

CATHOLIC TEACHERS'
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERIES

**Steps to Take if
You Are Concerned
About Your
Mental Health**

It is important to take your own mental health needs seriously. To support Catholic teachers and help you reflect on your mental health and wellness, the Association has developed the **Catholic Teachers' Mental Health and Wellness Series**. In this resource we share some steps that you can take if you are concerned about your Mental Health. By being proactive about your mental health, you may be able to lessen the negative effects of stress on your life and enhance your overall health and well-being.

Step 1

Look for the signs and symptoms:

- Prioritize your mental health and practice self-care using the ideas in this document. You cannot be present for your students or your loved ones if you are not present for yourself.
- OECTA has many mental health resources. You can find these listed in the document Catholic Teachers' Mental Health Series: Mental Health Resources.

Step 2

Consult your doctor:

- As per the collective agreement, you can access a sick day for a doctor's appointment.
- If you, or someone you know, is at immediate risk, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department at a local hospital.

Step 3

Follow your doctor's advice:

- This could include a variety of interventions ranging from counselling, therapy, medication, and accessing your school board's employee assistance program (EAP).
- If you are not sure if you have coverage for a certain health professional, you can always contact the Ontario Teacher's Insurance Plan (OTIP) to confirm coverage or submit a pre-determination of benefits to OTIP.
- If work restrictions or limitations are suggested by medical professionals, your doctor will have to complete paperwork to communicate this with your school board. Contact your **local OECTA unit office** for details on this process, as it may differ by unit.



Step 4

If your mental health concerns are becoming more serious and you need time off:

- You can access your sick days.
- If your absence is going to be five days or longer, please contact your local unit office to discuss the requirements for medical documentation.
- Follow your doctor's treatment plan.



Also consider the following:

- Contact your local OECTA unit office if you have been asked to continue to provide lesson plans while off work on an approved sick leave.
- You may be eligible for OTIP's Early Intervention Plan (after 11 consecutive days absence).
- Take note of the number of sick days and short-term leave days you can access.
- Contact your local unit office to discuss long-term disability leave if you believe you may not be able to return to work after your short-term sick leave expires.
- You may be eligible for support from the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) if you have experienced a mental stress injury from a traumatic incident or substantial stressors at work. Contact your [local OECTA unit office](#) for assistance.

Mental health and mental illness are important to consider. Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses can be treated successfully, especially if early intervention is possible.

Prioritize your health, including your mental health.