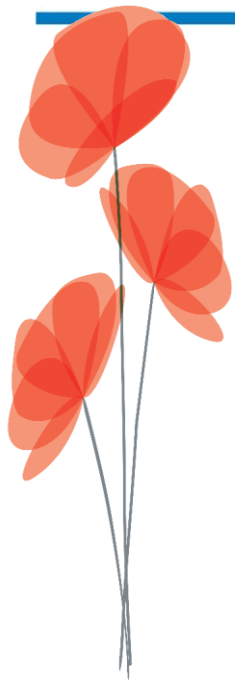


# Address the



Ruth Soult  
Mental Health Promotion Facilitator



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“Just Breathe, you are strong enough to handle your challenges, wise enough to find solutions to your problems, and capable enough to do what needs to be done”.

~Lori Deschene  
[www.tinybudha.com](http://www.tinybudha.com)

# Overview

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- What is stress?
- Stress management techniques
- Mental Wellness versus Mental Illness
- Mental Health resources

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Stress is a natural response to life situations that changes how we feel physically, mentally, emotionally.

It can begin to have negative effects on our physical and mental health if allowed to continue beyond its usefulness.

Stress cuts across every economic, social, and cultural boundary.

Everyone is affected by stress, including our children and even our pets.

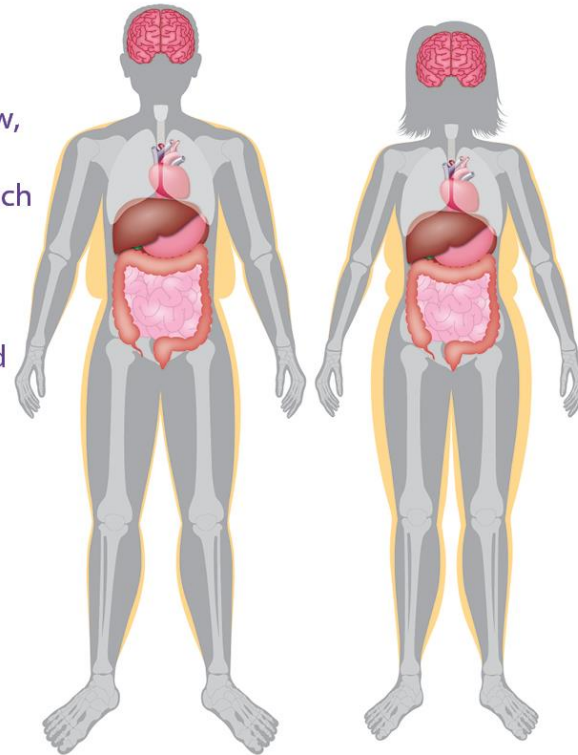
## Warning Signs of Stress

### ● Physical

- Headaches, body aches/pains
- Muscle tension (e.g., in back, jaw, shoulders)
- Digestive problems (e.g., stomach aches, IBS, upset stomach)
- Weight gain or loss
- Feeling tired
- Increased heart rate, high blood pressure, heart palpitations
- Getting sick more easily

### ● Cognitive

- Trouble focusing or concentrating
- Memory loss
- Forgetfulness
- Constant worry
- Unable to make decisions
- Loss of sense of humour



### ● Emotional

- Easily upset/cry
- Feeling powerless or overwhelmed
- Nervousness/anxiousness
- General unhappiness
- Irritable or short-tempered
- Sense of loneliness
- Boredom

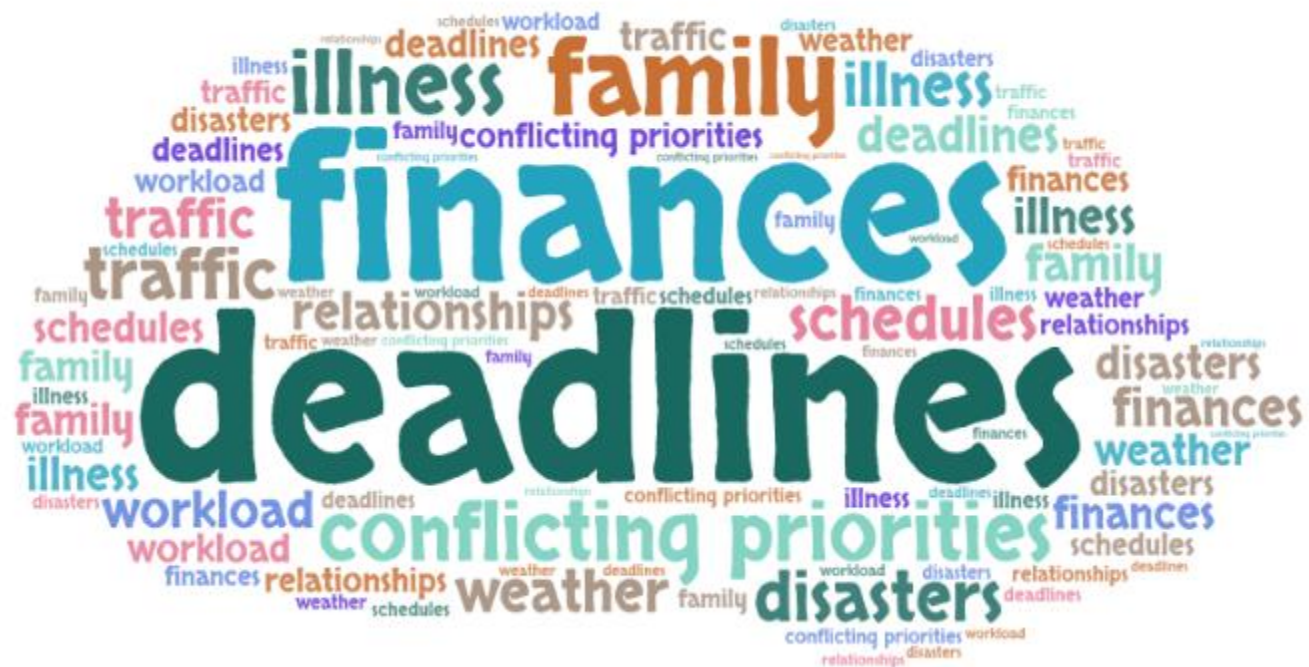
### ● Behavioural

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Eating more or less than usual
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing, compulsive gum chewing)
- Putting things off
- Unable to relax
- Increased (or new) use of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, vaping, or other drugs

# Stress- fight or flight response

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- Prepares our body for action
- Changes how our body functions
- Increases our ability to respond to a threat.
- Body doesn't know the difference. Is this a real threat or are we just thinking about it?



# What happens in our body?

<b>Physical changes</b>	<b>What's happening</b>	<b>Side effects</b>
Heart racing	Blood goes to where it's needed most –legs, arms, lungs	Blood is taken from where it's not needed: fingers, toes, skin may tingle, feel cold, numb
Breathing gets faster	Helps blood carry oxygen to where it's needed – gives more power	Breathlessness, choking feeling, feel dizzy, blurred vision
Muscles tense and prepare for action	Large muscles tense to create power	Muscle pain, aching, shaking
Sweating	Cools the body, makes the body more slippery	May feel thirsty , dry mouth
Pupils dilate	Lets more light into our eyes so our vision improves	Eyes may be sensitive to light or see spots before our eyes
Digestive system slows down	Slows down – not important right now. Energy goes where needed	May feel nausea, butterflies, dry mouth
Immune system kicks into gear	Immune system prepares for wound healing	Over time the immune system starts to wear down
More alert	Concentrate on looking for danger Waiting for something to happen	Much less able to focus on anything else



# What happens in our mind?

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## Thoughts:

**How our thinking  
changes**

**We are on high alert !**

Speed up or slow down

Hard to concentrate

Forgetful

Hard to focus

Short of time

Overwhelmed – can't cope

Feel like something bad is  
going to happen

## Emotions:

**How we feel**

Anxious

Fear

Irritable

Impatient

Anger

## Behavior:

**What others see**

Restless

Worried

Feel rushed

Shouting

Arguing

Crying

# Why manage your stress?

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- No longer in short bursts
- Long term disrupts body's balance
- Can lead to mental health problems
- Can lead to physical illness



**One in five Canadians will suffer from a mental health problem in any given year.**

# Healthy ways to manage stress

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- Connect
- Eat
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Breathing techniques
- Mindfulness
- PMR

# Stay Connected

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# Food & Stress

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- ✓ Eat enough nutritious food during the day
- ✓ Have healthy snacks on hand
- ✓ Eat small amount of what you crave



# Be Active



# Sleep

- Often neglected
- Tips to improve sleep
  - Maintain regular wake-up time
  - Create a sleep environment
  - Develop bedtime rituals
  - Train yourself to sleep
  - Cut out day time naps
  - Train yourself to relax



# Decreasing/ Eliminating

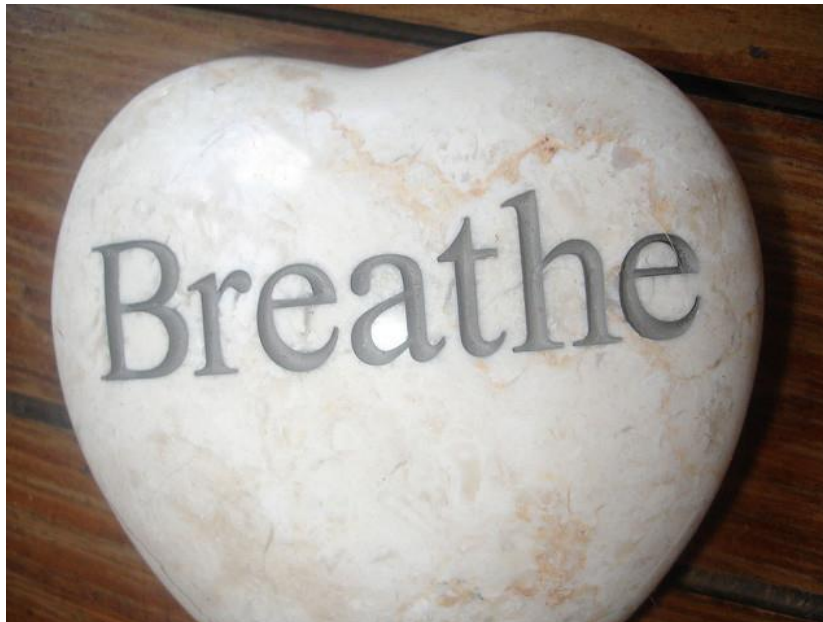
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- Cut down on caffeine
- Limit alcohol
- Quit smoking



# Breathing Exercise

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# Mindfulness

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- Paying full attention to what you are doing
- Great for stress management (staying in the here & now) ⇒ complete inner stillness
- Examples:
  - Meditation
  - Music
  - Journaling
  - Yoga



# Stress Apps

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## *Breathe (free app)*

Meditation, breathing, music – extras can be purchased when you go premium

## *Calm (some free, some for purchase)*

Mindfulness, guided or unguided meditation, and visualization

## *Happify (free)*

Happiness-based activities received through daily email

# Stress Websites

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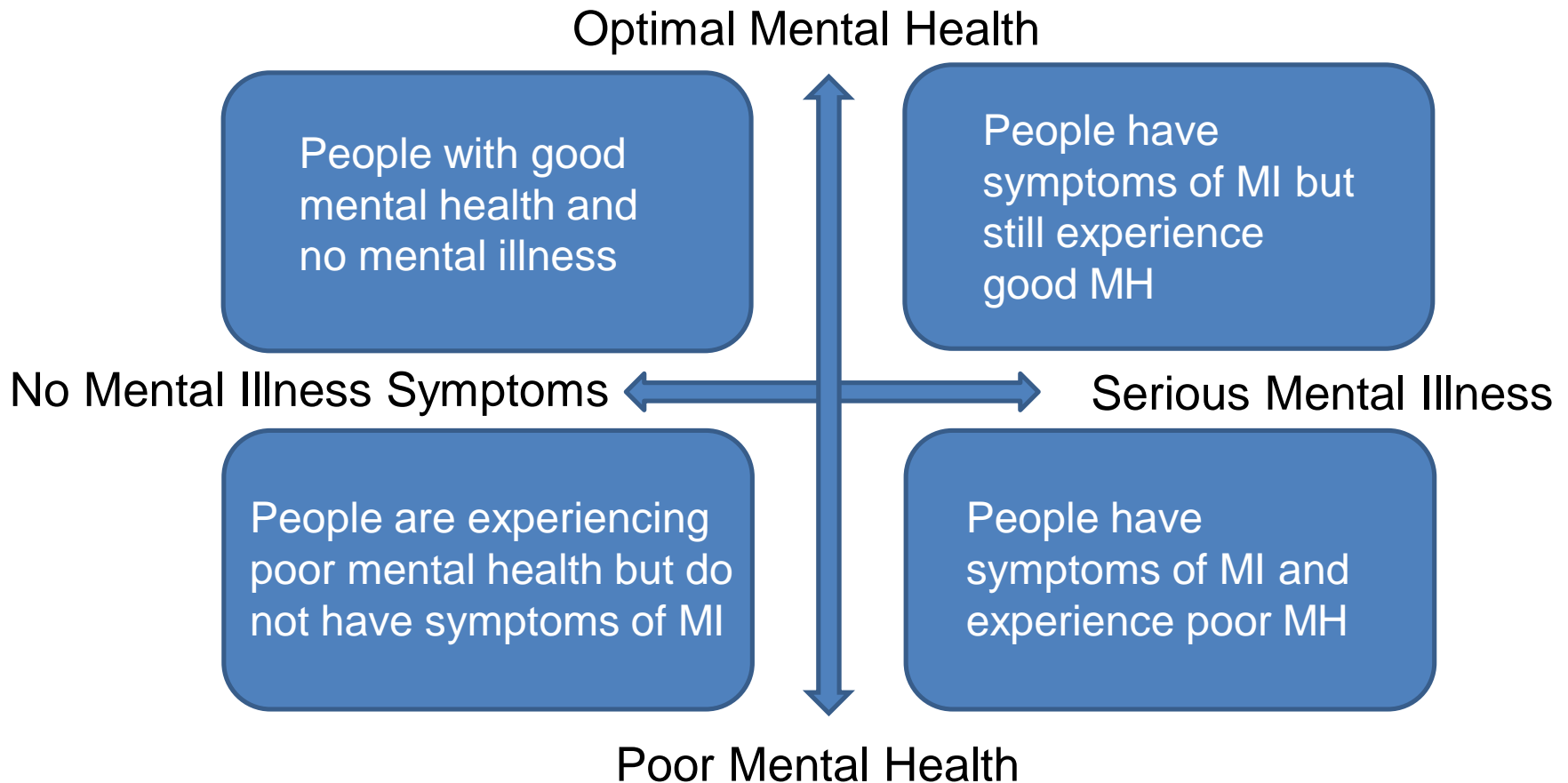
[www.de-stress.ca](http://www.de-stress.ca)

How to Make Stress Your Friend: Kelly McGonigal

<https://cmha.ca/whats-your-stress-index>

[https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/Pages/conditions.aspx?  
hwid=rlxsk](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=rlxsk)

# How are mental health and mental illness related?



# Know where to call for HELP

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HEALTH LINK	8-1-1
Mental Health Help Line	1-877-303-2642
Rural Crisis Line	1-800-232-7288
24 Hour Distress Line	1-877-321-2747
Addictions Help Line	1-866-332-2322

In a emergency dial 9-1-1

# Five Ways to Wellbeing

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**Connect**

**Connect with the people around you**

**Keep Learning**

**Try something new or rediscover an old interest.**

**Be Active**

**Discover an activity you enjoy**

**Take Notice**

**Be aware of the world around you.**

**Give Back**

**Do something good for your community .**

## For more information...

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<http://www.mymentalhealth.ca> Learn more about mental illnesses and steps to better mental health

[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca) Canadian Mental Health Association provides mental health information and supports resilience and recovery

<http://www.klinic.mb.ca/docs/booklets/CalmintheStorm13.pdf> Calm in the Storm: Coping With the Stresses in Life

[http://www.stressingout.org/Stress\\_and\\_the\\_City\\_eBook.pdf](http://www.stressingout.org/Stress_and_the_City_eBook.pdf) Stress and the City – a Helpful Little Guide to Surviving Modern Life

[www.anxietycanada.ca](http://www.anxietycanada.ca) Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada Provides information on anxiety disorders

<http://www.mymentalhealth.ca> Learn more about mental illnesses and steps to better mental health

[www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au) and the City – a Helpful Little Guide to Surviving Modern Life

[Unlockfood.ca](http://Unlockfood.ca) - Healthy Habits to Cope with Stress