MY MENTAL HEALTH WORKBOOK
Mental health is a fundamental part of our well-being. Our mental health affects how we feel, think, and act. This workbook was designed to give students a way to assess their mental health regularly and learn signs of poor mental health to watch out for. The workbook provides students with resources to create their own self-care plan, tips to strengthen mental well-being, and supports available.

This workbook can be kept on a phone for quick access or printed out.
Mental health is a continuum; it can change from day to day depending on the internal and external factors. The mental health continuum tool on the next page can help you evaluate where your mental health stands at a particular time.

• When you feel **HEALTHY** or reacting, it is best to practice using self-care and social support.

• When you are **REACTING**, you may be experiencing a stressful time in your life, such as a difficult exam season. This distress is common and reversible.

• When you feel **INJURED**, your mental health is causing you significant distress and negatively impacts your life. It is best to access resources with others who are trained to help. Try same-day counselling at Dalhousie or professional care.

• When you feel **ILL**, your mental health is causing you extreme distress and disrupting your life in profound ways. It is strongly recommended that you reach out for professional care. Try speaking with a mental health professional or calling the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (if in NS) or Good2Talk (if in Canada). How to access these resources are on the “Mental Health Resources” pages in this workbook.
## Mental Health Continuum Self-Check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Mood</th>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Reacting</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>III</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal mood fluctuations</td>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Easily enraged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Excessive anxiety/panic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Pervasive sadness</td>
<td>Depressed mood, numb</td>
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<td>Sadness</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Thinking and Attitude</th>
<th>Good sense of humor</th>
<th>Displaced sarcasm</th>
<th>Negative attitude</th>
<th>Noncompliant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes things in stride</td>
<td>Intrusive thoughts</td>
<td>Recurrent intrusive thoughts</td>
<td>Suicidal thoughts/intent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to concentrate and focus on tasks</td>
<td>Sometimes distracted or loss of focus on tasks</td>
<td>Constantly distracted or cannot focus on tasks</td>
<td>Inability to concentrate, loss of memory or cognitive abilities</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in Behaviour and Performance</th>
<th>Physically and socially active</th>
<th>Decreased activity/socializing</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present but distracted</td>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performing well</td>
<td>Procrastination</td>
<td>Decreased performance</td>
<td>Can’t perform duties/tasks</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Changes</th>
<th>Normal sleep patterns</th>
<th>Trouble sleeping</th>
<th>Restless sleep</th>
<th>Cannot fall/stay asleep</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good appetite</td>
<td>Changes in eating patterns</td>
<td>Loss of appetite</td>
<td>No appetite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling energetic</td>
<td>Some lack of energy</td>
<td>Some tiredness or fatigue</td>
<td>Constant and prolonged fatigue or exhaustion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintaining a stable weight</td>
<td>Some weight gain or loss</td>
<td>Fluctuations or changes in weight</td>
<td>Extreme weight gain or loss</td>
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<tr>
<th>Changes in Addictive Behaviours</th>
<th>Limited alcohol consumption, no binge drinking</th>
<th>Regular to frequent alcohol consumption, limited binge drinking</th>
<th>Frequent alcohol consumption, binge drinking</th>
<th>Regular to frequent binge drinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited/no addictive behaviours</td>
<td>Some to regular addictive behaviours</td>
<td>Struggle to control addictive behaviours</td>
<td>Addiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>No trouble/impact due to substance use</td>
<td>Limited to some trouble/impact due to substance use</td>
<td>Increasing trouble/impact due to substance use</td>
<td>Significant trouble/impact due to substance use</td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>What healthy coping strategies can I use when I feel mentally unwell?</td>
<td>What are the external influences on my mental health? If they are</td>
<td>How do I behave/feel when I am mentally well?</td>
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<td>What are things I do, that are good for my mental health?</td>
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<td>What helps me feel better when I am struggling?</td>
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Use this worksheet and The Mental Health Continuum Tool to evaluate your mental health and identify the signs that it may be getting low.
SELF-CARE

Life can be busy and overwhelming, especially as students. Establishing a self-care plan can ensure time is spent to allow your mind and body to destress and reconnect with yourself. Your self-care may not look like anyone else’s and that is okay. Start slow, ensure your body and mind’s basic needs are fulfilled. Gradually, healthy activities can be added to increase your mood. The purpose of self-care is to destress, not increase stress. Sometimes, self-care is not doing anything at all because everybody needs breaks.

The next page has examples of integrating self-care into life. Use the worksheet to create your own self-care plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create Your Own Plan</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MIND                 | • Setting boundaries for, or taking breaks from, social media  
|                      | • Journaling  
|                      | • Setting achievable personal goals  
|                      | • Engaging in community activities or volunteer work |
| BODY                 | • Drinking plenty of water  
|                      | • Physical activity  
|                      | • Taking a relaxing bath or shower  
|                      | • Setting a sleep schedule with 7-9 hours of sleep  
|                      | • Eating regularly/healthy |
| SPIRIT               | • Meditating  
|                      | • Self-reflection  
|                      | • Practicing spirituality/faith  
|                      | • Connecting with nature |
| EMOTIONS             | • Reaching out for support  
|                      | • Take time to process your emotions  
|                      | • Expressing yourself creatively  
|                      | • Making a gratitude list  
|                      | • Practicing mindfulness |
| RELATIONSHIPS        | • Connecting with loved ones  
|                      | • Joining clubs or support groups  
|                      | • Communicating boundaries |
| WORK/SCHOOL          | • Separating work time from personal time  
|                      | • Appreciating the achievements and joys of work  
|                      | • Listing only three things at a time you must do. Once done those three, you can add three more. Do not overwhelm yourself.  
|                      | • Learning about the resources available to you and access them when needed |
It can be helpful to have strategies to ensure that you practice self-care, especially in times of heightened stress. If you take time to develop a plan, it will be there when you need it. Derived from Break the Silence NS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 3 people you can talk to and include their phone number. This can include a support line.</th>
<th>List 3 activities that you find calming/grounding.</th>
<th>List three affirmations that you find comforting.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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Grounding techniques are used to reconnect you with yourself and your present surroundings. They can be used routinely but are especially helpful during panic attacks, PTSD flashbacks, unwanted thoughts or memories, and emotional distress. Below are examples of some grounding techniques you can try.

- If possible, move to a less stimulating and calmer environment.
- List 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- Participate in practices or traditions specific to your culture. For example, if you are Indigenous you could smudge.
- Perform a body scan. Start at your feet and gradually focus on each body part going up to your head. What are they touching?
- Perform your favourite breathing technique. Try breathing in for 4 seconds, holding your breath for 4 seconds, then breathing out for 4 seconds.
- Keep a grounding object with you. This might be a stone, a coin, or a bracelet. Hold the object in your hand and focus on it.
- Move your body. Try stomping your feet and focusing on your ability to control your feet coming up and back down to the ground.
- Run your hands under cold water or hold an ice cube in your hand and watch it melt. Put it down if it becomes too cold.
- Call a support line, a friend, or a family member to avoid feeling isolated.
- Repeat a grounding phrase. Try "I am safe. I will breathe. I will be okay."
- Distract yourself. Pick a colour and name all the objects in the room that are that colour.
- Visualize and verbally describe a common task.
HOW TO USE POSITIVE SELF TALK AND AFFIRMATIONS

Talking to yourself and thinking in positive ways can help to improve mental well-being. Identify when you are thinking negatively about yourself and change your thoughts to incorporate understanding, patience, kindness, and positivity. Affirmations are positive statements or goals to combat negative thoughts and feelings.

On the next page are examples of positive self-talk and affirmations, try choosing a few that feel personal to you and repeating them to yourself throughout the day or in times of distress.
EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE SELF TALK AND AFFIRMATIONS

• I will do the best I can today; I do not need to be perfect.
• I am worthy of good things.
• I will surround myself with positive energy and people.
• I will remove myself from situations or people that worsen my mental health.
• I am proud of myself.
• I will make my well-being a priority.
• I accept myself unconditionally.
• Create a list of positive qualities you possess.
• Change “I can’t” to “I can.”

• I will focus on the present and not dwell on negative things in the past.
• Create a list of things you are thankful for.
• I am healing. Healing takes time.
• Create a simple, achievable goal for the day.
• It is okay to say “no” to others to take care of myself.
• My thoughts and opinions are valuable.
• I am strong, resilient, and powerful.
• I will reach out for help when I need it.
Breathing Techniques

As you try these techniques, practice mindfulness by clearing your mind and focusing on each breath. Use these in times of stress or daily as part of your self-care plan.

Butterfly Hug

1. Cross your hands across your chest, with your middle fingers resting on your collarbones.
2. Slowly tap your hands on your chest, alternating left and right.
3. While tapping, breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

4-7-8 Breathing

1. Inhale for 4 seconds through your nose.
2. Hold your breath for 7 seconds.
3. Exhale for 8 seconds through your mouth.

Rainbow

1. Slowly follow the rainbow with your finger.
2. Inhale as you bring your finger to the middle of the rainbow.
3. Exhale as you bring your finger back down towards the end of the rainbow.
“When you feel your mental health declining, do one small thing that brings you peace. One little step is all you need to remind yourself that this is not permanent.” - 1st Year Student

“When I experience panic attacks, I really do not like when other people touch me. Although I know they are trying to help me, it makes the situation a lot more frightening for me. Since it can be quite difficult to communicate with someone during a panic attack, I will let my friends know I do not like to be touched in these situations beforehand. I will let my friends know to breathe slowly and steadily with me, I might even teach them a breathing technique that works best for me. I can slow my own breathing easier if I am watching someone else do it with me. It is okay to share tips with the people around you about what works best for you when you are experiencing a time of low mental health. Building good social supports can help you recover from low moments quicker.” 😊 - 2nd Year Student

“It can be hard to feel like you can open up about mental health a lot of the time but talking to someone can be very helpful. Whether it is a friend, family member, or someone from a mental health resource. School can get very overwhelming at times, especially doing a lot of it alone and online. Just remember you are not alone and there are lots of people out there who care about you and are willing to help you in any way they can.” - 2nd Year Student

“Life is a grand experiment. A series of complex chemical reactions. It helps so much to always try to keep things in perspective. Maybe you're stressed or depressed in this moment... A bad day or week or month isn't a bad life. You are a mere inconsequential being in the vastness of the cosmos. Out in the multiverse there may be so many alternative versions of you being your best self. In the vein of Freddie Mercury’s Bohemian Rhapsody “Nothing really matters.” Some advice to my younger self: there’s never a need to take life seriously and or to take things personally. Live and learn. Roll over, get up, and try again.” - Graduate Student
“Know that you are enough and loved on your good and bad days <3”  -2nd Year Student

“Many times, when I have dealt with low points in my mental health, I felt alone because I kept a lot of what I was feeling bottled up inside. I didn’t want to share what I was going through so people wouldn’t have to worry about me. So instead, I kept it all to myself until everything started to pile up and I would explode and breakdown. I know I am not the only one who has experienced this, but still I felt so alone. It took me a long time to realize that these feelings don’t last forever and talking to someone about how you’re feeling or releasing those thoughts & emotions in any way is so crucial to your healing. There are so many amazing videos online for mental health advice and I find that listening to other people talk about their journey fills me with so much love, understanding and motivation. So, my advice for you is always show up for yourself and put in the effort to becoming the person you want to be and have patience. We can’t always avoid the curveballs life throws us, but we have the power to control how we deal with it.”  :) <3  -1st Year Student

“University is one of the few times in a person’s life where they are able to access counselling services for free. Take advantage of this! It also okay to ‘shop’ around for a counsellor that clicks with you.”  -5th Year Student

“If you are feeling stressed about schoolwork, plan all the work you have to do for each day at the beginning of the week to stay organized. Take each day one day at a time and only worry about the work you must do that day. This helps me feel less overwhelmed and in control of my schoolwork.”  -2nd Year Student

“My mental health advice is to take breaks without feeling guilty. If your body is telling you, you need a break, listen to it.”  -1st Year Student
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AT DALHOUSIE

Student Health and Wellness Centre
- Counselling can be accessed through Student Health and Wellness. Same-day appointments are available Monday through Sunday.
- Appointments can be booked by phoning 902 494 2171 or through www.dal.ca/studenthealth/bookonline

Dalhousie Social Worker
- The social worker provides practical problem-solving support to students experiencing daily life challenges and helps students with on-campus resource/systems navigation.
- Offers virtual appointments and can be booked by phoning 902 494 2171 or through www.dal.ca/studenthealth/bookonline

The Bissett Student Success Centre
- This centre can offer a wide range of help relating to academics, including workshops and individual appointments to help with time management and scheduling, career planning, and tutoring.
- For information on the services they offer, please visit https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/student-success-centre.html
- To book an appointment, email advising@dal.ca or phone 902 494 3077

The Resident Support Team for Students Living on Campus
- Resident assistants (RA) and Residence Life Managers (RLM) are in every residential building. They are there to support you through your time in residence. They are also familiar and can assist you in navigating the resources on campus.
- They can be contacted through residence@dal.ca and found in residences buildings

Black Student Advising Centre
dal.ca/bsac

Group Counselling
dal.ca/groupcounselling

Indigenous Student Centre
dal.ca/isc

International Centre
dal.ca/international

Tranquility App (for Graduate Students)
dal.ca/tranquility
Good2Talk (Canada wide)
- They are here to support post-secondary students and offer free e-mental health services in English and French to young adults. This service is anonymous.
- Open 24/7 and can be accessed by phoning (+1 833 292 3698) or texting GOOD2TALKNS to 686868 or through the website.

Therapy Assistance Online (TAO)
- The website allows tracking of behaviour. It is a great way to keep track of how you feel, your progress and log any problems that come up. TAO can also assess how you feel and make suggestions based on your answers and provide learning modules.
- dal.ca/tao

Q-Life Resilience Project
- Q-Life is a resilience program intended to address feelings of being overwhelmed, anxiety, and perceived stress through proven skill development like mindfulness, nutrition, cognitive hygiene and problem solving, to name a few.
- If you would like more information, please visit https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/resiliency-project.html

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (Nova Scotia only)
- The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team provides crisis support to those in Nova Scotia. The response team consists of the police and mental health clinicians.
- Offers telephone service open 24/7 for those in Nova Scotia. The Mobile Response Team is active from 1 pm to 1 am in HRM.
  - 902 429 8167 or https://www.ementalhealth.ca

Remote Study Health Program
- The Remote Study Health Program is for international students worldwide and can be accessed 24/7. The program can connect students to a certified counsellor in their home country. The counselling is private and confidential, multilingual, and can be over the telephone or virtually.
- Services can be accessed through 016039522068 or internationalhealth.ca/RemoteStudy-DAL
SUPPORT AND RESOURCES AFTER EXPERIENCING SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ASSAULT – GO TO A SAFE PLACE
For safety planning, and immediate and ongoing safety needs
HALIFAX
Dalhousie Security Services 24/7 902.494.4109
TRURO
Dalhousie Security Services 24/7 902.893.4190
Emergency Services 911 (police, fire, ambulance)

MEDICAL ATTENTION
Within 5 days of the assault, you can preserve physical evidence, treat any physical injuries and test for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or pregnancy. A support person is welcome to accompany you.
HALIFAX
Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) 24/7 902.425.0122
TRURO
Student Health Services 902.893.6300
Colchester East Hants Health Authority 902.893.5554

ONGOING SUPPORT
HALIFAX
Student Health and Wellness (including counselling services) 902.494.2081
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre 902.422.4240
TRURO
Student Health Services 902.893.6300
Colchester Sexual Assault Centre 902.897.4366

UNIVERSITY REPORTING OPTION
You can initiate a report through the University’s Sexualized Violence Policy (can be initiated whether or not a criminal report is made).
Sexualized Violence Advisor
Human Rights & Equity Services 902.494.6672

SUPPORT AND EXPLORE OPTIONS
Sexualized Violence Advisor 902.494.6672
Human Rights & Equity Services for consultation, confidential support, advising about options, liaison, requesting accommodations, arranging for safety planning, case management, referral (You can discuss and explore options without initiating a report.)

CRIMINAL REPORTING OPTION
You can initiate a report through the Criminal Code (can be initiated whether or not a university report is made).
Emergency 911
HALIFAX
Regional Police Dept 902.490.5020
TRURO
Regional Police Dept 902.895.5351
RCMP 1.800.803.7267 or 902.893.6820

For more information on sexual violence visit https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres/sexual-violence/purple-folder.html
COLORING PAGES FOR SELF CARE
COLORING PAGES TO DESTRESS
Diary of a Journal Planner
COLORING PAGES TO DESTRESS