

Let's Raise Awareness about Mental Health

Here are some ideas for talking about Mental Health on the radio or at an event:

- a. What is mental health?
- b. Facilitate a call-in show where people talk about what activities give them a sense of wellbeing.
- c. Present self-care strategies to promote mental wellness.



What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes:

- Being able to enjoy life;
- Having positive relationships with others;
- Having confidence in yourself and taking control of your life;
- Achieving your goals and contributing to the community, according to your skills and abilities;
- Being able to adapt to change, cope with stress and survive hard times;
- Being able to ask for help from someone you trust or from a professional during hard times.

Host a Call-In Radio Show!

Invite community members to call in and talk about a moment in their life or an action they have taken that gives them a sense of wellbeing.

Make sure you have shared the “Take Action to Find Meaning” poster (with the image of the family fishing) in your community and/or on Facebook, before going on the radio.

You can start the activity by presenting the wellbeing strategies named on the poster. Start the dialog by sharing your own story, or if you are shy, find an ally or an elder to co-host the show.

Here are some examples of questions you can ask:

- Can you think of a time that you felt a strong sense of wellbeing? Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?
- How do you take care of your mind, body, spirit and relationships?
- Which well-being strategy works best for you?

ITK's Inuit Nunangat Taimannanit is a story-telling project that could inspire you to take this project even further! <https://itk.ca/taimannanit/>

Self-Care Strategies to Promote Mental Wellness

Wellness means finding a balance between physical, mental, spiritual, social, and work needs. There is no “formula” – each person can choose their own strategies. Making time for these activities in your life can help maintain mental health, and resilience. If you are feeling down, these activities can help you release stress, and overcome difficulties.

- Spend time on the land.
- Do physical activity (walk, run, play sports, go to the gym, etc)
- Practice cultural activities (camping, hunting, berry-picking, etc)
- Practice spiritual activities (go to church, pray, practice ceremonies, etc)
- Be creative (sew, build a cabin, carve, paint, play music, write in a journal, etc)
- Eat country food
- Relax your body (take deep breaths, do yoga, meditate, stretch, etc)
- Connect with other people
 - Visit friends and family;
 - Speak with elders;
 - Play with children or read with them;
 - Do something to help other people;
 - Accept help from others;
 - If something is bothering you, talk to someone you trust.
- Take action, get involved!
 - Join a committee in the community;
 - Participate in community activities (community kitchen, sports, school events, etc.);
 - Express your needs and ideas to decision-makers.

Activities like **camping, hunting, fishing, gathering ice, and berry-picking** have important benefits for mental health. These outings often involve doing physical activity, eating country food, and spending time with loved ones. Furthermore, being on the land can bring a sense of peace, self-sufficiency, cultural connection, and belonging.

What about Mental Illness?

Mental health is not just an absence of mental illness. With proper supports, people who live with mental illnesses, such as depression or anxiety, can live happy and productive lives. Treatment of mental illness often involves a combination of counselling, self-care and treatment (e.g. medication). Support from friends and family is another key to healing.