



## What to do when your workplace is driving you crazy

Good health is more than just feeling well physically; it's also about feeling well mentally. Good mental health enhances our ability to enjoy life and to effectively deal with challenges. It also allows us to handle day-to-day demands, look after ourselves, enjoy personal time and manage unexpected circumstances.

Issues and claims related to mental health are increasingly a concern in Canadian workplaces. Although most Canadians believe they have good mental health, a recent report identified work as the leading source of stress for Canadians.

It's important for you and your employer to address the stressors in your workplace for several reasons:

- Employees under stress are less motivated, productive and creative, and over time their mental health may seriously erode.
- Efficiency levels may drop and absenteeism may increase due to increased physical illness, depression or anxiety.
- Short- and long-term disability claims (and even premature deaths) may increase.

### Identify the causes of your stress

Common sources of workplace stress often include:

- work overload,
- long hours,
- inflexibility in your work schedule,
- an inability to make independent decisions,
- conflicting job demands,
- reporting to more than one supervisor,
- strained relationships,
- an inadequate work space,
- social isolation, and
- limited training or career development opportunities.

In order to confront stress in the workplace, you first have to identify where it is originating.

*Content provided courtesy of Alberta Health's Healthy U initiative.*

### Take control of your stress

Once you've identified what is causing your stress, take control of it by asking yourself some key questions.

- What is your [work-life balance score](#)? Have you found a balance between work, play and self-care?
- Are you allowing workplace stress to become a habit? Like any habit, that can be changed.
- Are your thoughts about work generally optimistic or chronically negative? Try taking a step back from your situation and reframe how you are viewing it.
- Can you distinguish between things you can control and those you can't? Put an emphasis on those you can.
- Can you see humour in stressful situations? Being able to laugh at yourself is an indicator of positive mental health.
- Do you have a strong social network? This network can help you keep perspective and resolve nagging issues.
- Are you maintaining your mental and physical health by:
  - seeking connections with something beyond yourself through nature, books, art or service to others; or
  - including regular physical activity, good nutrition and relaxation techniques in your schedule?

Psychologists often recommend physical activity to reduce feelings of depression and anxiety because of the endorphins your brain releases during these activities. To learn more, visit the Canadian Mental Health Association's [Resilience web page](#).

### Learn more

#### [Workplace Stress](#)

Answers to general questions about workplace stress.

#### [Mental Health Works](#)

A comprehensive resource for organizations wanting to better handle mental health issues.

#### [Your Mental Health](#)

Helpful tips on work-life balance and staying mentally fit.