults

- Have your own workspaces.
- Communicate clearly and identify your own goals and expectations.
- Take breaks away from each other.
- Respect each others needs, boundaries and routine.



Working from Home

Maintain your morning routine.

Create a dedicated workspace.

Schedule your time (and take your breaks!).

Get up and move.

Talk to people (regular check-ins).

Quitting time is quitting time.



Workplaces



Employers

- Straightforward: information, boundaries and decision making matrix.
- Priorities: safety, communication, flexibility and access to resources.

Employees

- Increased workload.
- Working in isolation.
- Meeting public expectations.
- Personal stresses.
- Wearing protective equipment.
- Following rigid/changing protocols.
- Fear of infection (or infecting others).
- Separation from family/supports.
- Stigma of being in public.
- Job insecurity.

Healthy Workplaces

- Encourage self-monitoring and pacing.
- Regular check-ins with colleagues, managers, friends and family.
- Consistent breaks and opportunities for refreshment.
- Working in partnerships and teams.
- Focusing on what's within our power and accepting what we cannot change.



Workplace Concerns

- Long hours in isolation without regular check-ins.
- Feeling that “you” are the only one that can do “it”.
- Excessive caffeine and sugar intake.
- Substance abuse.
- Inability to stay in touch with friends and family.
- The needs of workers are less important than the needs of others.



Providing Support

- Observe the signs and ask about the symptoms.
- Listen non judgmentally; create a safe space free of criticism and advice.
- Provide reassurance and information.
- Explore resources; build upon strengths/interest and meet practical needs when possible.





People do amazing things for each other everyday.

Group question #3:

What is a memorable act of kindness you have recently received, given or observed?



Kindness is something to celebrate!



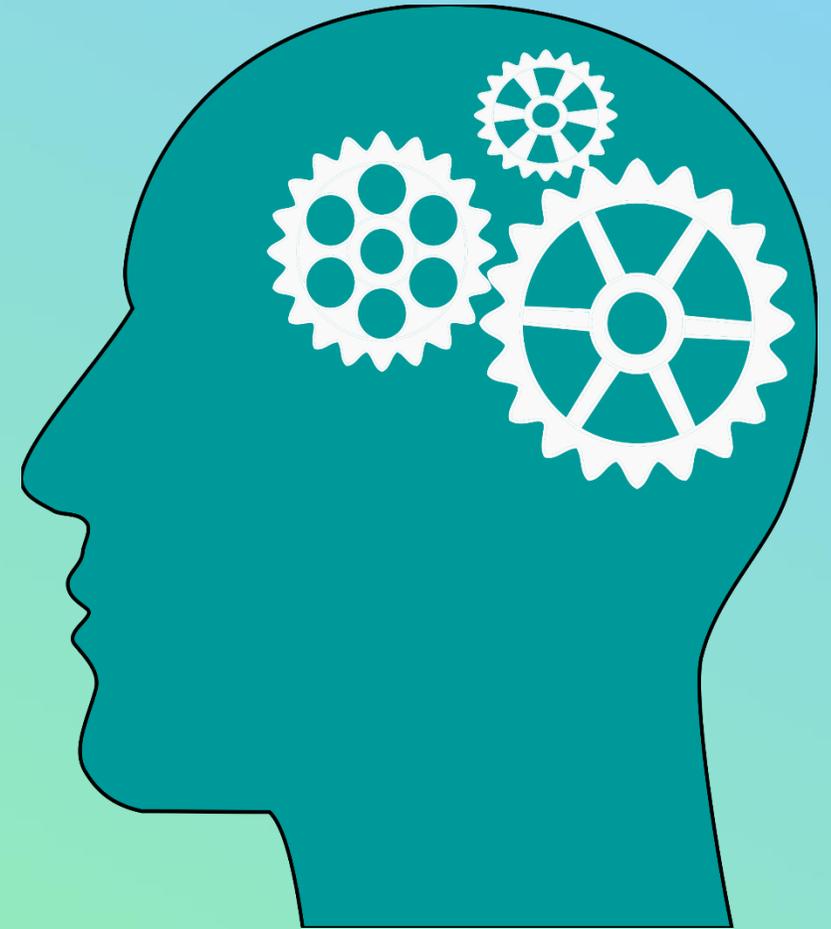


Mindfulness:

“A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and (non-judgmentally) accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.”

CBT Strategy

1. Identify the stressful situation.
2. Recognize the harmful thoughts, emotions and behaviours that are making it feel worse.
3. Experiment with new ways of thinking and reacting to the situation that feel better or offer a different perspective.
4. Consistently use these new approaches.
5. Reflect on how this strategy may help in other situations.



Mindfulness Activities

- Walking
- Meditation
- Stretching
- Gentle breathing
- Observing our senses
- Reciting a mantra





Mental Health Resources

- **AbilitiCBT:** Developing cognitive behavioral therapy skills, with the support of a professional therapist, to reduce anxiety and develop better coping skills. Free of charge to all Manitobans.
- **Wellness Together Canada:** Free online resources, tools and connections (including immediate crisis support) to trained mental health professionals and volunteers.
- **Text4Hope:** Daily messages of support, hope and positivity. Simply text: “COVID 19 HOPE” to 393939. Free of charge to all Albertans.
- **So many many many apps:** Mindfulness, exercise, therapy, happiness, stress relief, CBT, sleep, etc.



Dogs are winning!

Going for walks

Plenty of sleep

Licking faces

Getting treats

