

Department of Education and  
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**Date:** May 1, 2020  
**To:** All school district personnel (Part II)  
**From :** George Daley, Deputy Minister  
**Copies :** Craig Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Minister, EECD  
Robert Penney, Assistant Deputy Minister, EECD  
**Subject:** **Bulletin #14: Mental Health Support - COVID-19**

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The recent tragedy that happened next door in Nova Scotia is weighing on all our minds. Events like this can add to feelings of distress and anxiety already heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such circumstances can challenge our ability to remain calm, present, and compassionate.

To help you and your friends, neighbours and families there are a number of tools that may help you navigate through these difficult times.

In addition to the GNB inConfidence program available to all GNB employees, the Government of Canada has recently introduced two programs that are available free to all Canadians:

- A toll-free 24/7 crisis hotline is available at 1.844.751.2133. Individuals will receive crisis counselling support and/or referral to community resources.
- A global mental health support program called [Wellness Together Canada](#). It consists of free online resources, tools, apps, as well as connections to trained volunteers and qualified mental health professionals.

As you may be aware, the government of New Brunswick is working diligently to start the planning of our recovery. This will include scheduled start up of programs that have been more dormant than normal. As shared in Bulletin 12, GNB is taking the precautionary measures to ensure that your workplace is safe before it re-opens. Nonetheless, you may be feeling anxious about returning to the workplace. We encourage all employees to once again access the [inConfidence](#) online resources such as the [Mindfulness Toolkit](#); [How to be active and stay fit at home](#) – LIFT; and other articles as you prepare for return to the workplace. (Username: gnb Password: inconfidence).

As shared in Bulletin 8, we must also acknowledge that home is not a safe place for everyone. For anyone in an abusive relationship, being unable to leave the house to go to work can increase their vulnerability, as they may be subjected to increased surveillance and control by their abusive partner (who may also be at home) and are no longer going out for work or running errands, which could have provided the chance for them to reach out for help.

The social effects of the pandemic are also creating conditions which exacerbate domestic violence, such as unemployment, financial hardship and confinement or isolation.

For support and guidance on how to recognize domestic or intimate partner violence, how to seek help if you're a victim, a child or a bystander, visit [this link](#) to the GNB Coronavirus website. You can also find a link to crisis lines, shelters and domestic violence outreach services across New Brunswick [here](#). Many of these services can help a person subjected to abuse plan for their own [safety](#) as well.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) [Mental Health Week](#) is from May 4 to May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and there are webinars and videos available to support you and your family. CMHA provides access to resources that will assist you to maintain and improve mental health, community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness:

- [Canadian Mental Health Association NB](#) – Events Calendar
- Subscribe to [CMHA of NB YouTube Channel](#) (for pre-aired webinars) and get notifications when new videos are posted.

May is a time to raise awareness about sexual violence. It is also the month to acknowledge survivors for their resilience and strength. Sexual violence can have long-lasting impacts on survivors. It is linked to mental health difficulties, feelings of shame, self-blame, anger, as well as fear, and distressing memories of the experience.

If you need help, there are support lines you can call. To find our more information about sexual violence services visit: <https://bit.ly/2xoC3xc>.

It is also important to remember that co-workers and managers can be bystanders, and there are steps you can take to check in on colleagues who may be abused. An abusive partner in the home may be less likely to be suspicious of a phone call or e-mail coming from a co-worker or manager. Visit [Domestic & Intimate Partner Violence Workplace Toolkit](#) for information and resources on steps you can take.

For support and guidance on how to recognize and deal with one's own violent, controlling or abusive behaviours, you can also click [here](#) or visit [PLEIS-NB](#)

Be well, keep safe and continue to stay informed by checking GNB's coronavirus [website](#) regularly for up to date information.

You can find these bulletins and other information [here](#). If you are outside GNB's intranet network, you can find them [here](#).



George Daley  
Deputy Minister