

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



How and where to get help

By Joe Pece

In stressful situations, we often overestimate how bad the situation can get, and underestimate how well we will be able to cope using the coping skills we employ everyday. Knowing when to get help, and where to turn, may not always be clear.

You are encouraged to assess your level of anxiety and overall mental health proactively and regularly. By recognizing and addressing problems early, you can usually prevent more serious issues from developing. The following are free and accessible resources that you can access proactively, without a doctor's recommendation or diagnosis.

Feeling Better Now

[Feelingbetternow.ca](https://feelingbetternow.ca) is a free, confidential e-resource available 24/7 to all members and their families. Once you create an account, you have access to a variety of mental health resources, including:

- A user-friendly mental health risk assessment tool
- A personalized action plan for you and your health care provider based on medical guidelines
- Immediate access to curated mental health support resources for you and your family

The Feeling Better Now website also has a list of resources to help you manage your stress and anxiety specifically as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employee Assistance Programs

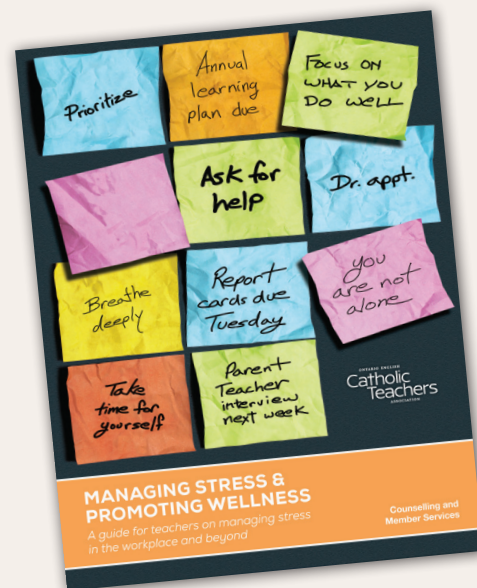
Your school board's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and valuable resource. The types of services and benefits afforded through the EAP will vary from board to board, but most of these programs offer some free services and/or counselling in the following areas: family, marriage/divorce, depression, grief, addiction, finances, and anger and stress management. The following types of professionals are available for you to access through a referral from your doctor or an EAP: counsellors or therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, stress specialists, addiction counsellors, and financial counsellors.

Your local OECTA unit can help you obtain support through your EAP and will be able to answer questions regarding access to sick leave, long-term disability (LTD), and workplace accommodations. Unit contact information is available [HERE](#).

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.
REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

Managing Stress and Promoting Wellness (booklet)

The *Managing Stress and Promoting Wellness* booklet, developed by the OECTA Counselling and Member Services department, contains a summary of concepts, ideas, and suggestions to help teachers deal with job-related frustration, stress, burnout, and other issues related to mental health.



Catholicteachers.ca

There are many COVID-19-related resources developed by the Counselling and Member Services department available at catholicteachers.ca. In the Members' Area, you can access:

- **Mental Health and Wellness for Teachers**, a presentation that was developed for OECTA leaders and delivered at the recent Health & Safety regionals.
- **Mental Health Resources 2020**, a comprehensive list of organizations, articles, and initiatives dealing with mental health and wellness.
- **Mental Health Podcasts**, a great list of podcasts dealing with the topic of mental health during COVID-19, many of which are specific to educators.

Advice is always available through your OECTA local unit or the provincial Counselling and Member Services department. Contact information is available [HERE](#).

Joe Pece is Department Head in the Counselling and Member Services department at the OECTA Provincial Office.