

UNION STRATEGIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**Building Connections, Resilience and
Stronger Community Resources to Support
Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic**



PSAC · Prairies
Public Service Alliance of Canada

Webinar Objectives



- Mental health: Impacts, stigma and realities
- What to do when the paycheque stops, understanding the impacts of stoppages, and changes to pay, job security and pay continuance
- The resources and support services available in our communities
- The role of our Union in building stronger, responsive and supportive communities for members (in the workplace, working remotely, and online)
- Problem solving, questions & answers

Mental Health Impacts & Realities



- Members, staff and our leadership may be worried about Covid-19 and how it could affect all parts of their lives – including staying at home, essential service jobs and maintaining physical/social distancing
- The impacts may feel difficult and stressful and can compound as time progresses
- Whether at home or at work, it might feel more difficult than usual for members to take care of their mental health and well-being
- The goal: Building capacity and social supports so that we can become stronger advocates for building stronger communities

What is Mental Health?

The World Health Organization defines Mental Health as:

“A state of well being in which we realize our potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productive and fruitfully, and able to make contributions to our community.”



Healthy Communities: Well-Being

Four quadrants of mental wellness - a healthy community:

Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enough resources and money• Living wage & pay continuance• Safe(r) home, food, clothing – basic needs met	Social <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right to belong and care for one another• Connections and community during distancing/isolation
Political <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety, leadership• The right to speak and to be heard• Connections in your community	Mental & Emotional <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right to feel good• Places to find and feel happiness, connection• Value all members

Social Determinants of Health: Impacts

Income and income distribution	Employment and working conditions
Unemployment and job security	Housing (adequate & affordable)
Food insecurity	Aboriginal status
Gender	Race
Disability	Sexual orientation
Gender identity	Early childhood development
Education/access to education	Social exclusion
Social safety net	Health services (access to & access to appropriate services)

CLC Mental Health at Work



Individual Needs During a Crisis

- All members have basic needs: eating, sleeping, the need to feel safe, to feel included, like we belong to a community, pay continuance, job security
- All people exist within a context: If you don't have food/housing, or continuance of pay, you're not worrying about law & order/personal growth/etc.
- Mental health & well-being can become a luxury: in our own social context – less an “illness” and more an unmet need
- During crisis, unfavourable or negative attitudes about mental health & well-being build = Stigma



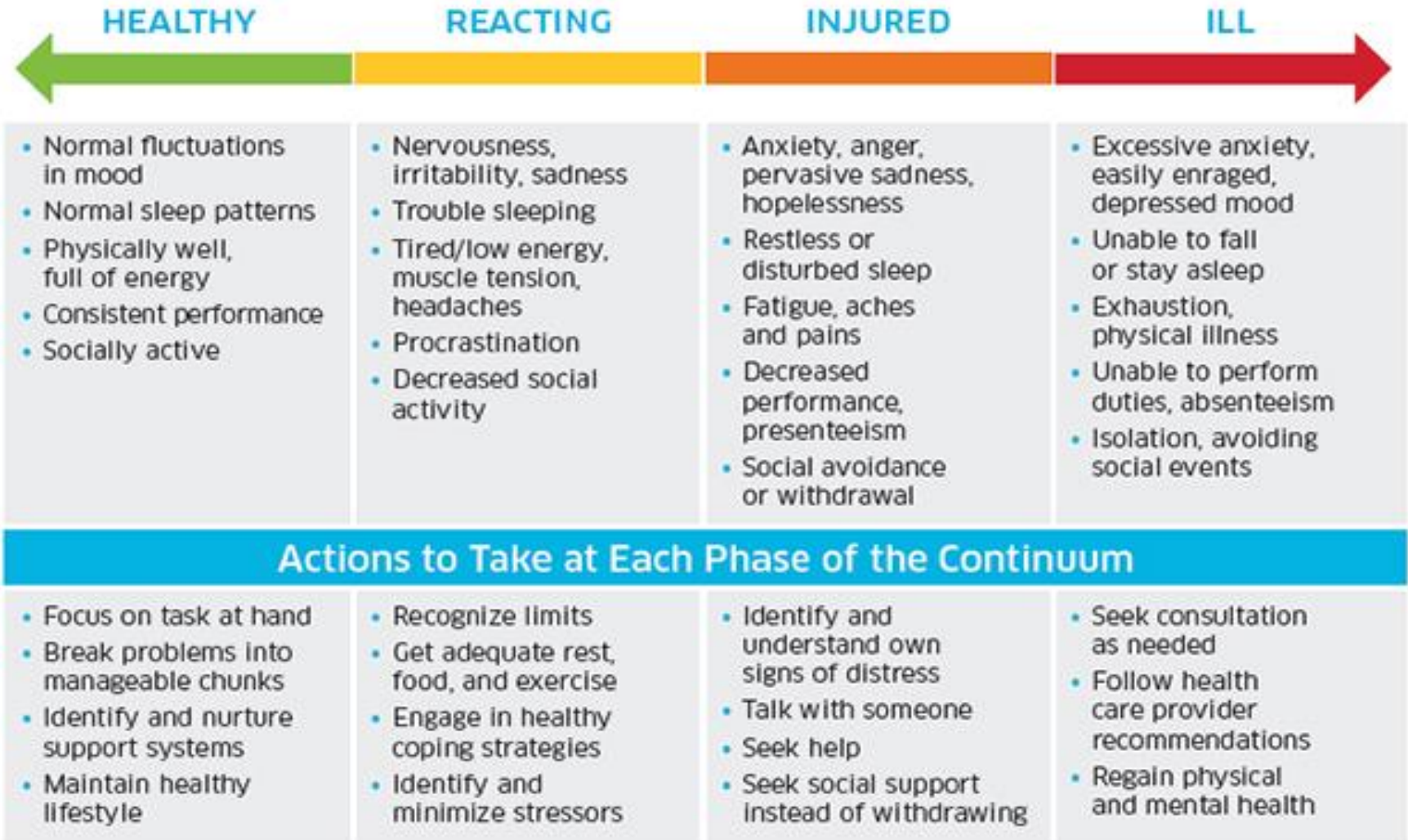
Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Stigma & Discrimination

- Discrimination can come in many forms and stigma can happen anywhere: workplace, union, media
- Stigma is often as hard (if not harder) to deal with than the symptoms of the illness
- Why does stigma exist?
- The effects or impacts of stigma during a crisis can further isolate members and can affect job/home/basic needs securities
- The results of stigma:
 - *Avoid getting the help one needs*
 - *Mental health & potential substance use may be affected*
 - *Increased isolation, depression, lose of hope for ability to get through*

Understanding Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL



When the Paycheque Stops – Resource

- Understanding the impacts of stoppages and shortages to pay, pay continuance and job security
- The impact of the pandemic on stress & anxiety for all workers and members
- Importance of building in self-care, building routine and building resilience
- Accessing or supporting United Way COVID-19 fund in communities to help ensure basic community services are available to all members
- Unemployment support, connections to social supports, 211.ca, Canada's Emergency Benefits, personal finance support, household budgeting, and credit crisis guidelines

<https://unitedwaywinnipeg.ca/covid-19-labour-union-resources/>

When the Paycheque Stops – Pay Specific

With interruptions to pay cycle, fear of stoppage and fear around pay continuance, it is important to have support around advocacy and support.

What should members consider during this time?

- Communicate: Making a plan to get through it (personal) & with Union
- Evaluate: budgeting, payments and necessities
- Act: Cdn Benefit provisions, provincial benefits, Gov't specific supports, Union negotiated LOUs/protective language provisions

**WHAT TO
DO WHEN THE
PAYCHEQUE
STOPS**



**A guide to assist union
members and their families
during a difficult time**

<https://unitedwaywinnipeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/UnitedWayWinnipeg-StrikeSupport.pdf>

211 & the Labour Movement



Life is 24/7. We are too... 

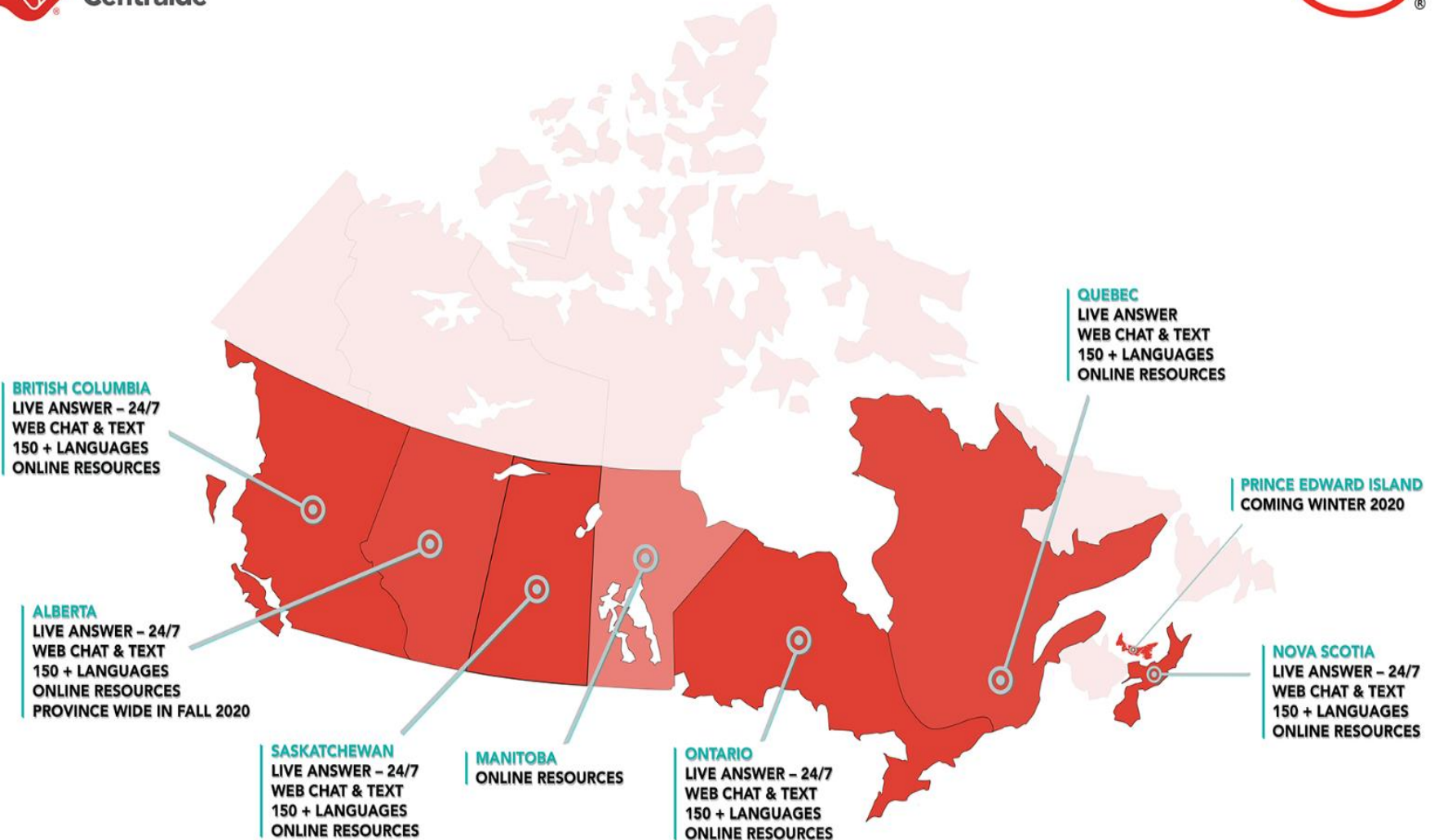


Are you a shop steward?
Help Starts Here.

When Union members need assistance, let them know help starts with **211 Manitoba!**

211 SERVICE AVAILABILITY



The hours of operation for programs and services listed may vary during the ongoing covid-19 crisis. Please call ahead to ensure the program or service you are looking for is operating.



Your search starts here

Find programs and services in your community.



Emergency Resources



Covid-19 Info



Housing & Homelessness



Food & Clothing



Health



Mental Health & Addictions



Abuse & Assault



Financial



Employment & Training



Legal Issues



Youth



Older Adults



Need info or resources related to COVID-19?

Click these links:

[COVID-19 Info](#) [COVID-19 Resources for Albertans](#) [Daily Emerging Needs](#)

Need other resources? Find services in your community.

NEW Try the Search Help Tool

- Caregivers
- Financial Supports
- Legal
- Children / Families
- Food / Basic Needs
- Mental Health / Addictions



Please be advised, programs may be affected due to COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms and need to be assessed,

call the Saskatchewan Healthline 8-1-1

For further information, click here.

Looking for:



Crisis Hotlines



Mental Health & Addictions



Violence/Abuse



Health Care



Learning/Education



Community Programs



Seasonal



Homelessness



Employment/Training



Housing



Food Security



Legal/Courts



Income Support



Indigenous Peoples



Refugees/Immigrants



Older Adults



Youth



Children/Families




People with Disabilities



Veterans/Military

211 Resources – MB Sample



Visit **mb.211.ca**
TO CONNECT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES

I'm looking for ...

Food & Clothing	Housing & Homelessness	Health
Mental Health & Addictions	Children & Parenting	Youth
Indigenous Peoples	People with Disabilities	... and much more

Help starts here.

Visit **mb.211.ca**

211 Manitoba, United Way, Volunteer Manitoba

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211 Manitoba

Visit **mb.211.ca**
to find services related to:

- Food & clothing
- Housing & homelessness
- Health
- Mental health & addictions
- Children & parenting
- Youth
- Indigenous peoples
- People with disabilities
- & much more

BUG

211 Manitoba, United Way, Volunteer Manitoba



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How can we support fellow members?

1. Know the facts
2. Be aware of your attitudes and behaviour
3. Choose your words carefully
4. Educate others
5. Focus on the positive
6. Support people
7. Include everyone



Image: <https://excellence.ca/mental-health-at-work/>

The Importance of Social Support

We all need to feel like we belong and that others care about our well-being. This is what social support is: the belonging and care we receive from other people.

When we have these people in our lives, this becomes our social support network.

These networks can include family members, friends, Union colleagues, neighbours and community & social sector professionals (nurses, counsellors, peer support workers, etc).

People need people, and often we underestimate how much we might benefit from this support.

Who is in your
social support
network?



Building Social Support Networks – for each other!

What does a social support look like?

Emotional Support

Someone you contact when you need to talk about an issue/reality and share your thoughts/feelings

Knowledgeable Advice

Someone you talk to when you need more information

New Perspectives

someone you call when you might need to look at something from a different perspective

Practical Help

someone you can call when you your childcare provider calls in sick, or someone who drops off a meal when you're sick, or someone to help you with your workload

Reminder: to be mindful of our expectation with others. Depending on our need for support, one person might not be able to help with more than one support style

<https://cmha.ca/documents/social-support>

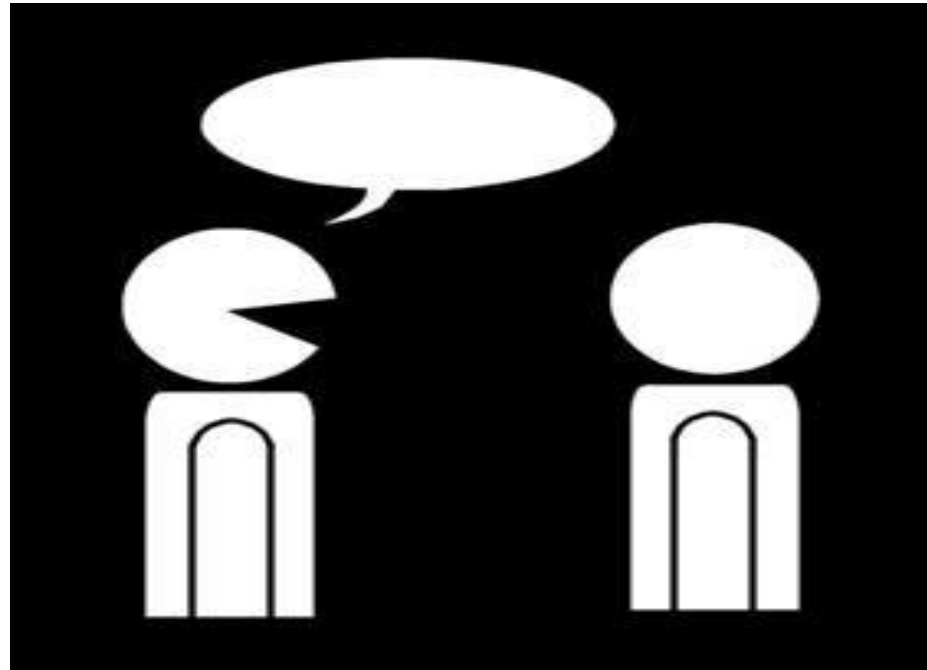
How to Build Social Support Networks

- Connect with your networks and ask for help. Remember that reaching out takes strength!
- Take care of important relationships you already have. You need to contribute to relationships, too—you can't only ask for help or assistance. Offer support to others in your networks.
- Be clear about the kind of help you need. Tell people what you need—they may be able to offer better help when they know what you're looking for.
- Seek specialized support, like counselling, when it's needed. Make sure that you're asking for help in the right places.
- If you put work into a relationship but don't see the improvements you need, it may be time to let go of that relationship. People change and situations change. Sometimes it's best to go your separate ways and put your energy into healthier relationships.

Get involved. Give it time. Reach out in person. Look online. Explore supports.

<https://cmha.ca/documents/social-support>

Direct Action: Starting the Conversation



What Can Mindfulness Look Like?

Mindfulness can be practiced in many different ways and there is no right or wrong way to do it.

The most important aspect is that you give yourself permission to take a minute, find a balance that works for you and remind yourself to find this balance as often as you need!

- >Eat a meal with no distractions
- >Get some fresh air
- >Go for a walk/stroll and pay attention to surroundings
- >Talk with a friend face-to-face (facetime/web based platform)



Direct Action – What is the Union’s Role?

- Be informed
- Listen
- Referrals
- Follow-up
- Community liaison
- Prevention & Education



Communication!
Bulletins, member news, facebook pages, did you know pieces, positive stories

Resources & Support Services

- Taking care of our mental health & well being can include connecting to resources to help get through the challenging times
- Sharing connection points with each other for:
 - *Connecting with others*
 - *Routine & keeping active*
 - *Online community building & keeping minds stimulated*
 - *Understanding health & government updates*
 - *What do to when... (feelings of anxiety, stress, etc.)*

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse37535>

Problem Solving, Q & A



References

- Taking care of our mental health & wellbeing: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse37535>
- United Way Winnipeg Labour Program COVID-19 Resources for Unions: <https://unitedwaywinnipeg.ca/covid-19-labour-union-resources/>
- Canadian Labour Congress COVID-19 Resource Centre: <https://canadianlabour.ca/home/covid-19-response/>
- Online community resource tool for community & social supports (public & community non-profit services): www.211.ca | www.mb.211.ca | www.sk.211.ca | etc.
- CMHA Responses to COVID-19: <https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health>