

Stress Management Toolkit

"For most of my patients who are dealing with stress there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution that I can recommend. People have different styles and different needs. This toolkit offers a "buffet" of options from which you can choose. The idea is that you take a look around and find something that you like, whether it's a targeted worksheet, online support, or a great book. Pick the resource (or combination) that you think will work for you."

— Dr. Mike Evans

Stress Management Resources



Visit online:

- On this site, Ontario's Ministry of Education has put together a complete list of web resources on stress, including ways to identify stress in your life and ideas on how to manage it. www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/career/stress.html

General Resources for Mental Health



Visit online:

- The National Institutes of Mental Health offer referenced fact sheets on a variety of health conditions through the following websites:
 - www.nimh.nih.gov (select "health information" and then follow the links to topic of your choice)
 - www.health.nih.gov (find your health topic of interest in "health topics a-z")
 - www.medlineplus.gov (select "health topics" and then select "s" and then follow links to "stress")

The Mental Health System



Visit online:

- This review, done by the Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association, looks at how mental health care is delivered in Ontario. Much of it is academic, but knowing how the system works is an often overlooked skill in optimizing health. www.ontario.cmha.ca/content/mental_health_system/mental_health_system.asp

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Websites and Online Tools

Wellness Modules



Visit online:

- This is an excellent Canadian site with a series of instructive worksheets on promoting good mental health and general well-being. They are based on quality information from well-conducted research. Each 4-page module is descriptive and interactive, describing key components of mental well-being and useful tips on handling the normal ups and downs of life. www.heretohelp.bc.ca/helpmewith/wellness.shtml

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy



Visit online:

- Stress is most easily managed when you understand some of the basics of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Essentially, this is all about looking at your “automatic” thoughts and seeing if they tend to be negative or harmful. We all do this to some extent and the process of CBT challenges these “automatic” thoughts and puts them in a more positive light.
- www.paniccenter.net
 - This site offers a free 12 week online CBT course. While the focus of the site is anxiety and panic disorders, you may find it useful in evaluating and managing your stress. It is sponsored by a number of sources, as the providers seem to want to collect anonymous data in an attempt to show that online CBT can make a difference.

Wondering if your stress has turned into something more serious?

Online Screening



Visit online:

- We all worry and have the occasional blues but for some people these feelings can become more pervasive and start to affect their ability to work or take part in relationships. This site offers online depression and anxiety screens (tests) and can provide you with a severity score that indicates your probability of suffering from either of these conditions.

If you want, you can print the results and take it to your health care provider to start a conversation about how your life could be better.

www.heretohelp.bc.ca/events/ (connect to the screening tools in the right column)

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Bibliography

"Bibliotherapy is when we prescribe a book to improve the health and well-being of an individual. Some people do well with just advice from their caregiver or friends, but at other times sitting down with a book, especially one that is inspiring and based on high-quality research, is the best solution."

— Dr. Mike Evans



Read:

- Antony, M.M., & McCabe, R.E., ***10 Simple Solutions to Panic: How to Overcome Panic Attacks, Calm Physical Symptoms, and Reclaim Your Life***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2004.
 - This book does a great job of delivering evidence-based solutions for panic while still being enjoyable to read and accessible to the general public.
- Bieling, P.J., & Antony, M.M. ***Ending the Depression Cycle: A Step-By-Step Guide for Preventing Relapse***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2003.
 - Depression is typically a chronic vulnerability. People who manage their chronic problems well recognize this and are able to stop a temporary setback from becoming a major relapse.
- Bourne, E.J., ***The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook (4th edition)***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2005.
 - This is a larger workbook that combines good information and various exercises to help control anxiety. I tell my patients that they don't have to use all of the outlined approaches, but to pick 2 or 3 that fit with their style. If worry and fear are major for you, this book also has a checklist for the 8 different subtypes of anxiety disorders so you can zero in on your specific vulnerability.
- Claiborn, J., & Pedrick, C. ***The Habit Change Workbook: How to Break Bad Habits and Form Good Ones***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 2001.
 - Let's face it: change is difficult and many of us resist it. If you have one or two (or more!) habits that you really feel you need to change, this book will take you step-by-step through this process.
- Davis, M., Eshelman, E.R., & McKay, M., ***The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook (5th edition)***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2000.
 - This classic workbook looks at the big picture of stress reduction. It walks you through various exercises and techniques that have proven successful for most people.
- Greenberger, D., & Padesky, C.A. ***Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel By Changing the Way You Think***. New York: Guilford Press, 1995.
 - This is the classic workbook that introduces users to the concepts of automatic thoughts and the often hidden connection between cognition and behaviour (and vice-versa!). It is focussed on depression but also recognizes that most people who have depression also have anxiety.
- McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. ***Messages: The Communications Skills Book (2nd edition)***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1995.
 - When we consider the skills required in managing stress and change, the skill set that is often forgotten is communication. This book highlights the importance of clear communication between you and your partner, your boss, your friends and family.
- Posen, D., ***The Little Book of Stress Relief***. Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2003.
 - This is a light and easy-to read book that offers 52 prescriptions to help you make small changes that can have a profoundly positive effect on the quality of your life.