

Mental Health

Mental health issues can make individuals more vulnerable to experiences of violence and abuse. Violence, abuse and living under threat can also play a role in triggering or worsening mental health problems as stress levels stay high. Abuse can often cause people to question their judgement or sense of reality. People who are abusive often tell partners they are crazy or tell others their partner is crazy, including the police. After experiences of abuse and violence, certain trauma responses are expected, and sometimes are diagnosed as mental illness by medical professionals.

The following may help me cope with the challenges to my mental health:

- ☐ List the people who I can trust to help me, e.g. friend, counsellor, police, etc.
- ☐ Reminding myself that violence affects my stress levels and risks my mental health so I need to stay watchful of my stress and mental health needs and remember to ask for help.
- ☐ Learn more about local resources that support people with mental health issues (consider finding a resource who understands connection of trauma with mental health), including drop-in hours or crisis lines
- ☐ Consider making a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) through T.E.A.C.H. or CMHA which is a personal plan to stay as well as possible, identify warning signs and develop action plans to respond at these times
- ☐ Track and monitor my prescribed medication(s). Keep a list, including the pharmacist, dosage, and prescribing doctor. If applicable, have my drug card and employee benefits card with me to help with filling prescriptions.
- ☐ Make a note of the events that almost always increase my stress and have a negative effect on my mental wellbeing.
- ☐ Make a note of the warning signs which signal that my stress is increasing and/or I am moving in crisis.
- ☐ If I am a parent, it is important I prioritize my own mental health so I can better care for and support my children.
- ☐ It can help to spend time alone or with a trusted individual to help sort out my feelings. List the people who I would contact or go to in order to get a break from my partner or my relationship
- ☐ Create a box/bag/basket of items to help self-soothe (calm) and manage feelings/distress. Keep this kit in places that are safe and accessible when needed (i.e. car, purse, work, bedroom).
- ☐ Learn about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to increase my understanding of my experience and support me in my healing.

Resource Section

- ☐ Mental Health Support and/or Assistance with WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)
 - Support House - 1-833-845-WELL(9355)
 - Halton COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support Team) - 1-877-825-9011
 - T.E.A.C.H. - (905) 693-8771
 - CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) - (905)693-4270
- ☐ Information about PTSD
 - Mayo Clinic - <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967>
 - CAMH (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) - <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/posttraumatic-stress-disorder>