Mental Health Services Online

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The challenges and changes that the pandemic brings can affect mental health. Mild mental health problems include stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms. It is difficult to access help for these problems during shutdown.

The pandemic affects everyone's mental health. According to Kids Help Phone, the number of young people calling has strained their resources.

According to Mark Booker, a mental health worker originally from northern Ontario, children who have been quarantined have four times more symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than children who have not been quarantined.

Booker is also concerned about people with addiction disorders. The pandemic places additional stress on those struggling with addiction, which is associated with reduced mental health.

The good news is that there has never been a better time to get help. There are now a variety of online resources for children and adults. Booker notes four types of services: help finding a resource, online group programs, hotlines, and individual support services by a therapist.

Those experiencing a moment of crisis, whether or not accompanied by suicidal thoughts or harmful behaviours, can call Health Sciences North's Crisis Intervention Services, or simply 911.

Many people don't realize that they have coverage to pay for professional services. Many employers' employee assistance plans cover therapeutic counselling services. Some employers offer benefits for psychotherapy.

Having a long-term relationship with a psychotherapist is an excellent tool for maintaining mental health, notes Booker. Over the years, he says he himself has benefited from this kind of service.

Five tips to preserve your mental health

To keep morale high throughout the pandemic, Booker offers a few suggestions:

* Create a daily routine and don't check emails, phone messages or texts after work hours;
* Limit your screen time and media consumption on the internet;
* Pursue a hobby;
* Exercise;
* Communicate daily with family and friends.