

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE



RCMP Mental Health Strategy Building wellness

Toolkit for Managers/Supervisors - Speaking to Staff on Mental Health



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

WORK SAFE. FOR LIFE.
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

Canada

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Introduction

When dealing with mental illness in the workplace, your role as manager is to ensure a healthy work environment, to help employees perform well at work, and to take care of yourself.

This toolkit will help you:

- Better understand mental health and mental illness
- Take action when warning signs appear
- Manage employees with mental health issues on a day-to-day basis
- Understand the necessary action to take while the employee is away
- Facilitate the employee's return to work
- Learn about management practices that promote the performance and well-being of all employees

We hope you find this useful.

The information contained in this publication is intended as general guidance only. It may or may not reflect the position of qualified mental health care professionals. The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice and should not be interpreted as official government policy or direction. The applicable policies and guidelines of the Government of Canada, as well as those of each department and agency, should be consulted with respect to specific cases.



Mental Health at Work

A shared responsibility

Issues related to mental health in the workplace may be very complex and require the involvement of specialists. As a manager, your role is not to become the confidante of the person in difficulty, but rather to help the person recover and perform well in a healthy work environment. You should consult as often as needed with the employee assistance services counselors as well as experts in the areas of:

- occupational health and safety
- labour relations and/or Staff Relations Representative Program
- compensation
- employment equity

Some people might assume mental health is an "individual" responsibility that has nothing to do with the workplace. This is not necessarily the case. Although each employee is, in fact, responsible for his or her own well-being and work performance, the organization also plays an essential role in creating a healthy work environment that fosters well-being and productivity.

[Part II of the Canada Labour Code](#) clearly states the employer is responsible for the occupational health and safety of employees. What is also important is that a healthy workplace must reflect sound management practices based on the internalization of ethical values in day-to-day operations.

How health* is defined:

Health is defined as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease."

Mental health exists where a person is "in balance physically, psychologically, emotionally, economically, and spiritually". Being in good mental health means being generally satisfied with one's personal, family, social, and professional lives.

Mental health in the workplace is expressed as a feeling of balance, satisfaction and effectiveness in the work environment.

**These definitions are from, respectively, the World Health Organization, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Revue des psychologues du Quebec (March 2001).*

Taking Action When Warning Signs Appear

You are a manager and you are concerned about an employee whose performance has slipped and whose health is worrying you. Should you take action? The answer is YES, ABSOLUTELY.

As a manager, you are not required to take charge of the employee in difficulty or to become the employee's friend and confidante. Nor are you required to make a diagnosis. Only specialists can do this. Your role is to create a work environment that supports the employee's well-being and performance.

Early intervention means the employee can remain at work or be absent for only a short time. The first thing you need to do is to assess the situation appropriately and to know how to recognize the signs of excessive stress that may be the forerunners of mental illness.

Risk factors

Imagine a tightrope walker balancing on a high wire. In good times, we are usually able to deal with daily difficulties. When the level of fatigue increases, or when we have to deal with internal or external stress factors, we are like a tightrope walker buffeted by high winds and we risk losing our balance.

The main factors threatening the physical and mental balance of individuals may be divided into four categories:

Traumas: difficult circumstances such as bereavement, separation or divorce, involvement with a serious accident/incident, illness, sexual assault, or abuse.

Genetic predispositions: a family history of diagnosed or undiagnosed mental illness.

Personal stress: internal attitudes or perceptions that can increase personal stress, such as perfectionism, difficulty in taking care of oneself or in saying no, lack of self-esteem, difficulty in "letting go," and delegating.

Watch out for absenteeism

If an employee starts missing work regularly and gives only vague excuses or no reasons at all for these absences, you must take immediate action by talking to the employee and determining whether the absenteeism is due to a more serious problem. You also need to keep an eye out for employees who work longer than average hours or regularly take work home to make sure they don't burn out.

Occupational stress: excessive stress at work that can be caused by:

- an excessive workload
- involvement in traumatic or troubling situations
- lack of control over or knowledge of the tasks to be performed
- lack of recognition
- lack of consistency between the values of the organization and their daily application
- interpersonal or organizational conflict, including harassment

It is important to note that occupational stress is not caused solely by excessive demands; it also occurs when an employee does not have enough to do and, consequently, feels unproductive and undervalued. [Appendix 1](#) contains a summary of the symptoms of excessive stress.

Excessive stress and mental illness - The warning signs

It has been proven that excessive stress can endanger a person's mental health. It is therefore important for you to be able to recognize the symptoms in the workplace.

Here are some signs to watch for:

- unusual behaviour
- frequent late arrivals or absences
- unusual performance difficulties
- uncharacteristic signs of distraction, concentration, or memory problems
- marked loss of interest and desire to be involved
- strange or grandiose ideas
- excessively high or excessively low energy level
- unusual inability to make decisions
- rapid mood swings, angry outbursts, or weeping
- signs that could point to substance abuse

Attention: the presence of these signs does *not necessarily* mean that an employee has a mental health problem. However, you should take action promptly if you see these signs.

Role of the organization

A growing number of employers are implementing well-being policies and programs. Most are based on organizational values and ethics, as well as a body of legal obligations pertaining to:

- labour relations (bargaining agents) and/or Staff Relations Representative Program (SRRs)

- employee assistance programs
- occupational health and safety
- employment equity and diversity
- informal conflict management program
- harassment

Senior managers also have a role to play; through communication and concrete action they can support managers in demonstrating the importance of employee well-being.

Role of the person in difficulty

Employees who are showing signs of excessive stress or mental illness are responsible for seeking and obtaining professional assistance. Ideally, employees should discuss any well-being or work performance issues with their managers in order to find solutions.

The link between stress and illness: an explanation

It has been scientifically proven that there is a clear relationship between stress factors and illness.

Externally and internally generated stress "causes changes in brain chemistry which ultimately imperil the immune system's ability to defend the body against bacterial and viral attack..."

"The effect of excessive stress and strain on brain chemistry is experienced as mood – usually depression, anxiety or anger, depending on the individual and the situation. Even when such negative mood states do not produce immune system deficiencies, they are important in themselves because they are associated with poor morale, absenteeism and lower productivity."

Best Advice on Stress Risk Management in the Workplace Part 1 of 2,
Health Canada, 2000

Your role as manager

When you realize that an employee is showing one or more of the signs of extreme stress, you should take the following action:

- *Avoid assuming the problems experienced by the employee will resolve themselves over time.*
- *Take action as quickly as possible, but without assuming responsibility for the person.*

Meet informally with the employee and give reassurances that the conversation will remain confidential¹.

- Inform the employee of your observations about his or her behaviour and mood. Emphasize the facts. Use concrete examples, and ask open-ended questions that will allow the employee to freely express any concerns (See [Model of an Effective Conversations](#) below).
- Never try to obtain information about the employee's medical condition. Such information is private. If the person provides you with medical details spontaneously, treat this information as confidential. ¹
- Encourage the employee to get help.
- Tell the employee you are concerned. Exercise discretion and judgment in suggesting the employee contact Employee Assistance Services. Consult [Appendix 2](#) for suggestions on how to respond to any objections the employee may raise in this regard.
- Offer your help in maintaining the employee's well-being and work performance.
- Explore with the employee how you might, for example, temporarily adjust the employee's duties or schedule, increase motivation, and reduce absenteeism.
- Do everything possible to address any prejudices concerning mental illness that may exist in your team (see [Appendix 3](#)). For example, you could organize an information session on mental health in conjunction with the Health Services, and encourage your employees to attend well-being activities within your organization.

When illness makes things difficult

Employees who have not come to terms with their illness or who are prevented from doing so because of the very nature of their disability, may not take adequate steps to obtain treatment or seek accommodation. In fact, some forms of mental illness can impair a person's ability to assess their own situation and to articulate their concerns, which may in turn prevent them from dealing effectively with management in finding reasonable accommodation.

Managing Mental Illness in the Workplace

You have noticed an employee is showing signs of excessive stress and that the employee's performance has slipped. You have intervened and encouraged the employee to seek help but the situation does not seem to be improving. What do you do?

As with any other employee living with a disability, you have a role to play in assisting him or her with mental health problems so they can maximize their potential in a healthy work environment.

Mental illness: a definition

Mental illness is characterized by changes in thinking, mood or behaviour (or a combination of the three) associated with **substantial distress and general dysfunction**.

Thus, mental illness includes a variety of disorders that impair the well-being and functioning of individuals, such as:

- anxiety disorders (i.e. panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders, anorexia or bulimia)
- burnout
- depression
- post-traumatic stress disorder/occupational stress injury
- bipolar disorder (previously called manic depression)
- schizophrenia
- paranoia
- substance abuse

With appropriate treatment, people who have a mental illness can successfully manage their condition and lead a productive life. In order for this to happen, however, the illness must be detected and treated quickly. In this respect, never underestimate your role in convincing your employees, colleagues, and any other person around you to get help as soon as the first signs of distress are observed. Early intervention can help to prevent minor symptoms from growing to the point at which they become disabling.

Role of the organization

The organization must ensure policies and processes are made available to managers to help them deal with mental health issues (e.g. disability case management measures). The organization must also help managers develop the skills they need in order to take appropriate action. This guide is a starting point for managers to learn about mental health.

Role of the person in difficulty

Individuals who receive a diagnosis of a mental illness are responsible for taking care of themselves by following the professional advice they are given. They should also try to maintain their work performance by making use, where necessary, of reasonable accommodations in consultation with the manager, Health Services Office, human resources specialists or Employee Assistance Services.

Role of the Peer to Peer Program

Whether it's a work-related or personal issue, Peer to Peer Coordinators can provide information on the services offered through [Health Canada's Employee Assistance Services \(EAS\)](#) as well as resources within the RCMP that could help address the situation.

[Peer to Peer Coordinators](#) are not trained to provide crisis intervention or counseling. They have received focused training on the services provided by Health Canada's EAS, as well as services that are available within the RCMP. In this sense, the coordinators are a useful link between the employee and a range of services available to the RCMP.

Role of mental health professionals

RCMP psychologists will receive and respond to information requests from managers and colleagues regarding regular and civilian members. They are bound to confidentiality¹ and are top-secret cleared.

NOTE: All employees have access to the Employee Assistance Services.

- Mental health professionals assess the well-being and morale of regular and civilian members, and offer early intervention, when required.
- Managers can consult with mental health professionals to help them address detachment/division issues and to generate recommendations for actions to improve well-being and morale. They can also request specific training on issues affecting their whole detachment/division, such as how families are affected by the work of members, stress management and conflict resolution.

Your role as manager

It is important to fully prepare in advance of meeting with an employee having difficulties. Below is a list of things to think about and information to gather before sitting down with the employee.

- *You are not alone in dealing with the situation*

Plan the meeting by tapping into expertise (health services, employee assistance,

labour relations).

- *Take some time to reflect on your own experiences with mental illness*

You must ask yourself certain questions before meeting with the employee: Am I comfortable dealing with mental illness issues? Have I experienced a mental health problem or helped someone close who was affected? If so, what happened? What aspects of my approach worked well? What would I do differently? The answers to these questions will help you develop the empathy required for your contact with the employee to be effective.

- *Take stock of your own prejudices concerning mental illness.*

Everyone has prejudices. You simply need to be aware of yours so you can either curb them or set them aside to prevent a negative impact on your contact with the employee.

- *Familiarize yourself with your organization's human resources policies and accommodation provisions.*
- *Have on hand a list of the resources available in your organization such as how to reach the Health Services Office or Employee Assistance Services.*
- *Make sure your conversation with the employee is completely confidential¹ by holding it either in a closed office or on "neutral ground."*

Mental illness can cause concentration or confusion problems. For this reason, the employee may choose to be accompanied by someone, such as a representative of the employee, staff relations representative or a union steward.

- *Be prepared to respond to any reactions and objections the employee may have.*

The employee may appear reluctant to discuss the situation, especially if he or she has previously witnessed discrimination against a person living with mental illness. If the employee seems ill at ease, find out what you can do in order to increase the his or her comfort level and confidence (see [Appendix 2](#) for more information).

Mental health resources at the RCMP

- Health Services Officer
- Psychologist
- Employee Assistance Services
- Chaplain
- Nurse

Leaders who want to reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems in



their divisions need to be consistent. They need to support those who seek help, encourage them, and remind their subordinate leaders that it takes leadership to ensure those who need help, get it.

Model of an Effective Conversation

The following model is adapted from Marshal B. Rosenberg's "non-violent" method of communication. This method may be used at any time to promote good interpersonal relations and has proved to be particularly effective in difficult conversations. The basic principles for communicating with sincerity and empathy are as follows: Observing -Feeling - Needing - Requesting (O-F-N-R).

Make your observations

- *Inform the employee of the observable behaviour you have objectively noted.*
- *Emphasize the facts.*
- *Pay attention to the words and tone you use, as well as your body language.*

Express your feelings

- *If you feel comfortable doing so, express your feelings concerning the facts noted. Avoid interpreting the facts or making judgments. This will allow the employee to feel that someone is listening and to have more confidence.*
- *Show empathy and understanding. Bear in mind that mental illness does not happen only to other people. One Canadian in five will be affected by mental illness during his or her lifetime. Someday, it could be you.*

Clarify your needs and the employee's needs

- *Explain your concerns, needs or values as they relate to the facts and your feelings, and pay attention to those expressed by the employee.*

Make your request in a positive, concrete, and achievable way

- *Clearly describe the change in attitudes or behaviour you are looking for in relation to what you have observed. Indicate what you want the employee to do in order for the situation to improve, from both your point of view and the employee's. Be clear about how this is to be done, the time limits for taking action, and the way in which the situation will be followed up (for example, by making an appointment for another meeting to discuss the situation).*

Example: *I have noticed that you were absent three days in the past two weeks (O). I am worried about you and I am concerned (F) because I need everyone on the team to perform their duties consistently (N). I would like us to discuss what can be done to prevent the situation from getting worse (R).*

It is always a good idea to end this type of conversation by asking the employee to summarize what he or she has understood so you can rectify any misunderstanding. Make sure both parties are satisfied with the means to be used to improve the situation. It is also recommended that you summarize in writing the follow-up measures you have both agreed to (e.g., the employee should be made aware that other people may be involved).

Follow-up after the meeting with the employee

You have come to an agreement with the employee about the action to be taken so that the employee can perform well and maintain his or her balance at work. You must now take the appropriate follow-up action to ensure that the employee's performance improves and that the employee's health does not get worse because of work.

- *First and foremost: take care of yourself!*
 - Have realistic expectations for yourself and for the employee
 - Avoid acting as a saviour
 - Limit the amount of time and attention you spend on the employee
 - Seek support for yourself
- *Make sure the employee has enough sick leave credits (for public servants)*
- *It is mandatory for all category of employees to report the sick leave through HRMIS*

It is not a good idea to make informal arrangements with the employee to compensate for the employee's absences. Make sure the employee understands his or her benefits. As soon as the employee goes on leave, have him or her contact the compensation specialists to make adequate arrangements in terms of leave or disability insurance.

- *Provide effective supervision*

Make sure the employee is carrying out the follow-up measures that were agreed upon. For example, you could schedule regular meetings in order to discuss the results achieved or to make adjustments. Use this opportunity to praise the employee's efforts and the objectives achieved, or to make changes based on how things are going.

- *Be aware of the impact on the team*

If the employee needs to be absent for an extended period or if temporary accommodations are put in place, inform the other employees as appropriate, without revealing any confidential¹ information.

- *If the employee continually refuses to cooperate, seek assistance immediately from Employee Assistance Services and/or labour relations.*



While Your Employee is Away

Occasionally, an employee living with a mental illness may need to be away from work for an extended period in order to, for example, adjust to a new medication or to receive intensive treatment.

As a supervisor, you may wonder if it is appropriate to contact an employee who is absent for an extended period. Some managers are reluctant to do so. However, occasional telephone calls will help the employee feel supported and will give you a heads-up on the arrangements that may be needed to facilitate the employee's return to work.

Policy requires an employee on sick leave to be contacted a minimum of every 30 days.

Steps to be taken

- *Call the employee for updates from time to time (if medically acceptable)*
 - If you are not sure how to go about this, consult the experts
 - Emphasize that the employee's recovery is of primary importance
 - Avoid giving detailed answers to the questions the employee may ask about work but give the employee general reassurance
 - Do not push the employee to return to work as it could create feelings of guilt related to his or her absence
 - Keep the employee informed of any major changes that could take place in the organization

- *Obtain assistance in planning the employee's return to work*

Do not wait until the last minute to prepare for the employee's return to work. Discuss it as soon as possible with the appropriate resource people. This will allow you to offer the employee various options for returning to work that meet your operational requirements, the employee's needs, and employer obligations.

- *Consider the climate in the work place*

If there is reason to believe that an unhealthy work environment, a workplace dispute, harassment or any other organizational cause is an influencing factor in the employee's absence, seek help in taking quick and effective action on both individual and organizational levels.

- *Seek advice on how you can improve your own management practices if you wish to expand or update your knowledge*



Staying Healthy at Work

How do you ensure that an employee living with a mental illness remains comfortable and productive at work and an asset to your organization?

Good management practices

Here is some good news – the practices required here are exactly the same as those that already form part of your job as manager. In fact, if you adopt sound management practices at all times, you will be able to prevent excessive stress in the workplace and increase the well-being and commitment levels of all your employees.

Emphasize the following four points so you and your team will enjoy a healthier and more productive work environment.

Ensure your demands are realistic, both for your employees and for yourself

- Clarify work priorities and the roles and responsibilities for each task to be performed
- Eliminate some of the activities and roles that are not essential
- Help people manage their workloads
- Negotiate schedules with senior management where appropriate

Increase employee control over their work

- Delegate, where possible, decision-making to individuals
- Clearly indicate the difference between work that is essential and work that can wait (not everything is "urgent"!)
- Where necessary, encourage the use of additional resources during busy periods or consider sharing the work with other teams

Reduce effort and tension

- Pay attention to perfectionist tendencies, both your own and those of your employees!
- Take vacations and make sure that your employees take theirs
- Facilitate work-life balance, both for yourself and for your employees.
- Allow your employees and clients to be involved in designing new work procedures when possible
- Invest in technology, training and professional development in order to enhance the skills and competence of your staff



- Encourage open communication and, when needed, make use of informal dispute resolution services available in your organization
- Make healthiest choices the easiest choices by integrating positive health practices into your current lifestyle

Increase recognition

- Support those employees who receive interesting assignment or promotion offers
- Where possible, structure your organization to allow employees to develop professionally
- Regularly give positive feedback when work is done well
- Learn to recognize what each of your employees considers to be rewarding in his or her work



Conclusion

Sound management practices are the best way to prevent problems of excessive stress and mental illness in the workplace.

Research has shown the key factor in determining workplace well-being is participation by employees and the level of commitment to their work. This also applies to you as manager.

No policy or program will ever demonstrate the importance of a healthy work environment better than you can. **As an individual and as a manager, your first responsibility is to look after yourself.** If you pay attention to your own balance in the workplace, you will set an example for your employees and be better able to pay attention to their needs. Respecting yourself and others, keeping an open mind, and showing empathy and authenticity are all winning attitudes that go a long way towards promoting workplace well-being and performance.

ENDNOTE

1. The confidentiality and privacy of personal information obtained from an employee's contact with EAS will be maintained in accordance with the *Privacy Act*, *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Access to Information Act*.

This confidentiality is limited to the interaction that an employee has as a client of EAS.

Employee Assistance Services counsellors are bound by their professional code of ethics to protect client confidentiality.

EXCEPTION: When there is a court subpoena, child abuse, or a threat to harm oneself or others. Interactions between Peer-to-Peer Coordinators and employees, as part of the RCMP's Peer-to-Peer System, are not bound by this confidentiality.

NOTE: Interactions will be dealt with in a respectful and discretionary manner.

Peer-to-Peer Coordinators must clearly articulate the limitation of confidentiality at the beginning of each interaction with an employee, and inform the employee of instances where they are required to disclose information.

Circumstances that require the disclosure of information obtained during interactions between a Peer-to-Peer Coordinator and an employee include the following:

where information disclosed by a member to a Peer-to-Peer Coordinator, who is also a member, identifies an alleged breach of the *RCMP Act*, *RCMP Regulations*, or the Organizational Code of Conduct by that member;

- where the information provided by an employee suggests a threat to human life and safety; or
- where the Peer-to-Peer Coordinator is required to disclose information by law, or ordered to do so by judicial authority.

When a Peer-to-Peer Coordinator becomes aware of an issue that he/she is duty bound to report, he/she will report it to an appropriate resource who has the authority to act on the information. Only those persons who have a legitimate need to know of the information will be advised, and the issue will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the legislation, policies, and procedures established for addressing such issues, e.g. the *Access to Information Act*, the *Privacy Act*, the *RCMP Act* and *Regulations*, the Organizational Code of Conduct, and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector.

Appendix 1 - Signs Of Excessive Stress

Cognitive

- Difficulty in reasoning and making decisions
- Concentration difficulties
- Memory /confusion problems
- Decline in cognitive functions

Physical

- Excessive perspiration
- Dizziness
- Accelerated pulse
- High blood pressure
- Rapid breathing
- Excessive fatigue or excess nervous energy
- Sleep disturbances
- Changes in appetite and weight gain or loss

Emotional

- State of emotional shock
- Sadness or distress
- Fear or panic attacks
- Depression
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Irritability and frustration
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Depersonalization
- Feeling isolated
- Apathy
- Frequent crying
- Mistrust
- Mood swings

Behavioural

- Change in usual behaviour
- Decline in performance
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Unusual quietness or excessive volubility

Appendix 2 - Answers To Employees' Concerns About Using The Employee Assistance Program

If the employee says...	Your answer could be...
1. I don't have time. / It's too far.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can have access to EAP during and after work hours. You can talk with someone by telephone. Arrangements can be made to suit you in terms of time and place.
2. It's none of your business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That is true, but I am worried about you. I only want to remind you that the EAP is available to you if you need it. You are right, but your work performance is (or your attitude at work is).
3. Why don't you worry about your own problems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're not here to talk about me. I'm worried about you. I only want to remind you that the EAP is available to you. <p>NOTE: Do not let yourself get caught up in a discussion about yourself and try not to be on the defensive. Show empathy but suggest that the meeting be postponed if emotions are too intense.</p>
4. The employee wants to tell you all about his or her problems, and does so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think you have a lot on your shoulders. Let's focus right now on how I can help you with your work-related problems. I think the EAP would be more helpful with your personal problems.
5. You can't force me to use the EAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That's true, but why not try? It cannot hurt. It's up to you. I only want you to know that the EAP is available to you.
6. Are you saying that I have a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't know if you have a problem or not, but I have noticed that... (Describe the attitude or work performance) and only want to remind you that the EAP is available if you want to talk to someone.
7. I don't think the EAP is confidential.¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professionals at the EAP are bound by professional privilege. They strictly respect the confidentiality¹ of clients.
8. I have the situation under control. I don't need any help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't doubt that you're able to get through this alone. Sometimes getting some help and support can make things easier.

9. The employee becomes emotional (crying/anger).

- I can see how much this affects you. Maybe you could take the time to speak with someone at the EAP.
- I can see that this is a sensitive topic for you. Maybe you could take the time to go through it with the EAP.



Appendix 3 - Resources

Consult the following resources for more information on mental health and illnesses and for ways to create and maintain a healthy work environment.

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada - Mental Health](#)

[Université Laval](#) (*Chair in Occupational Health and Safety Management*)

[Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)



Appendix 4 - RCMP Health Services and Benefits

All employees

Employee Assistance Program

All RCMP employees and their dependents can access the [Employee Assistance Services](#) (EAS) provided by Health Canada. EAS provides employees with up to eight hours of counseling per issue. Issues can be work related or personal in nature, and there is no limit to the number of issues an employee or dependent can request assistance with.

Regular members

The RCMP's Occupational Health Services is comprised of specialized health practitioners who screen and monitor all members to identify physical and mental health risks. Some high-risk duty areas receive increased focus and monitoring to ensure employees are being assessed on an ongoing basis. Work-related health issues — whether physical or mental — are taken very seriously.

The RCMP currently has 11 occupational health services offices across Canada available to regular members to support their health, safety and fitness for duty.

Occupational Health and Safety Services teams include:

- medical doctors;
- psychologists;
- occupational health nurses;
- occupational safety officers;
- disability case managers;
- return to work facilitators;
- duty to accommodate coordinators; and
- fitness & lifestyle advisors.

In addition, eligible regular members may receive treatment at a Veterans Affairs Canada or Canadian Forces Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinics when referred by their treating physician or a member's Health Services Officer. As well, a wide range of external services are available through provincial/territorial health care programs and community service providers.

Regular members have direct access to Canadian medical and psychological practitioners of their choice including of general physicians, psychiatrists, and community-based psychologists. The RCMP's *Health Care Entitlements and Benefits Programs* allow coverage for the following:

- An eligible regular member is covered for **personal or group counseling** by

an approved psychologist without a referral or authorization for a maximum of six hours followed by a further six hours when preauthorized by the divisional psychologist per calendar year.

- An eligible member is covered for **couple or family counseling** by an approved psychologist without a referral or authorization for a maximum of six hours followed by a further six hours when pre-authorized by the regional or divisional psychologist per calendar year.
- An eligible member and his/her dependents may receive further couple or family treatments if preauthorized under the occupational health care level for the following work-related factors such as when the member is diagnosed with an occupational stress injury.
 - Eligible members may also receive further personal psychological treatment if preauthorized under the occupational health care program.

Periodic Health Assessments

[Periodic Health Assessments](#) (PHAs) are mandatory every three years for all regular members*. These assessments help ensure a member is fit to perform their assigned duties and it helps identify if the member's occupation is having a harmful effect on their health. If a member performs high-risk duties, assessments may occur more frequently.

* in unique circumstances, CMs may be required to have PHAs as well.

RCMP Veterans

RCMP Veterans are persons, retired or still serving, in receipt of an award granted under Section 32 of the *RCMP Superannuation Act*. RCMP Veterans (RMs and CMs) may be eligible to receive a [wide range of services](#) administered by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). These services include:

- disability pensions;
- health benefits and services; and
- access to OSI Clinics.

RCMP Veterans may receive one or all of the following services:

- counseling;
- case management;
- screening;
- referral;
- information;
- advocacy support; and
- assistance in accessing programs from VAC or other community agencies.

Veterans Affairs Canada provides the above services through their respective multidisciplinary team of health care experts.

Public service employees and civilian members

The [Public Service Health Care Plan](#) is designed to supplement care provided by employees' provincial health care plan and is administered by the Treasury Board. It is available to:

- civilian members and their dependents;
- public servants employees and their dependents; and
- dependents of regular members.



References

In addition to the references already cited, the following documentation was consulted in the preparation of this guide.

Line Managers' Resource, A practical guide to managing and supporting mental health in the workplace, Mind Out for Mental Health, Department of Health, U.K.

Marshal B. Rosenberg, *Les mots sont des fenêtres (ou des murs): Introduction à la communication non violente*, Jouvence Éditions, 1999

[*"Understanding Anxiety Disorders,"*](#) Canadian Mental Health Association

[*What You Need to Know About Mental Health: A Tool for Managers,*](#) The Conference Board of Canada

