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Date: March 23, 2020
To: Part II Schools and School Districts
From: Mr. George Daley, Deputy Minister
Copies : Mr. Craig Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Minister
Subject: **Bulletin #4: Managing Anxiety and Worry (COVID-19)**

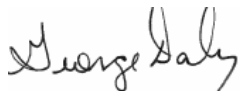
We are currently experiencing unprecedented times. Virtually every part of daily life is being upended or disrupted in some way.

A number of you remain on the job, on-site or remotely, because you work in critical positions or support those critical positions. Many remain on standby, ready to be deployed to help, and/or caring for your children at home. Regardless of your circumstance, these are trying times and we must be conscious of looking after our mental health.

The emotions of anxiety and fear in confronting a threat like COVID-19 are part of the survival instinct. Anxiety might become problematic when it becomes persistent or impairs day-to-day tasks, rational decision-making, and maintaining healthy relationships. To assist you in managing anxiety and worry about COVID-19, we share the following tips and resources:

- 1. Inform yourself.** On what the virus is, what the signs and symptoms are and the preventative measures. Visit the [GNB website](#) for regular updates.
- 2. Keep perspective.** Though it is important to stay informed it is also important to keep perspective. Do not spend too much time checking the news channels. Remember to also spend time on other important and positive things in your life.
- 3. Understand the risk.** When something's new and there are unknowns about it, it can seem very scary. This is our brain's normal reaction to a threat (our fight or flight response). Take the time to consider the risk to you.
- 4. Take precautions.** Once you've determined what the recommended precautions are, incorporate those into your regular routine. Right now, the recommendations are: wash your hands regularly with soap and water; stay home if you feel sick; avoid those who are sick, practice the 2-metre social distancing guideline if possible; and maintain regular health routines like sleeping enough, eating healthy and exercising.
- 5. Stay connected.** Having a support network of people to talk to when you're feeling anxious can help to keep you grounded and remind you to keep the perspective you need. Use social media, telephone, texts and email.
- 6. Use your coping skills.** If you experience anxiety in other areas of your life remember to engage in the practices that help manage your anxiety levels, for example, engaging in regular mindfulness practice. The [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) has mindfulness information available to assist you.

7. Seek extra help. If you're still struggling with your anxiety or experiencing panic that is affecting your ability to maintain your regular activities, you may consider seeking additional support. EFAP is there for you 24/7 at www.myinconfidence.ca or by calling inConfidence toll-free at 1-866-721-1738. (Username: GNB Password: inconfidence).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Daley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Daley
Deputy Minister