

Our Health Matters

Welcome to 'Our Health Matters', a new section of the Capital Health Update aimed at promoting health. Each month you will read of a new focus for your own health. Each month you may also be challenged to think about how you are doing in that area.

May celebrates Mental Health Week – by Bruce Miller, Sterile Processing, Capital Health

What do you do to take care of your mental health? How is your mental health? These are questions we need to ask ourselves. They can be tough ones especially if you are experiencing some kind of mental stress. Working in healthcare can be very stressful for a number of reasons and can impact you physically and mentally. One of the problems with working in the healthcare field is that while we are great at taking care of the patients, we may not be as good at taking care of our own mental health. The reason is often related to the stigma associated with mental illness. So what should you do if you are experiencing a mental health issue?

1. The first and most important step is to seek help. This may be a hard thing to do but very important.
2. If you get a diagnosis of some type of mental illness (or if you have a diagnosis now), realize that it is an illness. There is not something you have done to cause it. With mental health issues we often tend to blame ourselves.
3. Begin to take care of yourself. Listen to your Doctor or Therapist. Some of the things you need to do may be hard but will soon help you. Try to exercise (even just walking), take your medication, and do not isolate yourself.

There is a lot more information available. The Canadian Mental Health Association has a great site about Your Mental Health, check it out at http://www.cmha.ca/BINS/content_page.asp?cid=2-267 .

How do I know about this mental health stuff, I worked in the Social Work field as a Registered Social Worker with Community Services with a caseload of individuals who had a mental illness. I also worked at the East Coast Forensic Psychiatric Hospital as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. The one thing that has made me an expert on the above information is that in 1987 I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression, I have been able to work on a continuous basis because I followed the above steps.