



# Mental health in the workplace

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At Bell, we believe taking care of the mental health of our team members is essential to their personal success and to our organization's ongoing progress. Accordingly, we continue to develop and implement world-leading mental health practices in the workplace. We consider our best-in-class training programs and awareness campaigns as fundamental components to foster a mentally healthy workplace.

## Mental health training

We continue to expand our mental health training with targeted efforts to reach all team leaders and team members, with an additional focus on union representatives and Health and Safety committee members.

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### Team member training

Our online Building Blocks for Positive Mental Health training is available to all team members. This program consists of interactive modules and includes strategies for building resiliency and improving overall mental health. It also includes practical tips for enhancing self-awareness and boosting emotional intelligence, as well as caring for others who are facing mental health challenges.

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### Leadership training

In our efforts to promote supportive mental health practices across Canada, we worked with our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provider and Queen's University to develop our **Workplace Mental Health Leadership™ program** in 2014 the world's first university-certified workplace mental health training program. Available to any Canadian company or organization, the program has seen significant adoption nationwide; since its



inception, more than 822 companies across Canada have participated in this program leading to a certificate from Queen's University.

This certification training consists of three modules:

- Module 1 provides basic notions around mental health,
- Module 2 emphasizes building leadership skills through role plays and case studies where best practices on communications, accommodations and return to work situations are being presented,
- Module 3 deepens leadership skills, further strengthening preventive techniques and integrating elements from the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Those who successfully complete Module 3 receive a certificate from Queen's University.

In 2020, with the goal to enhance the virtual leadership training experience, we partnered with LifeWorks to develop Learning Labs, allowing participants to put into practice skills they learn. Participants are divided into small groups and practice various case studies. The intent is to make webinar sessions as effective and engaging as a face-to-face experience.

## **Employee and family assistance program (EFAP)**

Our EFAP is a critically important tool for the management of team members' total health needs, including prevention of illness. In 2020, overall usage reached 31%, which is more than double the national norm and represents a 149% increase compared to 2010. This is a good story for Bell because it shows people are reaching out to receive the mental health support they need. A decrease in the number of short-term claims related to mental health during this same time period also demonstrates how greater initial support can benefit everyone involved.

## Additional support services

Our health benefits plan offers up to \$3,000 per year for psychological care coverage for Bell team members and their dependents. Additionally, we continue to enhance support services on an ongoing basis with additional programs.

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### Coverage for online mental health support

In an effort to further increase psychological support, Bell team members and their spouses and dependents have access to Internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT). Cognitive behavioral therapy is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a wide range of problems including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, insomnia, and other common mental health problems. This affordable, easy-to-access, and flexible service (no traveling or appointment) is particularly helpful for team members, spouses, and their dependents, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also an ideal resource for those who are comfortable with technology, based in remote locations, have limited availability, and/or prefer digital interaction. According to our 2020 performance report, over 89% of iCBT participants experienced a reduction in symptoms severity after completing the program.

Since January 2020, all Bell team members and their family members have access to virtual health care through EQ Care. Employees can now consult with a doctor, nurse, psychologist or other health care professional through secure online video. In 2020, out of the 22,000 total EQ Care consultations, around 45% of employees were looking for mental health support.

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### Suicide prevention and response guides

According to [Statistics Canada](#), suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults (15-34 years) and the third for adults aged 35 to 44. Furthermore, 11.8% of Canadians report thoughts of suicide in their lifetime.

Bell team members and leaders expressed a need to be better equipped on how to react with colleagues or team members expressing suicidal intentions. In 2019, in partnership with subject matter experts from Suicide Action Montréal, the Toronto Distress Center and



our EFAP provider, we created suicide-prevention protocols providing practical advice on how to respond to a few crisis scenarios.

Leaders and HR consultants are now better equipped with practical guides on how to manage suicidal intentions, suicide attempts as well as suicidal losses. We also designed a process flow map for Bell team members in order to guide them on what to do if a work colleague expresses suicidal intentions. The feedback received on these protocols has been very positive and users feel they provide all the critical components one needs to know in these challenging situations.

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### Physical health

Over the past few years, we have embedded physical health promotion in our workplace mental health campaigns as an important prevention component with the understanding that regular physical activity can have a significant positive impact on mental health, energy levels, and resilience. In July 2020, we organized our recurring corporate Walk for Wellness Challenge in which over 3,700 team members participated (increase of 35% compared to 2019), and collectively logged over 1.1 trillion steps. This challenge generated personal motivation, friendly competition, and social connections with colleagues with a satisfaction rate of over 92%.

Additionally, in 2019, we reviewed our gym discounts offering for Bell team members. A range of gym partners were selected (traditional, family, and boot camp) to ensure a wider geographic coverage. Amongst others, Bell continues to promote our partnership with GoodLife Fitness centres across Canada. To date, over 3,700 employees and their family members have taken advantage of our corporate discount. Team members can also benefit from onsite fitness facilities and extended services at numerous Bell locations.

New in 2020, all employees have access to free, personalized workouts through the LIFT session app provided by LifeWorks, where employees can follow along workouts on their own time and chat live with fitness / nutrition experts. In addition, more than 1,300 Bell employees have benefitted from our weekly LIFT virtual fitness sessions where instructors teach live classes ranging from Power Yoga to High-Intensity Interval Training. These broadcasted sessions received satisfaction scores over 94%.

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## Return-to-work program

Our return-to-work program has been widely recognized for excellence and continues to yield promising results related to reducing rates of relapse and recurrence of disability leave. Mental health related relapses (within 1 month) and recurrences (within 1 year) are down respectively by 60% and 34% since 2010.

## Awareness and communication

Bell provides team members and their families with expert insight and advice on health, wellness, and development-related topics through the LifeSpeak video library that offers content from internationally acclaimed experts, authors, professors, and medical professionals.

In addition to publishing weekly mental health articles through our internal newsletter, we offer team members a variety of events and special activities that promote awareness during Bell Let's Talk Day, Mental Health Week, Mental Illness Awareness Week, and National Suicide Prevention Day. Since 2010, Bell has organized more than 1,300 mental health events for team members across Canada, including seminars, workshops, information kiosks, speakers, and other engagement activities.

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## Mental health related websites

The **Bell Let's Talk** website and the mental health and wellness intranet site, continue to provide easily accessible, centralized tools and resources for team members to learn, participate, and stay informed. In 2020, team members accessed our Mental health and wellness intranet site more than 25,000 times, taking advantage of our comprehensive mental health resources, including articles, videos, and training, and a wide variety of other resources addressing total health.

# National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety

Bell continues to support and promote the adoption of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace across corporate Canada. Since the inception of the standard, we have shared best practices across hundreds of organizations in Canada to provide encouragement and guidance for others to implement healthier frameworks in their own workplaces.

We continue to build sustainable programs, and address opportunities related to the 13 psychological factors of the National Standard that experts agree have a powerful impact on organizational health and the well-being of individual team members.

## THE 13 FACTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE ARE:

1. **Organizational culture**
2. **Psychological and social support**
3. **Clear leadership and expectations**
4. **Civility and respect**
5. **Psychological demands**
6. **Growth and development**
7. **Recognition and reward**
8. **Involvement and influence**
9. **Workload management**
10. **Engagement**
11. **Balance**
12. **Psychological protection**
13. **Protection of physical safety**

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