The Working Mind Foundational Course
Course Description

The Working Mind (TWM) program provides practical knowledge and skills to address mental health and reduce stigma in the workplace. TWM courses are designed for employees as well as managers, supervisors, and team leaders who manage and support teams. This course is also aimed at aspiring managers and leaders.

TWM Foundational course offers a flexible format that can be delivered virtually or face-to-face to a general workplace audience and can also be adapted to various sectors with customizable sector-specific slides. For more information, please refer to the 'Customizing a Foundational Course' section.

Acknowledgements

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TWM was originally adapted for the workplace from the Canadian Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces' Mental Health Training for Managing Employees and Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) programs. Specifically, we wish to recognize:

- University of Calgary
- Mount Royal University
- Husky Energy
- Nova Scotia Community College
- the Government of Nova Scotia
- Capital District Health (NS/Halifax)
- Department of National Defence
- Dr. Keith Dobson (PhD), TWM Principal researcher, University of Calgary
- Dr. Andrew Szeto (PhD), TWM Principal researcher, University of Calgary

Objectives

TWM is an evidence-based course that initiates a shift in the way people think, feel, and act with respect to mental health. It aims to help participants:

- increase awareness and ability to recognize signs of good mental health, declining mental health and mental illness.
- recognize the impact of stigma surrounding mental health and reduce stigma and other barriers to care in the workplace.
- recognize the factors and benefits of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
- use the Mental Health Continuum tool to notice changes in their mental health and well-being and know when to take appropriate actions.
- have conversations about mental health and suicide with their colleagues, friends, and family members.
- recognize stressors in their life.
- use coping strategies and self-care to manage stress and build resilience.
- find available resources to support themselves.
- take care of their own mental health as a manager (Manager course only).
- support their team's mental health using available tools and resources (Manager course only).

Course Structure

The course content is framed according to four steps, represented by the acronym RAMP. This is the core process that learners will use in The Working Mind. The steps are as follows:

- Reflection: Exploring the impact of mental health stigma.
- Awareness: Recognizing signs of change across the Mental Health Continuum.
- Movement: Taking proactive steps to build resilience and reduce stress.
- Practice: Sustaining self-care and help-seeking behaviours over time.

In both the employee and manager versions of TWM, learners are regularly asked to apply these steps to consolidate knowledge.

Core Modules

Modules 1, 2, and 3 are core modules that offer the same foundational content to all participants (employees/managers). The core modules focus on increasing self-awareness and noticing changes in one's own mental health and well-being.

Module 1: Mental Health and Stigma

In Module 1, participants examine concepts of mental health and discuss the impacts of stigma on individuals living with mental health or substance use conditions.

At the end of Module 1 participants will be able to:

- describe the concept of mental health.
- explain the difference between good mental health, declining mental health and mental illness.
- list common mental illnesses in Canada.
- identify risk factors for mental illness.
- describe the different types of stigma.
- explain the difference between stigma, prejudice, and discrimination.
- explain the impact of stigma in the workplace.
- identify stigmatizing language and respectful alternatives.
- identify barriers to care.
- explain how to reduce barriers to care in the workplace.

Module 2: Mental Health in the Workplace

In Module 2, participants learn about psychological health and safety in the workplace and use the Mental Health Continuum tool to notice changes in their mental health and well-being. They also discuss how to have conversations with others about mental health and taking appropriate actions.

At the end of Module 2 participants will be able to:

- describe the concept of psychological health and safety.
- recognize a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
- identify the benefits of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
- explain how you can contribute to a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
- apply the Mental Health Continuum tool to recognize changes in their mental health and well-being.
- identify some signs and indicators in the 5 areas of the continuum.
- practice using the Continuum Self-Check tool to notice changes in themselves.
- recognize key actions they can take for themselves in each zone of the continuum.
- apply the Mental Health Continuum tool to talk about mental health with colleagues, friends, and family members.
- recognize the warning signs of suicide.
- describe the concept and principles of recovery.

Module 3: Stress & Resilience

In Module 3, participants explore the impacts of stress on mental health, and practice applying the Big 4 Coping Strategies—simple but proven tools to deal with stress effectively and remain resilient.

At the end of Module 3 participants will be able to:

- describe the concept of stress.
- identify and list main stressors (personal, organizational, other) in their life.
- describe the concept of resilience.
- identify the Big 4 coping strategies.
- apply the Big 4 coping strategies to manage stress and build resilience.
- describe the concept of self-care.
- use self-care strategies to manage stress and build resilience.
- identify other available resources to support themselves.

Leadership Module

Managers and leaders build on the content from the three core modules and focus on practical approaches to supporting their teams' mental health and well-being.

Module 4: Supporting Your Team

In Module 4, managers and leaders practice skills to support their team's mental health and well-being. They review appropriate actions to take in each colour zone of the Mental Health Continuum and address practical actions related to critical incidents and supporting employees.

At the end of Module 4 participants will be able to:

- recognize the mental health challenges that managers face.
- explain the employer's and manager's role in addressing psychological health and safety in the workplace.
- describe how to have healthy conversations about mental health with employees and team members.
- apply the Mental Health Continuum tool to support your team's mental health and well-being in each continuum zone.
- explain the return to work and accommodations process (optional).
- recall the actions in the AIR model to help employees in a crisis situation.
- apply the AIR model to support employees after a crisis.

Delivery Requirements

- The course modules are delivered in sequential order, as each module builds on learning from the previous module.
- Participants may take the course virtually or in-person.
- Participants must complete all the modules in the same delivery format with the same group/cohort.
- The modules may be delivered:
  - On the same day, with breaks between modules
  - On separate days within a timespan of no longer than two weeks.
- To receive a certificate of completion:
  - Employees are expected to complete the three core modules with the same cohort.
  - Managers and supervisors are expected to complete the four modules with the same cohort.

Participant Materials

Course Handout

The course handout is designed as a learning aid used throughout the course. There are two different course handouts, one for employees and one for managers. The handout is an integral part of the learning experience and is a tool to foster participant engagement. It provides the information that participants need to complete activities in each module, including:

- Instructions for activities
- Reference information for key concepts covered in the course
- Worksheets to write notes/responses on during activities
- Link to Online Resource Hub

Participants will receive the handout at the beginning of Module 1.

Scenarios Handout

The scenarios and discussion questions are packaged as a separate handout. The facilitator will direct participants to the chosen scenario and questions to discuss for each module.

Resource Hub

Opening Minds maintains an online resource hub with a comprehensive list of resources and support services for mental health and well-being. The English and French links to the resource hub (r.openingminds.org / r.changerlesmentalites.org), which can be accessed at any time, are included in the course handout that each participant receives.