



OCD is missing meals for fear of uncleanliness, it's repetitive tics, time-consuming nuances and irrational thought. OCD is disruptive, all consuming and has become a loose term to stereotype inappropriately. 1 in 5 Canadians struggles with mental health and it's time to end the stigma.

Today is Bell Let's Talk day and this year - more than ever - mental health awareness and support services are crucial. As we approach the 1-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic - amidst a province wide lockdown - the disconnect and self-isolation continues to place pressure on our mental health.

We have all had to navigate new challenges this past year; between homeschooling, social distancing, remote working, virtual birthdays and holidays and missing our loved ones, but in these struggles we have come together! It's important to remember to stay patient with each other and ourselves and to practice self care.

When you're struggling with your mental health your emotions may feel extremely overwhelming. During these times it is important to remember that you are not alone, and there is always hope and help. Coping with powerful feelings and emotions is not always easy, so we have compiled a list of different coping strategies to try when things are feeling a little heavy.

Everyone is different and what works for you may not work for your friend, so don't be scared to experiment!

- Allow yourself to feel your emotions, even if they are uncomfortable.
- Remember that thoughts are not facts.
- Ask for help from a friend, family member, or professional.
- Take a break.
- Practice self-care, no matter what that looks like to you.
 - Take a bath
 - Read a book
 - Listen to your favourite music
 - Go for a walk
 - Exercise
 - Watch a movie
 - Play a game
 - Practice breathing exercises or meditation

Bell Let's Talk Day has been integral in normalizing open communication when it comes to mental health and has accomplished incredible things through the programs they have, and continue to fund. With the support from Bell, the stigma surrounding mental health is ever changing and people are realizing it is okay to struggle and it is okay to seek help.

Reaching out to someone who you think is struggling with their mental health might seem scary, but letting them know you are there for them without judgement is a good start. Try to keep your language neutral and give them time to open up at their own pace (you never want to pressure someone to talk if they aren't ready). Help to make them feel safe by respecting their boundaries and be there to listen without offering unsolicited advice.





It's important to know the warning signs of someone who might be in distress. If someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, and you believe they might need help try engaging in a conversation with them to offer support. Remember, if you think that someone is in crisis to seek help immediately.

- Sudden mood changes
- More irritable than usual
- Sleep or appetite changes
- Social withdrawal
- Emotional outbursts
- Reactions that seem out of character
- Reckless behaviour
- Dark thoughts

We were fortunate enough to receive funding from the Bell Let's Talk Community Fund to support one of our own mental health projects, and cannot thank Bell enough for not just supporting us, but for making waves when it comes to mental health awareness.

Use the hashtag #BellLetsTalk on your social media, use the Bell Lets Talk snapchat filter or watch the official Bell Let's Talk video to help support mental health initiatives.

If you or a loved one are struggling, there tons of supports and resources out there to help and remember, you are not alone!

- Children and youth can contact Kids Help Phone by calling 1-800-668-6868 or texting 686868.
- Canadian Mental Health Association has a suicide prevention line 1-833-456-4566
- A suicide prevention website www.crisisservicescanada.ca. You can access all of their mental health supports at www.cmha.ca
- Canadian Indigenous peoples can receive support by contacting Hope for Wellness 1-588-242-3310

For more Canadian mental health supports you can visit:
www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/mental-health-services/mental-health-get-help.html#a3

