

# THE DISCOMFORT ZONE

Navigating Wellness as a Man



# Table of Contents

---

<u>Introduction</u> .....	3
<u>Improving self-esteem</u> .....	5
<u>Suppressing vs. Expressing emotions</u> .....	9
<u>Building a social life</u> .....	16
<u>Dealing with interpersonal conflict</u> .....	20
<u>Substance Use</u> .....	26
<u>Active Living</u> .....	33
<u>Eating a balanced diet</u> .....	38
<u>Importance of Sleep hygiene</u> .....	44
<u>Conclusion and Resources</u> .....	47



# Introduction

---

In Canada, approximately one million men go through a major depressive episode each year. 75% of suicides result in the death of men. These numbers are devastating. Sadly, there seems to be a gap between the number of men who face mental health challenges and those who seek support. The explanation for this is not straightforward, it is complex.

Many factors can hinder a person from coming to terms with their mental health needs. In some communities, there might be the expectation that men cannot or should not be sad, or perhaps that men can feel only certain emotions, such as anger. This can discourage men from being honest about what they feel. These messages can also reduce one's comfort in seeking support from friends, family, or professionals. Some people may be hesitant to reach out if they feel that they are expected to work through things on their own. They might prefer to navigate their emotions alone and be used to doing so.

In this resource, we will describe some of the physical, mental, and social challenges that men commonly face. We will also address some of the barriers that can hinder people from effectively navigating their well-being. Along the way, we hope to validate diverse experiences, especially those faced disproportionately by men.



## Who is this resource written for?

This resource is being written for all men, whether you be cisgender, transgender, and/or non-binary trans-masculine. In this resource, we will not be addressing trans-specific mental health issues, but instead sharing strategies for addressing some issues that men disproportionately face.

Many of the health topics discussed are not exclusive to men, but we hope to discuss them through the lens of navigating as a man in society.

Many parts of this resource will not apply to all men. Just like any other group, men are diverse and face different challenges even when sometimes faced with similar barriers. Please take from this resource what is relevant to you.

## Who is writing this resource?

This resource is being brought to you by McMaster University's Student Wellness Centre. The Student Wellness Centre is the place on campus to address your wellness needs. We provide a range of counselling options, medical services and wellness programs so that you can get the most out of your McMaster experience, academically and personally.

Visit [our website](#) to learn more.



---

# Improving self-esteem



‘Self-esteem’ is a loaded concept; one that can dramatically change the relationships we have with ourselves, other people, and the world around us.

In essence, self-esteem refers to the confidence that we have in our own worth. It describes the extent to which a person feels good enough.

# Types of self-esteem

Self-esteem is often seen as being separated into two subtypes: **global** and **domain-specific**.

Global self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of worth (or lack thereof). An individual may also have varying levels of self-esteem in different domains of their life. Some domains include academic competence, physical appearance, and romantic appeal. For example, one person may have high self-esteem in their fitness, but low self-esteem in maintaining their interpersonal relationships.

Each person plays many different roles. For example, an individual may hold the role of a significant other and an employee. The more importance a person places on a given role, the more impact the corresponding self-esteem domain will have on their global self-esteem. For instance, the more a person values their role as a student, the more impact their academic self-esteem will have on their global or overall self-esteem.



## What high self-esteem looks like:

Generally, self-esteem is described as either 'high' or 'low'. When a person has high self-esteem, they feel worthy and valuable, which is not the same as feeling superior to others. Someone can practice self-love and feel worthy without thinking that they are better than other people.

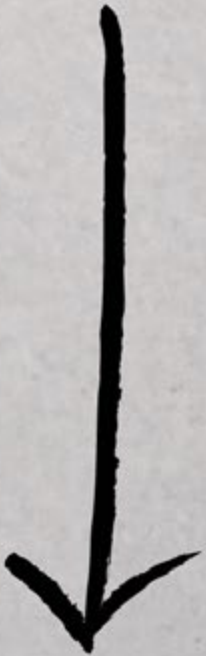
Moreover, when someone has high self-esteem, they still recognize that they are imperfect and identify areas where they can improve. However, they do not see their mistakes as diminishing their sense of worthiness as a person. Rather, these mistakes are a part of being human. They are also part of being a man.



## How low self-esteem manifests itself:

People vary in how their low self-esteem manifests. However, there are some common consequences of low self-esteem. For example, a person might be more sensitive to criticism from other people, with feedback damaging their sense of worth. As well, they might spend a lot of time and energy contemplating how others see them. To protect their self-esteem from being further diminished, people avoid taking risks. When they feel that they have made a mistake, they might downplay their positive qualities and amplify the weight of their mistake.

Low self-esteem can be debilitating, affecting a person's daily life and interactions. However, having low self-esteem is not a sign of weakness or something to beat yourself up for. It likely stems from your circumstances or surroundings. For instance, growing up with critical family members or experiencing many emotional bumps (like job loss) can make you feel as though you are not 'good enough'.



# Tips to develop your self-esteem

---



Thankfully, self-esteem is pliable. Some folks may not have faith in their ability to better their self-esteem because traditional methods, like using positive affirmations, have not been helpful. But described below are some steps to work on it.

- Identify the negative beliefs that you have about yourself. What thoughts do you have?
- Look for evidence that contradicts the negative beliefs you have about yourself. Where do your negative beliefs come from?
- If there are people in your life who contribute to the negative beliefs you have about yourself, consider creating boundaries which might limit the types of circumstances when they tend to tear you down, or perhaps prioritizing more positive relationships.
- Create a list of your positive qualities, recognizing that you are a balanced individual.
- Remind yourself that you may just have some areas for improvement – as we all do! Every person is a work-in-progress and there is no such thing as perfection.
- Exercise or practice another form of self-care. Your mind and body are worthy of being looked after.

Though there are steps you can take to strengthen your self-esteem, know that you do not have to do it all on your own. In addition to the support of your family and friends, it can help to access counselling and other kinds of therapy.





# Supressing vs. Expressing emotions

## *Vulnerability.*

This can be a scary topic for many. What does it even mean to be vulnerable?

Being vulnerable with others about what you're feeling does require taking a risk. You may not always get the response you desire, but that doesn't mean you can avoid it. Being honest in relationships and to yourself is necessary to have positive experiences, resolve conflicts well, and build intimacy. However, people might be hesitant to share their feelings



# Barriers men face to expressing their emotions

## 1. Prioritizing your loved ones

Many men feel that they cannot “waste” time dealing with their own emotions. Some may believe time is better used supporting those around them, while others may think that their problems would burden others and that they should be self-reliant. The fear of being a burden is understandable, and often comes from not believing that we, or our concerns, are worthy of other people’s precious time.

While it is a good thing to be considerate of other people’s energy, we all deserve to feel heard and supported. To help minimize the fear of being a burden, give your loved ones the opportunity to set healthy boundaries for when or how often you will confide in them.

## 2. Internalizing stereotypes and expectations of the ideal man

Many men try to avoid shame by being physically strong, appearing emotionally stable by not reacting or crying, being a good provider, and taking the role as the sexual initiator. However, men who constantly try and uphold these ideals are more likely to have lower relationship satisfaction, communication quality, and report being afraid of intimacy.

We may also look to the characters and media figures we look up to, which also shape the type of person we want to be. Especially in Western media, desirable men are often depicted as being fearless, resourceful, stoic, and facing adversity alone. Picture the strong, silent type. Consider what characters you’ve wanted to be like and how that may have affected how you think of yourself today.

## 3. Inexpressive male role models

It might be difficult to express your emotions if you were raised around men who never did so. Many men have grown up with fathers or family members who are emotionally distant and who rarely (if ever) cry or express affection outwardly.

From a young age, adults may use a narrower range of emotional vocabulary when talking to boys. Eventually, many boys internalize that the only intense emotion that is acceptable for men to express is anger.

# Consequences of suppressing emotions

It is helpful for us to learn to identify and cope with our emotions by communicating them to others in a variety of ways. However, using alternative coping strategies to deal with them is great too. This may involve some distraction, like physical and creative outlets, which allow you to relieve stress when you do not yet feel equipped to deal with the emotional stressors.

Distraction can be helpful when coping with short-term stress outside of our control or to reduce stress when we are temporarily overwhelmed or unable to deal with it directly. However, distraction can be harmful when used too frequently or when it hinders someone from processing their feelings for a long period of time.

## Acting out

Pent up negative emotions due to not expressing hurt or an inability to express affection may lead us to act out in more harmful ways. Many people attempt to avoid their feelings by drinking, using substances, having sex, playing video games, gambling, shopping, eating, etc.

Excessive amounts of any of these behaviours are classic indicators of “I don’t want to talk about it.” All of these behaviours are associated with some level of risk.

## Relational problems

Avoiding emotional conversations or overworking can hinder us from taking action on things within our control and result in us hurting others. Facing relationship difficulties often requires communication or active problem-solving, which can be emotionally tiring.

While pushing past the psychological barriers to facing your emotions in the present may seem like more trouble than it’s worth, if you consider the long-term consequences of not facing them, it may be better to put in the work now rather than later.

## Physical Consequences

Suppressing our emotions can also have physical consequences. By increasing our stress and pain, suppression can lead to poor cardiovascular health over time.

Additionally, some emotional avoidance methods like drugs, alcohol, over-eating, or risky sex can lead to health problems in the future.

# Strategies for expressing emotions



## **Write it down.**

Regardless of what you are trying to express, you can start by writing it down. Writing can be helpful for practicing how you'd like to express your feelings toward someone else or simply for sorting out what is going on within your own mind.

If you are unsure of how to express affection, writing down how you'd like to express it may help you gain confidence and clarity for how you'd like to act around them. You may not only write what you'd like to say, but the actions you want to take to express your affection.

## **Put aside the cultural script and tell them how you really are**

Typically, if someone asks you how you are, how do you respond?

*"Fine." "Good." "Doing all right."*

One way to be more vulnerable with those you care for is to be slightly more honest when someone asks how you are. Instead of "fine", you could share "You know, I've actually been struggling with physics lately," or "Awesome, I had a great chat with my housemate today."

Most of the time "how are you?" is a formality, meaning the person isn't looking for you to unload the stressors of your day. However, sharing something slightly more personal leaves an opening in the conversation for the other person to empathize, ask questions, or share their own struggles if they are comfortable. If they aren't interested in diving into that conversation with you at the moment, it provides them an opportunity to simply respond "Oh, sorry about that," and close the topic.

# Find out your love language

The Five Love Languages is a tool for understanding what forms of affection make us feel the most loved, and for discovering how we can make others feel loved.

You can care deeply for someone in your life and put in every effort to show them how you feel, but if you're not communicating in a way that resonates with them, they may not internalize it. Discovering your love languages may help communicate to loved ones what you need from them to feel cared for.

If you want to find out your top love languages, you can use the "Five Love Languages" tool and take the [Adult Quiz](#). Having others in your life also take the quiz may clarify how you can express your affection for them.



## The five love languages are:

### Words of affirmation:

Words carry meaning, and these folks find it meaningful to hear what others think and feel for them.

### Acts of service:

For some, actions speak louder than words. Having someone going out of their way to do something kind makes them feel special.

### Receiving gifts:

Knowing that someone wanted to surprise them with a gift makes these people feel loved.

### Quality time:

Others giving their time and attention to these people makes them feel loved.

### Physical touch:

This one, like the other languages, can come in different forms. Examples include hugging, holding hands, massages, etc.

## Find a conversation-friendly activity

It can be scary to ask a friend, “Want to call later and catch up?” One way to get around this feeling is to find an alternative reason to hang out that also provides the opportunity to chat. Some examples include:

- Hiking
- Studying together
- Shooting hoops
- Grabbing a drink
- Playing music together



There are certain activities which may be too engaging and prevent conversation from happening. It's best to consider your experience with the activity previously to decide whether it would be a good option if you're trying to start an honest conversation.

This strategy can be useful when you want to talk about something going on in your life and need someone else's opinion or just a listening ear, but you're nervous to ask for it.

## How can you support other men?

Model that it's okay to be vulnerable. Some men may need someone they trust to serve as an example for what vulnerability can look like. This doesn't have to be an intimidating task. Something as simple as telling a guy friend when you are having a bad day, if that's not something you typically do, can be important in starting conversations about your health and well-being.

## Reaching out

You may have friends who don't reach out for support because of the pressure they feel to not appear “weak”. This does not necessarily mean that they don't need support. Invite them out for an activity, accept support from them, and offer them support as well. You may have to take the first step.

---

## Final Note

This is a learning process. All of us are in it together. Getting better at expressing your emotions is not about getting it right 100% of the time, so do not beat yourself up if you fall back into old habits sometimes.

You deserve to have strong relationships. You deserve to not fear reaching out for support from your loved ones. Fortunately, you can learn how to build these bonds yourself.



---

# Building a social life

Loneliness can force all your responsibilities, internal conflicts, and questions onto your shoulders, and make you feel unsupported, unwanted, misunderstood.

When you are lonely, you may feel that you are floating through the world not connecting with other people – not really –, and just existing. This may be one of the most painful emotions to experience, but it doesn't have to be permanent. Loneliness can be relieved.





# Addressing loneliness through vulnerability

When you hear the word “lonely”, you might imagine a person who is physically alone and not spending much time with others. However, loneliness can also be felt in a room filled with people. Additionally, you don’t need to interact with people all the time to feel less lonely. Meaningful connection with even one or two people can make all the difference in relieving loneliness.

## What is social connection?

According to psychologists, social connection is something that can be achieved through vulnerability. ‘Vulnerability’ is a big, abstract word, but it is essentially a risk that you take when you are honest and express your feelings. This is much easier said than done, since vulnerability opens us up to the possibility of getting hurt.

If we’re honest with someone about our romantic feelings for them, we might be met with rejection. If we share details about our past with someone, they may start to see us differently. If we are open about our traumas, people may not respond how we need them to. If you’ve ever chosen not to be vulnerable, it may have been a choice to survive and protect yourself from harm, which is valid and understandable.

We must acknowledge that both pain and connectedness “come to us through the same door.” When we shield ourselves from hurt, we “are also shielded from love, intimacy, and connection.”





## **How can we be more vulnerable while still preserving some sense of safety and security?**

There is no risk-free way of being vulnerable. However, there are strategies of opening up that you may be more comfortable with. This could mean saying hi to the grocery store clerk or holding the door open for someone. All of these are ways of being honest, expressing your feelings, and opening yourself up. Depending on your experiences, you might feel more comfortable being vulnerable in some ways over others – and that's okay!

## **Coping with rejection and respecting boundaries**

Hurtful responses from other people are often unrelated to your own worth. If you ask someone how their day is and their response is dry, it does not mean that you are not deserving of a conversation, but rather reflects on their internal thoughts at that moment. Being able to separate your inherent worth from other people's responses to you can help you feel safer when being vulnerable. Facing rejection does not make you less worthy of love or social connection.

However, you have a duty to respect the personal boundaries set by others. These boundaries may be related to your pursuit of that person romantically, sexually, platonically, etc. Regardless of the circumstance, you should not make someone feel guilty for upholding their boundaries. Another person setting boundaries for your relationship with them does not lessen your worth. If someone is establishing boundaries with you because of a behaviour of yours which hurt them, acknowledge how your actions could have been different, apologize if it feels appropriate, and try to move on. If that person does not want to reconcile that situation, they do not have to.

The same expectations apply when you set boundaries; if you set them, you deserve for them to be respected. This process of accepting the boundaries others set for us can be painful and it is natural to feel disappointed, but it is your responsibility to do what is right.



## Benefits of social connection

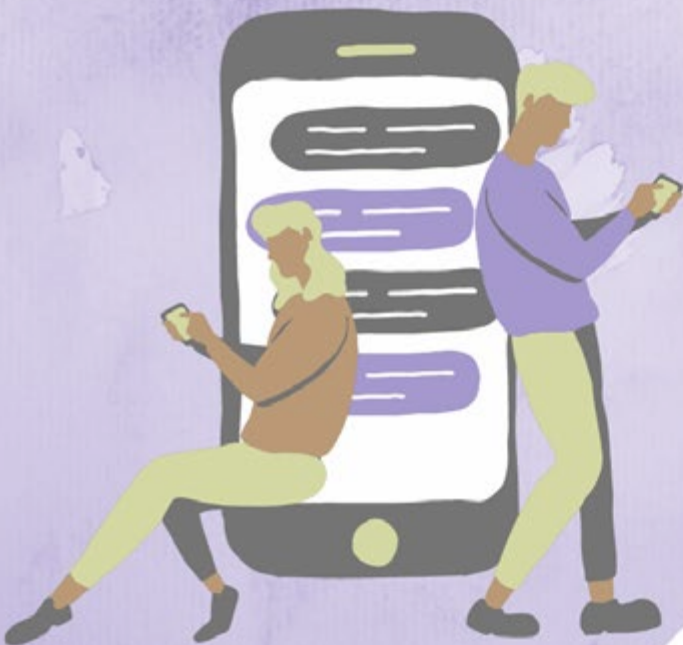
Over time, and by making the choice to be vulnerable, you will hopefully form a circle of people (or have even just one person) who you can turn to and who can turn to you. This community can offer you a sense of belonging and appreciation for who you are, while also inspiring you to do better. Moreover, connection can provide you with a sense of purpose, as you develop your identity inspired by the role you take on in those fruitful relationships. For example, you can be the friend who offers a listening ear, or perhaps the one who brings snacks to every hangout. You can laugh, cry, and share both joyful and painful moments with them. Social connectedness can help relieve your sense of loneliness.

### Some ways for you to interact more with other people:

- Visit places where you feel comfortable, e.g., a local café, the gym, a library
- Join clubs or groups where you can find folks who share your interests
- Schedule regular hangouts with friends, e.g., weekly game nights

### Some ways for you to connect with the people in your life:

- Show initiative in communication, e.g., send a text or call them every once in a while
- Offer a listening ear
- Request their advice when you find yourself in a difficult situation
- Share your wins with them and celebrate their wins



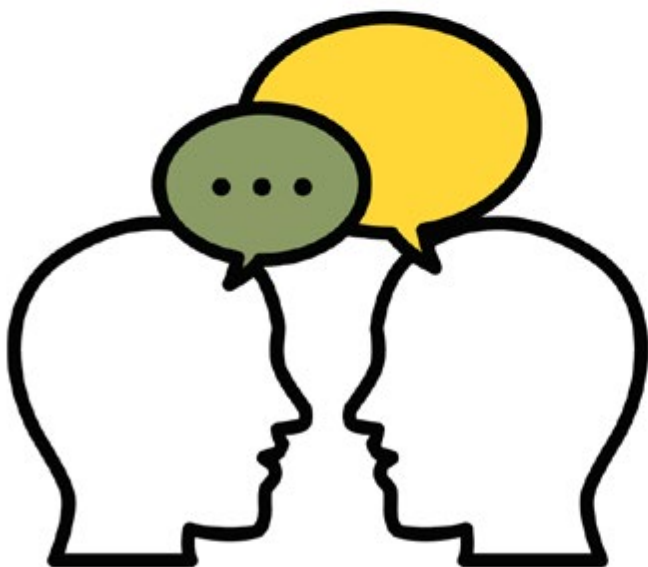
---

# Dealing with interpersonal conflict

When you get to know someone (even a little bit), you might learn that the two of you look at the same thing in different ways, depending on your personalities, values, expectations, and attitudes. This can lead to interpersonal conflicts, which take place between two or more people.

For example, a group of housemates might have different expectations regarding the cleanliness of their house, which can create some tension when it comes to dividing the chores.

Alternatively, romantic partners may have different ways of showing affection, which could cause them both to feel unloved and result in an argument.



## Conflict is natural

Although these conflicts can be uncomfortable, they are a natural part of human interaction – you are bound to meet someone who does not share your views on a particular subject. If handled with care, conflicts can have positive impacts; they can strengthen the relationship of the people involved or improve communication between them. They can even help you understand your own boundaries. However, interpersonal conflicts can also be harmful, such as when a dispute involves violence. These situations warrant thoughtful evaluation to determine safe(r) next steps. Ultimately, being able to identify and respond to these conflicts is an important skill.

## Types of interpersonal conflicts

Interpersonal conflicts come in various flavors. In this resource, we are introducing only two types of conflicts – fact-based and value-based –, but many other types exist.

### Value-based conflicts:

These conflicts arise when people prioritize different things in a given situation. For example, two students might disagree as to whether they should throw a house party during the COVID-19 pandemic: one sibling prioritizes public health protocols, whereas the other feels lonely and prioritizes interpersonal connection.

### Fact-based conflicts:

These conflicts involve disagreement about the truth of information. For instance, a group of people might debate about which contraceptive (between a hormonal IUD and a progestin-only pill) tends to be most effective.



# Types of responses to interpersonal conflict

To help people navigate interpersonal conflict, specialists have created a model that defines the various types of responses: avoidance, accommodation, compromise, competition, and collaboration.

**Avoidance involves** making the choice not to discuss the conflict directly. A person's feelings will likely be expressed passive aggressively, sarcastically, or through other indirect means. However, there will be no intentional dialogue about the subject. Avoidance can arise due to various factors, such as a lack of energy to discuss the problem or the belief that the conflict will go away (or won't go away regardless of communication).

**Compromise involves** giving up at least some of what each person wants. For instance, the student not wanting to throw a pandemic party might compromise with their roommate to instead invite a few friends over with masks (not during a strict lockdown), which is a middle ground between both people's desires. Again, this type of response is appropriate for time-sensitive conflicts but can leave remnants of frustration and regret in the long-term, as it does not meet the needs of everyone involved.

**Accommodation involves** completely 'giving in' to the other person, whether that means agreeing with them or providing them with what they have requested. For example, say two people are arguing about when they should hang out. If someone asks to be picked up five minutes later than what had been decided, and the delay does not impact their plans much, I could fulfil their request.

However, accommodation can sometimes end up harming both the person who is accommodating as well as the relationship. For example if one person gives in and stops asking for a particular form of affection, then they may continue to feel unloved and even grow to resent the other. Through accommodation, interpersonal conflict can be relieved in the short-term, as the people involved may stop arguing about the issue at hand.

**Competition** can be described as the opposite of accommodation, as it involves advocating for one's own needs and ultimately 'winning' the interpersonal conflict. For instance, the student wanting to throw a pandemic party might be successful in persuading their housemate regardless of their opposition. While this could create positive outcomes, perhaps by relieving the loneliness of both students and helping everyone have a good time, it disregards the views and needs of the other person involved, which could harm the students' relationship in the long term.

**Collaboration involves** a dedicated effort to meet the needs of everyone involved in the conflict. Professionals agree that collaboration is generally the ideal response to interpersonal conflict. It can be time-consuming, requiring effort from everyone involved in the conflict.

However, it tends to create long-term benefits, such as stronger relationships. Going back to the house party example, the two students can listen more closely to each other's needs: what one student really wants is to ensure the health of students and what the other student really wants is to feel less lonely. Through collaboration, they can create a solution, such as a virtual game night, that helps address both their 'sides'.



# How to engage in listening that will support finding a solution

Overall, active, empathetic listening is crucial for interpersonal conflict resolution. In order to engage in this kind of listening, particularly in the context of interpersonal conflict, you can take the following measures.

**1. Remove distractions** such as cellphones and earphones, so that you can better focus on the other person.

**2. Pay attention to your body language:** find a way of discussing that helps you and the other person feel comfortable. For example, you may prefer to face the person and make eye contact, but others may feel more comfortable walking side-by-side.

**3. Do not look for holes in the other person's argument as they are speaking.** Focus on understanding the other person's perspective rather than 'winning' or being understood yourself. You may do this by asking questions to clarify the meaning of the other person's statements, rather than suggesting their meaning yourself.

**4. Respect the boundaries of yourself and others involved.** For example, if the other person has identified a topic that is troubling for them, be sensitive when bringing up the topic if it is necessary and ask their permission to discuss it in the moment.

**5. Recognize the wisdom of the person to whom you are listening.** While you may have a solution to offer or an insight to share, refrain from giving advice unless you are asked to. If you are inclined to share regardless, ask permission for whether you may give your advice. If they say no, respect their wishes.

**6. Be mindful of the language that you are using:** Refrain from the use of slurs and other types of derogatory language. Offending the other person does not create a space conducive to finding resolutions.



**7. Focus on impact rather than intention:** performing harmful actions does not by default make someone a 'bad' or ill-intentioned person. The conversation might be more productive if you talk about an action that a person took, rather than making judgements about their character.

**8. Use gentle assertiveness:** Assertiveness involves clearly describing what you are feeling to another person and why, typically when we are feeling negatively about that person. Assertive statements often involve starting with, "I feel" rather than "You made me feel". Speaking this way avoids blaming the other person for how we are feeling. Instead, it can be used to gather information about what both parties are feeling and figure out the best way to move forward together.

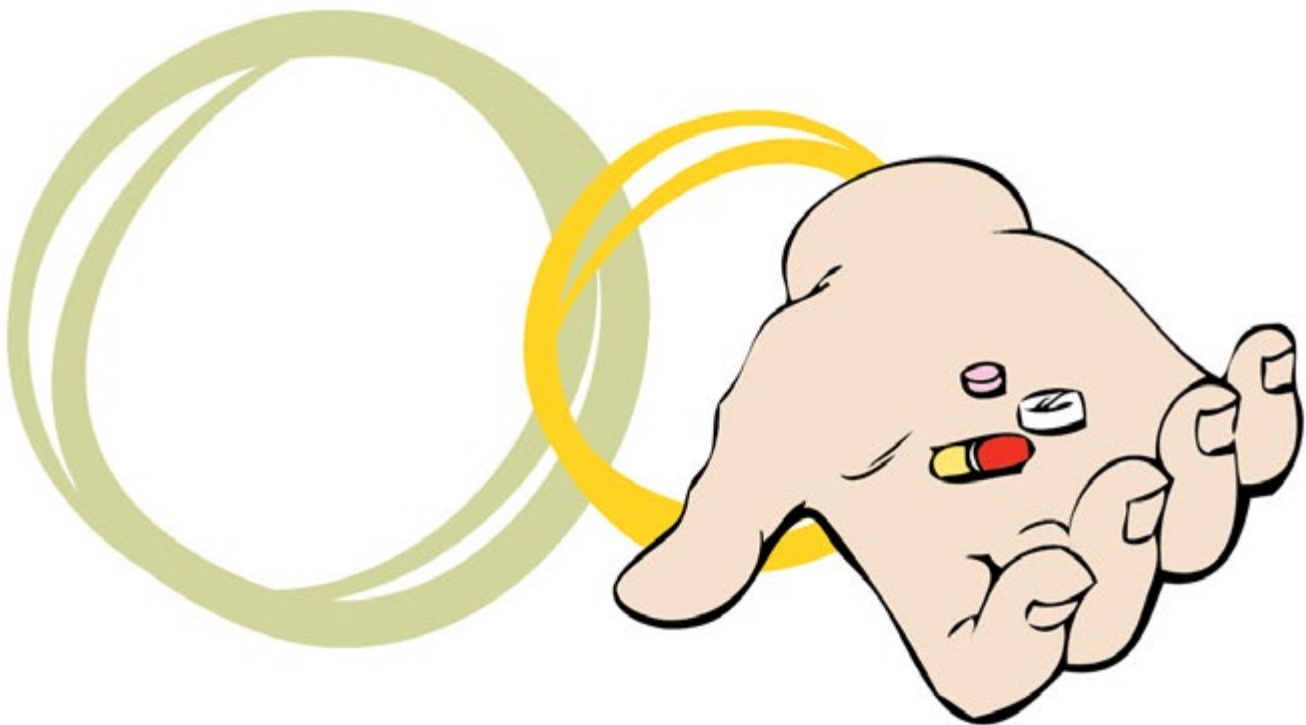
Without being assertive of our pain, emotions manifest outwardly in a different way. Individuals who suppress their feelings can become aggressive or shut the other person out all together by giving them the silent treatment. Neither of these alternative reactions solve the problem or move the relationship in a positive direction.



---

# Substance use

**Disclaimer:** This is not an addiction resource. If you are struggling with substance use and are looking for support, contact the Student Wellness Centre to book an appointment with our medical or counselling staff or visit our website where you can find other resources external to McMaster.



# Talking about substances

When discussing substance use and whether it has become problematic, it is good to understand the language which describes certain patterns of behaviour. Here is the useful terminology to describe your relationship with substances.

**Substance misuse:** Using a drug in a way that is not consistent with how it was prescribed. This may include taking a medication that is not prescribed to you, taking the incorrect dose or frequency, or using the drug for an alternative purpose (e.g., studying).

**Substance abuse:** When chronic use of a substance begins to impair aspects of life:

- Health complications
- Inability to carry out daily responsibilities
- Physiological dependence
- Cravings and drug-seeking behaviour

**Physiological dependence:** Increasing tolerance for a substance, withdrawal signs and symptoms when discontinued, or continued use of a substance to avoid withdrawal.

**Psychological dependence or addiction:** Psychological symptoms which demonstrate a loss of control or compulsive drug-seeking behaviour. Continued use of a substance despite clearly adverse consequences.



When considering whether your drinking habits are reasonable, it's good to revisit Canada's low risk drinking guidelines.

The following table shows what one standard drink looks like depending on the type of alcohol you are drinking.

Typical Drink	Alcohol Content	Volume
Beer, Cider, Cooler	5%	341 ml (12 oz)
Wine	12%	142 ml (5 oz)
Distilled alcohol (vodka, rum, gin, etc.)	40%	43 ml (1.5 oz)

### Canada's low risk drinking guidelines for men

- Reduce long term health risks by drinking no more than 15 drinks a week, with no more than 3 drinks a day on most days
- Reduce risk of injury or harm by drinking no more than 4 drinks on any single occasion.
- Those under 24 years should never exceed the daily and weekly limits suggested due to potential harms to brain and body development

### When zero's the limit

- Driving a vehicle
- Operating machinery or tools
- Taking medicine or other drugs which interact with alcohol
- Dangerous physical activity
- Mental or physical health problems
- Alcohol dependence
- Responsible for others safety
- Making important decisions



# Safer Drinking Tips

**Set your limits:** Being able to stick to the limits you set for your drinking habits is a good way to recognize whether you are in control of how much you drink. Without tracking your drinks, you may not recognize when you are drinking too much, or if you are drinking more than the standard guidelines.

- **Minimum of 2 off-days:** To prevent developing a habit, plan at least 2 days a week where you won't drink at all.
- **Drink slowly:** It's recommended you have no more than 2 drinks in any 3 hours.
- **Alternate non-alcoholic drinks:** For every alcoholic drink, have one non-alcoholic drink to stay hydrated and minimize the harmful effects. This will also help you slow down how quickly you are drinking.
- **Eat food:** Always eat before and while you are drinking.
- **Consider yourself:** Age, body weight, existing health problems, or medication use can all impact the effects of alcohol. Consider these factors and decide whether lower limits are more reasonable for yourself.

## Is my drinking problematic?

These are the characteristics of alcohol dependence which may be useful in identifying whether you should be proactive in employing reduction techniques or seeking support.

**Tolerance:** You have increased the amount of alcohol you consume over time to achieve the previous effects, either by the number of drinks you consume on a single day or the number of days you drink in a week.

**Withdrawal symptoms:** Physical symptoms such as insomnia, tremors, and mood swings after going a short period without drinking.

**Drinking to avoid or relieve withdrawal symptoms:** In attempts to cure a hangover or the shakes, you begin to drink again.

**Awareness of the compulsion to drink:** You may be aware of your cravings for alcohol, regardless of whether you admit to it.

**Drinking in larger amounts:** Over a longer period and you have made unsuccessful efforts to cut down.

# Cannabis

Following Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines can help you reduce the health risks of non-medical cannabis use:

1. Every form of cannabis poses risks for your health
2. The earlier you begin to use cannabis, the higher your risk of health problems. You'll lower risk of cannabis-related health problems if you choose to start using cannabis later in life
3. CBD can counteract some of the psychoactive effects that THC have. Choose lower strength products with lower THC content or higher ratio of CBD to THC.
4. Avoid using synthetic cannabis products such as K2 and spice. They are stronger and riskier than natural cannabis products.
5. Smoking cannabis (e.g., joint) is the most harmful way to use cannabis because it directly affects your lungs. Non-smoking options like vaping or taking edibles are better, but not risk-free.
6. Avoid inhaling deeply or holding your breath when smoking cannabis. These practices increase the amount of toxins absorbed by your lungs .
7. The more frequently you use cannabis, the more likely you are to develop problems. Limiting use to occasional at most, such as once a week or on weekends is a good way to reduce health risks.
8. Cannabis use impairs your ability to drive or operate machinery. These types of impairments typically last at least six hours, but could be longer, depending on the person and the product use.
9. People with personal or family history of psychosis or substance use problems should not use cannabis.
10. Avoid combining risky behaviours; the more risks you take, the greater your chances of harming your health (e.g., high THC content product and smoking and holding your breath is more harmful than one of these risky behaviours alone)

## A note on using edibles:

"A lesser known but important harm of non-medical cannabis use is the increased risk of unintentional overdose injuries. These injuries arise most often after the ingestion of cannabis-infused foods, also known as edibles (NASEM, 2017), which come in many forms, including candies and baked goods such as cookies or brownies."

## Study Drugs

Study drugs are typically stimulants prescribed by a doctor to an individual for treating conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These include Adderall, Dexedrine, Vyvanse, Ritalin, Concerta, etc.

These medications are misused by some students without ADHD to stay awake, alert, and more focused when studying. However, reliance on external validation, limited parental attention, low self-esteem, and mental health issues are underlying reasons which may provoke use of study drugs as well.

Side Effects	Risk of use over time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Dry mouth</li><li>• Nausea</li><li>• Appetite loss</li><li>• Agitation</li><li>• Restlessness</li><li>• Sleep problems</li><li>• Change in sex drive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High blood pressure</li><li>• Irregular heartbeat</li><li>• Heart failure</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Insomnia</li><li>• Mental health risks such as intense anger &amp; paranoia</li><li>• High addiction potential, equal to that of street drugs</li><li>• Withdrawal symptoms such as depression, suicidal thoughts, cravings, sleep problems, fatigue</li></ul>



# Alternatives to Study Drugs

While it may be tempting to use study drugs in order to get that additional boost you think you need nearing a large assessment, there are many alternatives to prevent the need for employing this dangerous habit.

**Meditation:** Having a consistent meditation routine has been shown to reduce stress, which thus improves focus when attempting to study.

**Good Sleep:** Regulating your sleep schedule and getting between 7-9 hours of sleep each night is extremely important for learning. Do not skip out on sleep. Visit our sleep section for helpful tips on creating your sleep routine.

**Exercise:** Getting active boosts your learning, memory, and concentration. Over time, regular exercise improves mood, helps sleep, and reduces stress, all of which will help you do better on your assessments as well.

**Fueling yourself with food:** Eating regularly the nutrients you require will help your body and mind operate how you want it to when entering a stressful assessment.





# Active Living

Staying active is essential to keep your body and brain functioning well. Mental health struggles can impact our physical activity by making it difficult to find motivation or energy to get moving. In the same way, implementing physical activity back into your routine can be a tool to combat feelings of depression and anxiety. Always consult a healthcare provider before starting a new exercise regimen.



## Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

- Treats mild to moderate symptoms of, and helps prevent, anxiety and depression
- Interrupts cycles of troubling thoughts
- Relieves physical pain and tension through the release of endorphins
- Boosts mental energy and academic performance
- Enhances self-esteem
- Increases feelings of happiness and lowers those of sadness
- Relieves the sense of loneliness
- Reduces feelings of fatigue and improves sleep
- Reduces day-to-day stress
- Helps to increase resilience and ability to cope with mental and emotional challenges

## Enhance mental health benefits

Rather than zoning out while being active, zoning in is an effective way to get more out of your work outs. Notice the sensations of your feet hitting the ground, the rhythm of your breathing, the wind and clothes on your skin, or your muscles moving. By adding this mindfulness element and focusing on what you are feeling physically, you can interrupt the flow of worries in your mind and improve your physical condition faster.



## **Create your plan**

We all have different ways of staying active based on our physical abilities, personalities, and goals. Consider which activities would work best for you. Creating a concrete plan is essential in helping yourself develop a habit. When you're starting out, be realistic in committing to an exercise routine, even a little bit of exercise is better than none.

## **Start small**

It can be tempting to set an extravagant workout schedule, but make sure to be realistic in choosing your exercise routine. If you've never worked out before, try starting out with 5 to 10-minute sessions and slowly increase your time being active.

If you don't know what works for you, test out several types of physical activity that interest you and then set your schedule. Eventually you can work your way up to physical activity recommendations of 2-3 hours of moderate physical activity per week, which can always be split up into multiple shorter sessions throughout the week.

## **Track your progress and set regular goals**

Being able to reflect on the progress you have made over time is essential for recognizing your improvements. Set small goals and celebrate the gains you've made, such as being able to exercise five extra minutes, doing five more repetitions, adapting your sleep or eating schedule to boost your physical activity, and more. While this is an important tool, remember to be kind to yourself if you are struggling to meet a goal. Everyone has off days or weeks, recognize that you can still get yourself back on track.

## **Sticking with it**

When you hit bumps in the road along the way to implementing physical activity in your daily life, it is important to develop methods for overcoming obstacles you may face.

## **Find your "why"**

To help yourself find motivation for initiating physical activity every day, define the reasons that active living is important to you. If you end up feeling discouraged, exhausted, or hopeless about the progress you're making (or lack thereof), it is essential to remind yourself of your "why". One example includes the mental or physical health benefits of exercise.

# Solutions to common reasons for not exercising

## Feel uncomfortable physically?

When you're starting out, you don't need to push yourself too hard. If you get 5 minutes in and you're too exhausted, know that it's okay to stop today and start again tomorrow.

## Don't have enough time?

Exercise frequently, but in short bursts (e.g., for 10 minutes)

## Don't have enough energy?

Schedule your exercise when your energy is highest. This time could be the morning, midday before the afternoon crash, or when you have more time on the weekends.

If you feel unenergized all day, then try to do something simple, like stretching or going for a walk, and work toward more vigorous exercise as you gain energy through sticking to that habit.

## Feel uncomfortable mentally?

Find an environment where you feel comfortable and motivated (e.g., at home, outdoors, your bedroom, etc).

## Not feeling motivated?

Making exercise a social activity can help motivate you to stick to your routine. In addition, the companionship can be just as beneficial as exercise if you are struggling mentally. Try working out with a housemate, family member, etc.



# Acknowledge how challenging exercise may be for you

When you're struggling with your mental health, simple tasks may be exceptionally difficult. On more challenging days, if you've managed to make yourself food, take a shower, get out of bed, or simply make it through a tough day, recognize that you've accomplished something. Try to use these small accomplishments as momentum toward working on your next small task. Practice self-compassion on the challenging days and recognize that not every day will be easy.

**Evaluate your plan:** If you are struggling to meet your original goals, that is okay. Take a moment to consider what aspects are more challenging to achieve at this time and set smaller goals. There is no shame in starting small and working your way up.

**At the end of the day:** When mental health challenges are wearing you down and your energy is low, remember that anything that gets you moving counts: getting out of bed, getting some work done around the house, throwing a frisbee, going on a walk, biking to the store.



# Eating a Balanced Diet

Various nutrients have been linked to reducing symptoms of mental disorders including depression and anxiety. The nutrients in a well-rounded diet are essential for creating mood-altering neurotransmitters and maintaining the health of the brain to help alleviate symptoms, while highly -processed foods have been shown to worsen them.



## Why eating healthy matters

Dehydration, caffeine, excessive sugar, and lack of nutrition can contribute to jitters, lightheadedness, weakness, lack of focus, and racing heart. When you're feeling down, you may assume these symptoms are caused by stress or poor mental health, rather than understanding they are tied to your food habits. You may end up feeling even more discouraged when self-care methods aren't helping you feel better. What you may need on some of those days is simply a nutrient-rich meal, to drink some water, or to cut back on caffeine or sugar. It is important to note, however, that more nutritious or less processed meals may be more challenging to access for some folks. To learn about services and programs that help address this, please see our list of resources at the end of this guide.

## Lack of appetite and thirst

Depression has been linked to lack of appetite and skipping meals. If you're in this position, you're not alone. It's possible a lack of appetite is driven by feeling nauseous, having too much on your mind, or being overly sedentary. Here are some tips to help kickstart your cravings.



### **Eat by the clock:**

Try scheduling small meals or snacks every two to three hours, rather than waiting for hunger to kick in. This method will help recover your hunger signals and make sure you're getting enough nutrients in the meantime.

### **Get moving:**

If your low appetite is accompanied by a sedentary lifestyle, you may not be getting enough exercise in order to stimulate your appetite. Try going for a walk in the early afternoon or incorporating another type of movement.

### **Always have water:**

Keeping a reusable water bottle or a glass of water in your space during the day can serve as a reminder to drink more. It's harder to avoid drinking water when you've removed any effort it would take to go get a new cup.

## Requires too much effort ?

Cooking can be time-consuming and tiring, and it is understandable if this has hindered you from eating enough to feel nourished. Sadly, insufficient nutrients can worsen your mood by draining your energy. You can support your mental health by prioritizing practices which will make eating as simple as possible on days it's difficult to manage.

### **Cook in larger quantities:**

If you struggle finding the energy to cook both lunch and dinner, try cooking in larger quantities when you do have the energy. Save the rest in the freezer or fridge for later. Eating leftovers from a well-balanced meal is likely to give you more nutrients than a meal replacement snack and is relatively low maintenance.

### **Start simple:**

Cooking low-processed meals doesn't have to be fancy. Check out this website for a few ideas for simple meal and side-dish ideas that don't require any cooking experience. Cheffing up doesn't have to be scary.

### **Eat smaller, more frequent meals and snacks:**

Cooking larger meals may feel like too tiring a task on some days. Interweaving high-protein snacks such as nuts, protein shakes, granola and Greek yogurt, or eggs in between smaller meals is a good option for fueling your body when prepping an entire balanced meal doesn't feel possible.





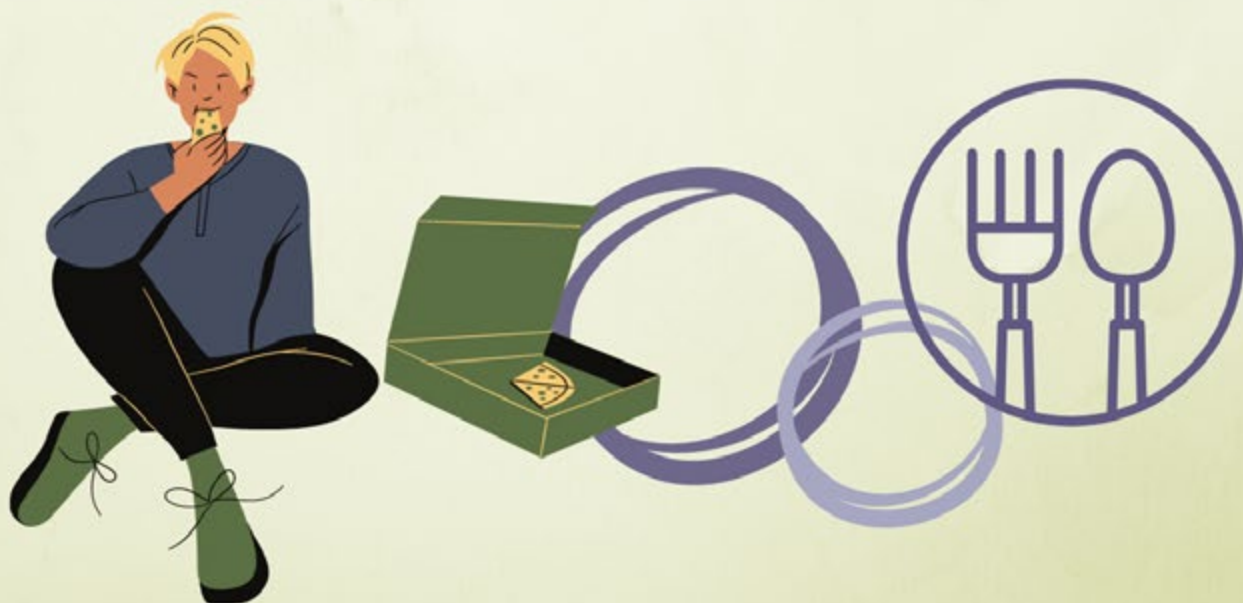
## Eating too much

When we accidentally overeat, we are often consuming too much of the food that gives us short-term energy without the long-term benefits. This type of consumption can increase risk of other health problems like heart disease and diabetes. Here are some tips to reduce thought-patterns and habits you may have which can contribute to overeating.

**Try not to eat for comfort:** Dealing with feeling upset, bored, stressed, sad, angry, or lonely by eating provides very short-term relief. If this is your instinct, try to avoid eating when you're feeling down and not hungry by replacing it with another stress-relieving activity (e.g., walking, calling a friend, writing down your thoughts, reading, etc.)





**Listen to your body:** Focus on how it feels when you begin to get full and when you start to feel hungry again. If your body is signalling that you are full, you can stop eating and save the leftovers, if possible. While you should try to not create excess food waste, eating the extra when you're really full is not a better option. You can always learn to make less next time.

**Avoid distracted eating:** Many of us eat mindlessly when watching TV or sitting at a computer. Try to make your eating behaviours intentional, by avoiding the habit of picking up a snack when you are going to be eating it mindlessly.



# Foods to incorporate

**Disclaimer:** This is a limited list of examples. There are many other foods which can fulfill the same nutritional needs. Not eating the foods included here does not indicate you are missing important food groups if you are eating a balanced diet, whether due to accessibility, lifestyle, culture, or personal choice.

Kinds of food incorporate	Examples
<p><b>Whole grains</b></p> 	<p>Try and incorporate whole grains at each meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown rice</li> <li>• Barley</li> <li>• Oats (oatmeal)</li> <li>• Quinoa</li> <li>• Whole grain flour products</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruits (frozen or fresh)</b></p> 	<p>Add in fruits with meals and/or snack daily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemade smoothies</li> <li>• Add fruit into salad</li> <li>• A snack between meals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vegetables (frozen or fresh)</b></p> 	<p>Incorporate vegetables at lunch and dinner (raw vegetables are great too!).</p> <p>Eat a variety of colours and types (dark green, yellow/orange, red, blue/purple)</p>
<p><b>Proteins</b></p> 	<p>A quarter of your plate should be made up of protein(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish like Salmon, Tuna, Trout, Cod, Mackerel, Sardines or Anchovies</li> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Turkey</li> <li>• Nuts and seeds</li> <li>• Beans, peas, lentils</li> </ul>

## Foods to limit

**Caffeine:** Although you may love the boost that comes from a coffee or an energy drink, they come at the cost of an energy-crash. Consuming caffeine occasionally is okay, but it shouldn't be your daily go-to for energy.

If you're finding you're too exhausted mid-day and require a second cup of coffee to wake yourself back up, it may be time to consider reevaluating your sleep habits. It is best to avoid caffeine in the evening, as it can disrupt how fast you fall asleep and the overall quality of your sleep, making it more likely you'll be tired when you wake up.

**High sugar foods:** Similar to caffeine, high sugar foods give you a short burst of energy, but are later accompanied by an energy low, making you feel drained. Try limiting sweets and desserts to two servings a week or for special occasions and reduce the high sugar snacks you may be eating without realizing.

- Store bought dried fruits with added sugar
- Fruit snacks with corn syrup
- Store bought granola bars with added sugar
- Candy and pastries
- Soft drinks or sweetened fruit juice

**Carbohydrates:** Products like white flour, white pasta, , and white bread, are lower in fibre than the whole-grain alternatives Choose whole-grain pasta, bread or rice or other whole-grain options such as; quinoa, barley or oats where possible to ensure you are getting enough fibre.

**Salt:** Salt in moderation isn't harmful, but it's a good idea to limit processed, packaged, and fast foods that typically contain high amounts of salt. These products can make you feel bloated and sick and contribute to other health issues in the long run. Additionally, when flavouring food at home, opt for spices, herbs, garlic and onions when possible.

**Butter:** Opt for olive, peanut, or avocado oil to reduce your intake of saturated fats from butter.



# The Importance of Sleep Hygiene

Getting an adequate quality and quantity of sleep can hugely benefit your physical and mental health. Unfortunately, sleep disturbances are common, especially among students, and many people report having trouble falling astruggling to fall asleep and/or staying asleep. It's important we work to improve our sleep hygiene and make the most out of the hours we can sleep.



## Why quality sleep is important

Sleep can have a range of positive effects on your physical health, including affecting your heart health and strength of your immune system. The benefits sleep has for your physical health are significant and range from heart health to memory. While asleep, your blood pressure decreases and lessens the work that your heart must do. This short-term relief for your heart can have longstanding benefits for your overall health. In addition, continuous lack of sleep can adversely impact your immune system and your body's ability to fight germs. A lack of sleep can alter the way your immune cells work, causing them to attack slower and leading to you getting sick more often.



## Benefits for your mental health

Sleep can significantly impact your mood from the beginning to the end of your day. Reflect on how you feel waking up for class after only a few hours of sleep., Not that fun, eh? A lack of sleep makes you more likely to experience feelings of grumpiness, irritability, and stress.

Your behaviour, including the likelihood that you will practice self-care, is also tied to sleep. You're much more likely to participate in activities that support your wellbeing if you're well rested. If you are energized during the day, you're more likely to exercise, paint, journal, or do anything else that brings you joy.

Sleep can affect your academics and concentration. Many students, for example, pull all-nighters in order to prepare for exams. This may be counterproductive as a lack of sleep can have negative effects on your ability to concentrate, solve problems, and make decisions.

## How to better your sleep hygiene

1. Avoid caffeine close to bedtime.
2. Caffeine can have disruptive effects on your sleep; it is a stimulant and can make it hard for you to fall asleep. Try to stop ingesting any caffeine 4-6 hours before your bedtime.
3. Avoid drinking alcohol close to your bedtime.
4. It can sometimes feel like alcohol helps us fall asleep, however, it can often have the opposite effect. Alcohol before trying to sleep can lead to shaky arms and legs, as well as breathing problems.
5. Wake up at the same time every day.
6. Keeping the same wake-up time everyday helps you and your body get into a rhythm of consistent sleep. Staying up or waking up at different times will make it harder to build a strong sleep schedule.
7. Dim your lights and turn off electronics.
8. Lighting in your environment, including the light emitted from phones, laptops, and other electronics, can hinder the production of melatonin. Melatonin aids the body in feeling sleepy and falling asleep.



---

# Support and Resources



## When to seek support

If you are dealing with mental health challenges, there are many avenues to seeking support. It is up to you to decide which is best for you.

When accessing counselling support at the Student Wellness Centre, you will start with a 30-minute consultation with a counsellor. This will help determine which options are best suited to address the challenges you are facing.

There is no “right” level of distress for seeking support from the Student Wellness Centre or another medical professional to learn about your options for dealing with mental or physical health issues. There is no harm to booking a consultation appointment so a trained professional can offer you personalized recommendations about which resources will address your needs, even if you don’t require counselling.

Regardless of where you are at, a consultation appointment is a good place to start if you are seeking external support.

## Support from resources already accessible to you

If you are facing emotional distress that is proportionate to typical life challenges, you may be able to use the resources already present within your life.

These resources include talking to your friends or family about the problems you are facing and potentially problem-solving to address the problem. You may also consider writing about the problem yourself to sort your feelings and thoughts.

Some typical life challenges may include:

- Experiencing stress because of a poorly designed class
- Feeling disappointed and discouraged because of a bad mark
- Being hurt by a negative comment directed at you
- Feeling moderately lonely because of online schooling

### **Student Wellness Centre (SWC)**

Provides medical services, counselling, health promotion programming to McMaster students. Phone line: 905-525-9140 x 27700



## Virtual and Telephone Mental Health Support

### **Real Campus (Undergraduate Students)**

Psychological counselling services and legal, financial, nutrition, and career development consultation for McMaster students, roommates, and parents. 1-877-390-7325

### **Empower Me (Graduate Students)**

24/7 accessible counselling services to empower you to thrive, crisis support, mental health and well-being services. 1-844-741-6389

### **Good2Talk**

Professional counselling and information, and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario. 1-866-925-5454

## Guided Self-Help and Peer Support

If you think that seeking support from friends or family is not sufficient in helping you cope with your stressors, you may choose to look for external resources to guide you in the process. This may involve accessing self-help resources such as books or self-help programming which you can do at home.

### **Bounceback Ontario**

A free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry.

### **List of external self-help resources:**

Additionally, peer support may be helpful for you to connect with someone with lived experience of the same thing you are struggling with. Most often, you will be paired with a trained peer who can personally empathize with what you are experiencing.

### **LGBT Youthline**

Youth Line provides service for youth, by youth that affirms the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, 2-spirited, queer and questioning youth in Ontario. Phone line: 1-800-268-9688 Text line: 647-694-4275

## **LGBT Youthline**

Youth Line provides service for youth, by youth that affirms the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, 2-spirited, queer and questioning youth in Ontario. Phone line: 1-800-268-9688 Text line: 647-694-4275

## **Maccess**

Maccess is a peer support, advocacy, and community centre for students who experience disability, chronic illness, mental health concerns, or inaccessibility. Maccess offers one-on-one peer support, weekly peer support groups, and a digital drop-in community space. [maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:maccess@msu.mcmaster.ca)

## **Pride Community Centre (PCC)**

A peer support service run by 2STLGBQIA+ students which advocates for queer, trans and two-spirit students on campus by offering educational programming, events and social awareness campaigns. The PCC provides peer support, check-ins, weekly community groups and resources of interest to the community. [pride@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:pride@msu.mcmaster.ca)

## **Student Health Education Centre (SHEC)**

Student engagement about health-related issues through peer support, events, and campaigns. [shec@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:shec@msu.mcmaster.ca)

## **Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN)**

A peer-support driven service that offers a safe(r) space for womxn, anyone who identifies as trans, folks who identify outside the gender binary, and all survivors of sexual violence. We offer regular drop-in peer support and support groups, free resources such as gender-affirming gear, and educational and social events.

## **Togetherall**

Online mental health and wellbeing service to anyone 16+ in Ontario.

## **Crisis Support**

If you are in severe distress and need to talk to someone immediately, please call a crisis line. They offer free, confidential, anonymous, nonjudgmental support, most of which are available 24/7.

### **Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)**

A partnership between Hamilton Regional Police and St. Joseph's Healthcare. Mobile team, consisting of mental health worker and police officer will respond to crisis calls between the hours of 8 a.m. and 1 a.m. daily. 905-972-8338

### **Barrett Centre for Crisis Support**

Support for anyone 16+ who is experiencing a mental health crisis and does not require a hospital stay. 905-972-8338 Toll-free: 1-844-777-3571

### **Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton and Area (SACHA)**

Support for anyone 16+ who has experienced sexual violence at any point in their lives. 24-hour line: 905-525-4162 Office line: 905-525-4573

## References

### Improving self-esteem

[Raising low self-esteem](#)

[5 ways to build lasting self-esteem](#)

[Is Low Self Esteem Ruining Your Life? Here's How to Banish It for Good](#)

[What factors influence your self-esteem?](#)

[Can exercise improve self esteem in children and young people? A systematic review of randomised controlled trials](#)

### Suppressing vs. Expressing emotions

[Men and Emotions](#)

[Why We Should Help Boys Embrace All Their Feelings](#)

### Building a social life

[Is It Weird to Enjoy Solitude?](#)

[Are the Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, and Interpersonal Interaction of Junior College Students Related to the Solitude Capacity?](#)

[The Importance of Community and Mental Health](#)

[Connecting with community: Head to Health](#)

[The Importance of Having Strong Communities](#)

[The Capacity for Successful Solitude](#)

[Social Isolation and Loneliness in Old Age](#)

[Vulnerability: The Key to Close Relationships](#)

## Dealing with interpersonal conflict

[Active Listening](#)

[6.2 Conflict and Interpersonal Communication](#)

[The Research of Interpersonal Conflict and Solution Strategies](#)

[Become an Empathic Listener in 10 Steps](#)

[How to Handle Interpersonal Conflict Like a Pro](#)

## Substance Use

[Why are students using study drugs, and what can we do about it?](#)

[Teen Health: Study Drugs](#)

[10 ways to reduce risks to your health when using cannabis: CAMH](#)

[Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guideline](#)

[Substance Use, Misuse, and Abuse: What are the Differences?](#)

## Active Living

[The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise](#)

["Psychology Works" Fact Sheet: Physical Activity, Mental Health, and Motivation](#)

[Heads Up Guy// Physical Health](#)

## Eating a balanced diet

[Anxiety Canada: Healthy Eating](#)

[Nutrition for Mental Health: Information for Adults](#)

[The emerging link between food and mental health/ CAMH](#)

[Food and Depression](#)

[Understanding nutrition, depression and mental illnesses](#)

## Importance of Sleep hygiene

[Sleep Foundation: Sleep Hygiene](#)

[4 ways sleep affects your mental health](#)

[Wellness Module 6: Getting a Good Night's Sleep](#)

## Conclusion and Resources

[Big boys don't cry: depression and men](#)

[Barriers to help-seeking by men: a review of sociocultural and clinical literature with particular reference to depression](#)

[The role of masculinity in men's help-seeking for depression: A systematic review](#)

[Canadian men's health stigma, masculine role norms and lifestyle behaviors](#)

[Perspectives on perceived stigma and self-stigma in adult male patients with depression](#)

[Help seeking in men: When masculinity and self-compassion collide.](#)