



Centre of Expertise on  
**MENTAL HEALTH**  
in the Workplace



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## COVID-19 and Mental Health @ Work

# Mental Health Tips for Working from Home

### Maintain social connection for mental health... from a distance.

Meaningful social connections help protect our mental health. But how do you maintain social connection at a time when public health authorities call for “social distancing” to stop the spread of illness? This fact sheet offers tips to help address isolation and loneliness some employees may experience while working from home.

#### Set a schedule

We are creatures of habit. Routine helps us physically and mentally prepare for our day. When working from home:

- ◆ **Get ready for work.** Shower. Get dressed. Eat breakfast. Keep the same routine as when heading into the office.
- ◆ **“Commute” to work.** If possible, have a dedicated workspace that minimizes distractions and helps reduce the blurring of lines between your work and home life.
- ◆ **Schedule your time.** Set regular working hours, including breaks and self-care practices between different tasks. Check-in regularly with your manager and colleagues.
- ◆ **Respect your limits.** Resist the temptation to keep working beyond your established work hours. Know, respect and share your limits with those around you to avoid burnout.

#### Stay connected

Physically distancing ourselves can make us feel disconnected. To help maintain social connection:

- ◆ **Call / text a “work buddy.”** Pair up with a peer to whom you can relate, sharing successes and challenges.
- ◆ **Take a virtual coffee break.** Skype, FaceTime, etc., hearing friendly voices and maintaining social connection.
- ◆ **“Meet” by the water cooler.** Set up a channel on a social networks for impromptu, informal workplace conversations.
- ◆ **Help colleagues with disabilities.** Offer assistance such as taking notes during virtual meetings or writing a descriptive text to relay information on images.

#### Make time for self-care

Practising self-care isn’t selfish. It is essential to maintaining positive mental health. Back to basics works best:

- ◆ **Get sufficient sleep.** Aim for 7.5 to 9 hours of sleep. Maintain proper sleep hygiene for the rest you need.
- ◆ **Eat healthily.** Ensure proper, balanced nutrition throughout your work day. Stay hydrated.
- ◆ **Exercise regularly.** Your gym may be closed, but the outdoors are not. Get outside for a daily 20-30 minute walk.

#### Learn more

Watch Ottawa Public Health’s have THAT talk video on [Building Social Connections](#) to learn more about the importance of meaningful social connections for better mental health.



**Tools and tips.** Visit [Canada.ca/GCMentalHealth](https://Canada.ca/GCMentalHealth) and follow [@CEMHW](#) [CESMMT](#) for resources, services and supports.

**In distress? Contact your Employee Assistance Program, or call 9-1-1 if in crisis.**