

First Nations Health Authority

Interior Region Mental Health and Wellness

Quick Reference Mental Health and Substance Misuse

Support Resources



Immediate Crisis, Mental Health, and Substance Use Support

If you require immediate assistance call 911

- **KUU-US: toll free 1-800-588-8717**
- **Indian Residential School Survivors Society** toll-free: 1-800-721-0066
Cultural Supports accessible through the office 1-604-985-4465 Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- **Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society:** 1-888-403-3123
- **Hope for Wellness Helpline:** 1-855-242-3310
- **Interior Health Crisis Line** 1-888-353-2273
- **First Nations and Aboriginal Specific Crisis Line available 24/7**
Toll Free 1-800-588-8717
Youth Line 1-250-723-2040
Adult Line 1-250-723-4050
- **British Columbia Crisis Center** 1-800-784-2433
- **Canadian Mental Health BC Division** 1-800-555-8222

Addictions and Substance Misuse Supports

- Adults Help Line 1-800-663-1441
- Mental Health Substance Use Interior Health 1-888-353-2283

Family / Domestic Violence

- **VictimLinkBC: 1-800-563-0808** (24 Hours) B.C. and Yukon
- **Domestic Violence Help Line 1-800-563-0808** (24 Hour)
- **Kids Help Phone** 1-800-668-6868
- **Helpline for Children in BC:** 310-1234 or text [686868](tel:686868)
- **Seniors Abuse and Information Line (SAIL)** 604-437-1940 | Toll free 1-866-437-1940 - Available 8am to 8pm daily (except holidays)

Youth and Children Mental Health and Wellness Supports:

- **Foundry Youth Mental Health Support:** 1-833-308-6379
Youthspace.ca Access emotional support, resources, and crisis response, volunteers are available on Youthspace Chat every night from 6pm - 12 midnight (Pacific Time) foundrybc.ca/get-support/virtual
- **Youth in BC online Chat:** 1-604-872-3311

PFLAG Canada 1.888.530.6777

Helps all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, supports, educates and provides resources to all individuals with questions or concerns, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week inquiries@pflagcanada.ca www.pflagcanada.ca

FNHA Mental Health and Substance Use Support Resources

FNHA Health Benefits- Mental Health Service 1-855- 550-5454

- For a List of First Nation Health Authority Mental Health and Substance Use/ service providers in your area use link below: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use>
- FNH Benefits service provider information: <https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/contact-health-benefits>
- Mental health service providers information: <https://www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health>

FNHA Doctor of the Day Clients call 1-855-344-3800

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/virtual-doctor-of-the-day>

- You can access Mental Health support and referrals through the doctor of the day to FNHA First Nations Virtual Addictions and Psychiatry

FNHA First Nations Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/virtual-substance-use-and-psychiatry-service>

- You can be referred into the program through community health and wellness workers, addictions counsellors, mental health clinicians or counsellors, and medical practitioners.
- You can access Mental Health support and referrals through the doctor of the day to FNHA First Nations Virtual Addictions and Psychiatry



Interior Region – Central Contact Information

Dākelh Dené | Ktunaxa | N. Stát'imc | Nlaka'pamux | Secwepemc | Syilx | Tsilhqot'in

The Interior Region FNHA is happy to announce that we are now able to provide our Nations, communities and members with a direct phone number and email address to access resources specifically related to;

- Mental Health
- Cultural Supports
- Crisis Support

We hope that this new pathway will be better able to provide you with simple, accurate and timely access to programs and services

Our goal is to connect members, staff and partners with the right people the first time!

Below are the ***NEW*** Mental Wellness contact details:

General Inquiries Toll Free Phone Number:

1-833-751-2525

E-mail Inquiries:

IRSupports@fnha.ca



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

CRISIS AND TRAUMA

Reactions to Crisis

REACTIONS TO CRISIS

When big things happen in our lives that are beyond our control, we respond to this uncertainty and change in a variety of ways. Both our bodies and our minds can be overwhelmed by what is happening due to the areas of our brains that are activated by these difficult events. When we decide that it is time to do the healing work, we can help to reduce this brain response. Healing work can include:



- Engaging in cultural and spiritual practices
- Talking with Elders for guidance
- Practising healing rituals and ceremonies
- Connecting with nature
- Seeking out counselling

Similarly, when big things happen to us that are unexplainable and beyond our control, our brains step in to protect our bodies. You may have some of the following experiences:

- Feeling foggy or like nothing is real
- Having a hard time focusing or concentrating
- Feeling numb or exhausted
- Feeling okay one minute then horrible the next minute
- Feeling like you can't trust anything or anyone
- Having a hard time getting to sleep or staying asleep
- Eating more than normal or eating mindlessly
- Having a hard time remembering to eat



Remember to ask for help when you need it. If daily routines are feeling overwhelming, we can turn to our family and friends, as well as trusted people in our communities and ask for guidance. We can also seek professional help from outside sources.

TRAUMA

There are many different kinds of incidents that can cause trauma. For First Nations people, the impact of colonialism has been traumatizing for individuals, families, communities and Nations. When we experience trauma or if something reminds us of our past trauma, we may experience:



- Difficulty concentrating
- Having a hard time staying focused
- Restlessness, irritability or anger
- Hypervigilance - being on “high alert” all of the time
- Body aches and pains
- Feelings of hopelessness and despair
- Difficulty talking about traumatic feelings and experiences
- Difficulty with relationships and intimacy

Trauma is serious but we can heal. Therapy can include our cultural and spiritual practices. There are other strategies and tools that can help too.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU MOVE FORWARD

Acknowledge that trauma has occurred. Know that what you are thinking and feeling is because of trauma. You can explore what self-care looks and feels like for you. Try different strategies to support healing from trauma. Self-care practices can include:

- Cultural practices and ceremony, including personal cleansing, taking a walk with the intention to heal, or praying
- Strong social connections with family and friends
- Healthy routines and healthy eating habits
- Exercise
- Counselling





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CRISIS AND TRAUMA Techniques for Grounding

THE BENEFITS OF DEEP BREATHING

One way that you can re-set your body and help to move out of the fight, flight, freeze or trauma response, is to practice deep breathing. Simply take a deep, slow breath and continue to breathe in slowly until you can't breathe in anymore. Then start to breathe out slowly, and continue to breathe out for longer than you breathed in. At the end of your exhalation, you can continue to hold your breath for a count of six.

If you want to increase the effect on your body, you can hug your arms around yourself while you are doing this deep, slow breathing. Even three cycles of deep breathing can help to reset your body and will only take a minute or two.



TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

First Nations people turn to practices they traditionally used in BC or to adopted practices from other Nations in Canada and around the world. Some of these include smudging with sweet grass and sage, cedar brushings, or brushing with an eagle feather. Each practice can provide grounding for individuals.

AFFIRMATIONS ARE POWERFUL

Our thoughts are powerful tools and can change how we feel and behave. Affirmations can shift negative thought patterns and behaviours into positive ones.



What we say has an energy to it and affects ourselves and those around us. Speaking positively is like making a request to the universe. Affirmations can be positive reminders or statements that we use for feeling secure, increasing self-esteem, and becoming more positive, to name a few.

Affirmations can come from within ourselves (by creating them to fit what we need at the time) or they can be something that resonates with us.

TRY ONE OF THESE AFFIRMATIONS

1. The Creator has chosen this journey for me because I can do it.
2. I create a safe and secure space for myself wherever I am.
3. Everything I have is a gift from the Creator.
4. I am connected to the Creator of all good things.
5. I give myself permission to do what is right for me.
6. I use my time and talents to help others _____ [fill in the blank].
7. What I love about myself is my ability to _____ [fill in the blank].
8. I feel proud of myself when I _____ [fill in the blank].
9. I give myself space to grow and learn.
10. I allow myself to be who I am without judgment.
11. I trust myself to make the right decision.
12. I am grateful to have people in my life who _____ [fill in the blank].
13. I am learning valuable lessons from myself every day.
14. I am at peace with who I am as a person.
15. I make a difference in the world by simply existing in it.
16. My ancestors are proud of me and watch over me lovingly.





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CRISIS AND TRAUMA

Trauma-Informed Yoga and Meditation

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness can be described as paying attention to the present moment in a non-judgmental way. Studies show that by being present:

- We live in the present moment instead of focusing on thoughts, feelings, external events or interactions with others that happened in the past or may happen in the future.
- We are able to have a choice over how we respond to our day-to-day lives instead of remaining on auto-pilot.
- Feelings of acceptance are enhanced.

YOGA AND MINDFULNESS AS A THERAPY FOR TRAUMA

In yoga, the key concepts of mindfulness are the basis of movement. Yoga is focused on the present moment and can help reduce worries and stress. While practising yoga, we observe our thoughts and focus on the breath, which continuously brings our attention back to what is happening in the present moment. Yoga involves gentle postures, breath work, and meditation. It invites you to focus on your experiences and personal choices.

When a person has experienced trauma sometimes the body is not a safe place. When this occurs, we may experience hypervigilance and this may lead to fight/flight/freeze responses. By doing yoga and inviting choices about how to move the body, we can learn that the body is a safe place to be and, in turn, reduce the fight/flight/freeze response.

Trauma-sensitive yoga facilitators do not tell people how to feel or what to do. Every potential body movement is an invitation and a choice.



Studies show that yoga has many benefits:

- Improves physical, emotional, and mental health
- Reduces symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTSD
- Improves coping skills, stress management and overall quality of life
- Increases a sense of self-empowerment, self-acceptance, and self-care

Learn more about online trauma-informed yoga programs:

<https://www.yogaoutreach.com/>

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

Because we are all unique, certain wellness tools work better for some of us than others. Some people like to do body scans to help them reconnect and regulate. This tool may work for you – or it may not. Give it a try and see what you think. Remember only to do what feels safe and comfortable for you. You can stop at any time if it doesn't feel okay.

Sensations might include buzzing, tingling, pressure, tightness or anything else you notice. What if you don't notice any strong sensations or if things feel neutral? You are invited to simply notice that, too. There are no right answers. Just tune in to what's happening, as best you can, without judgment.

You are invited to be curious and open to what you are noticing, investigating the sensations as fully as possible, and then intentionally releasing the focus of attention before shifting to the next area to explore.

At some point, you may find it hard to concentrate. You may discover that you can't stop your attention from wandering. When this happens you are invited to come back to the sensation of breathing or focusing on the body. You can use as much time as you like for a body scan. Some people prefer 30-40 minutes while others may prefer five minutes.



DOING THE BODY SCAN

1. Get into a comfortable position. Some people prefer to sit on a chair or on the floor, while others prefer to lie down.
2. You may close your eyes, as it can be helpful to allow you to focus. Or, if you'd rather, you can always lower and half-close your eyes.
3. You may choose to bring your attention to your breath. You are invited, if comfortable, to place a hand above your heart and a hand on your belly.
4. As you breathe in you may choose to notice the feeling of air going in through your nose and filling up the lungs. You may notice the belly rising as you breathe in.
5. You may feel the chest expanding and rising as you breathe in. As you breathe out, the belly goes down and the chest goes down.
6. You are invited to allow as much time as you need or want to experience and investigate each area of the body.

7. When you're ready, knowing there is no hurry, you are invited to breathe in and perhaps imagine that you are bringing your inhale all the way from your nose to fill up your feet with air.
8. As you exhale, envision the air being slowly released from the feet, allowing them to be heavier and melt into the floor.
9. You are invited to use this method with other parts of the body such as legs, hands, arms, torso and head. Slowly breathe in through the nose or mouth and out through the nose or mouth.
10. Once you have brought your awareness throughout your body as much as you would like, you are invited to come back to the feeling of the breath in your chest and belly. You are invited to bring your focus here.
11. Whenever you are ready you are invited to send some gratitude to yourself for trying something new or for taking some time out of your day to focus on yourself.
12. You are invited to roll out the ankles and the wrists. If you like, you can shake out the hands.
13. In your own time you may choose to open your eyes if they are closed.

MINDFUL WALKS

A mindful walk can help calm or clear the mind. It can help you live in the present moment.

If you think this is something that could work for you, consider incorporating mindful walking into your life. Try using all of your senses – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching – to bring awareness to your body and surroundings.



A GUIDE TO TAKING A MINDFUL WALK

As you walk, notice the feeling under your feet on the ground. Try feeling all the small movements your body has to make to lift your leg off the ground for each step. Notice how your legs, feet and arms feel with each step you take. If you become lost in thought, that is completely fine. As you continue to walk, you could use the next step as an opportunity to bring a pause to the thoughts - to bring some space to the mind.

If you choose to, use your sense of sight. Is the sun shining? If so, where is it shining? Is it reflecting off the water or puddles? Perhaps notice a tree and then maybe a branch and, even smaller still, a leaf. What intricacies are on the leaf? Are you able to notice the veins in the leaf?

Using your sense of smell, notice any aromas or scents. Are you able to notice any tastes as you walk? Can you taste the air? Now using your sense of touch, notice the solidity of the earth beneath your feet.

If it works for you, you can bring mindful walking anywhere. Use it on trail hikes around your community or when walking to a neighbour's house, the local school or to the grocery store.