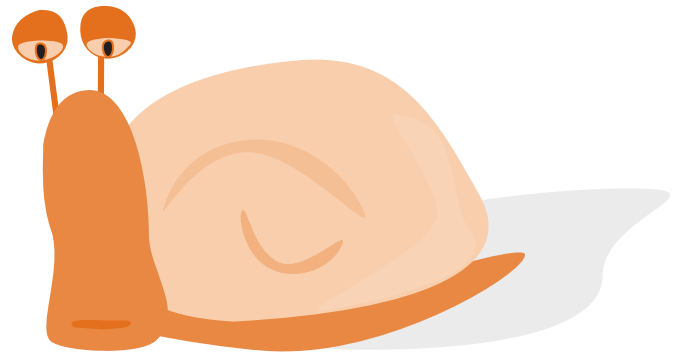


disappointed in life?

feeling stressed out?

not having any fun?

feeling worn out?



if your answer is YES,
you are not alone

No one has perfect mental health all the time, but ongoing problems can take a real toll on our well-being.

Your mental health can affect many areas of your life:

- 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 ...

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. Mental health includes:

- How you feel about yourself, the world and your life
- Your ability to solve problems and overcome challenges
- Your ability to build relationships with others and contribute to your communities
- Your ability to achieve your goals

Many people take care of their physical health before they feel sick. They may eat well, exercise and try to get enough sleep to help maintain wellness. You can take the same approach to mental health. Just as you may work to keep your body healthy, you can also work to keep your mind healthy.

THOUGHTS

Examples of positive thoughts

- I know I can get through these rough times
- I feel excited about life!
- I know my friends 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

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

THOUGHTS
The way you think about something has a big impact on your mental health. Changes in your thoughts often go along with changes in your mental health. When you feel well, it's easier to see positive aspects. When you aren't well, it's easy to get stuck on negative things and ignore positive things.

BODY REACTIONS

Examples of body reactions

- Chest pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle tension, muscle aches or headaches
- Sexual problems, such as low sex drive
- Aggravation of an existing health problem (e.g., acne, digestive disorders, migraines, chronic pain)
- Upset stomach or nausea
- Lack of appetite or increased appetite
- Pounding, racing or abnormal heartbeat
- Feeling that you're separated from things around you
- Urge to urinate or frequent urination
 - Sweating, hot flushes or cold chills
 - Feeling dizzy or light-headed
 - Upset bowel or diarrhea

BODY REACTIONS

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

4 BASIC DIMENSIONS of Mental Health and Well-Being

Examples of behaviours

- Exercise
- Avoiding the things that upset you
- Engaging in hobbies or leisure activities
- Isolating yourself and pulling away from friends and family
- Doing things that distract you from your problems, like watching TV or working late
- Working on a solution to a problem one step at a time
- Crying often
- Overeating, not eating enough or purging food (such as vomiting, over-exercising)
- Lashing out at other people (verbally or physically)
- Excessive dependency or clinging to loved ones
- Reaching out to a friend or family member for support and understanding
- Practicing your spiritual activities
- Using alcohol or drugs to make the bad feelings go away
- Doing something relaxing, like taking a bath or practicing yoga

BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours are the helpful or harmful things you do. Other people can usually see your behaviours. Changes in behaviour often go along with changes in mental health.

EMOTIONS

Emotions are the way you feel. They can be pleasant or unpleasant. Changes in emotions often go along with changes in mental health.

Examples of pleasant emotions

- Happiness or 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

BEHAVIOURS

EMOTIONS

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

Each of the four mental health dimensions can influence all of the others. Here's an example:



why should mental health matter to you and your family?

When your mental health suffers, it can become hard to enjoy life. You may start to feel run down, both mentally and physically. Many of these changes can make it harder to enjoy a balanced and rewarding life. Everyone can benefit from learning how to enhance and protect their mental health—whether or not they've experienced mental illness or a substance use problem.

where do I start?

The BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information have a lot of information on how to improve your mental health and well-being. Check out our other Wellness Modules, fact sheets, personal stories and other useful resources for you and your family at www.heretohelp.bc.ca. We're here to help.

You might also be interested in ...

- **Canadian Mental Health Association**
— visit www.cmha.bc.ca
- **HealthLink BC**— visit www.healthlinkbc.ca or call 8-1-1
- **Kelty Mental Health: BC's information source for children, youth & families**
— visit www.keltymentalhealth.ca

Select sources and additional resources

- Snyder, C.R. & Lopez, S.J. (2002). *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2009). *Improving the Health of Canadians: Exploring positive mental health*. Ottawa, ON: Author. www.cpa.ca/cpasite/userfiles/Documents/Practice_Page/positive_mh_en.pdf
- BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. (2009). *Tips for Positive Mental Health [fact sheet]*. Vancouver, BC: Author. www.heretohelp.bc.ca/sites/default/files/ImprovingMH2010web.pdf
- World Health Organization. (2007, September 3). *What is mental health?* Online Q&A. www.who.int/features/qa/62/en/index.html

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	Often	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 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	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) _____ ÷ 125 = _____	+	+	+	+	+

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 on “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, your score will probably go up over time. Increases usually mean that you are feeling better about things and feeling like you can cope with life’s challenges while still finding time for fun. If you are experiencing stress or

changes in your overall health, your score may go down for a period of time. Decreases usually mean that it is harder to feel good about things and that you are struggling to find a sense of balance. Decreases in scores can be an important sign that you need to take action to make things better for yourself. Most people experience ups and downs in their 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*).