

# Wellness Guide

## **Wellness Guide for NB Nursing Homes during a Pandemic**

Version 2: May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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### Introduction

The New Brunswick Association of Nursing Homes Inc. prepared this document for the staff and managers of NB nursing homes. This wellness guide aims at providing resources on how to find balance and take care of one's mental and physical health during a pandemic. The NBANH works closely with its service providers (Morneau Shepell, Mental Health Commission of Canada, etc.) in order to offer you resources that are relevant and science-based.

You will find general information on how to take care of your physical and mental health during this pandemic and how to access available resources, but also tools, links to webinars and posters that can be used at any time.

Please note that the guide will be updated at the NBANH's discretion. The Association is committed to sharing updated versions, if applicable, with members and partners.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is COVID-19?

The recent outbreak of COVID-19, which may be commonly known as “coronavirus” has now been deemed a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO), due to the death toll and the spread of the virus overseas. The first cases appeared in Wuhan, the capital of the Hubei province in China, in December 2019.

For more information about affected regions, click [here](#) to access the WHO Dashboard.

The COVID-19 is a virus that falls under the coronavirus “family” of respiratory viruses. It can cause breathing difficulties in those who have contracted it. Experts believe that it probably originated from human contact with animals, as these types of viruses are found most often in animals. In the case of the COVID-19, experts believe that the outbreak may have spread due to illegal trading of exotic animals.

#### What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those of a cold or flu: fever, headache, dry cough, and body aches with the added symptom of breathing problems. The incubation period during which a person has the disease but is not exhibiting symptoms can be between one day and two weeks. It's possible that the virus can be passed on to others during the incubation period before the person carrying starts to exhibit symptoms. It's important to seek medical treatment if you think you might have contracted COVID-19.

#### How can I avoid getting COVID-19?

The only way to get COVID-19 is to be in close physical contact with a person or animal that has contracted the virus. Because those who have been infected might not show symptoms for up to two weeks, it's important to remain vigilant.



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To best avoid catching COVID-19, the WHO recommends:

- Practicing good hand hygiene (washing hands with soap and water) – Please refer to next section for more information about hand hygiene.
- Practicing good respiratory hygiene (sneezing into your elbow instead of your hand),
- Avoiding any unnecessary physical contact with wild animals.
- Practice “social distancing”—maintain at least 2 meters (6 feet) of distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing and sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, as these are the easiest way for viruses to enter your system. If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately. There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19.

### Is COVID-19 the same as SARS?

No. COVID-19 and SARS come from the same group of viruses, called coronaviruses. There can be some confusion here, as many people refer to COVID-19 as simply “coronavirus”—but COVID-19 is not the same virus as SARS.

(Source: LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell)

### Where can I find out more information?

- WHO releases daily [reports](#) on the effects of COVID-19.
- You can also find out more information from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).
- The [Government of NB](#) also provides resources available to the public.



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## Hand Hygiene

### How to avoid getting COVID-19?

Hand hygiene is the first and most important line of defense.

The WHO recommends:

- Washing hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Carry disposable tissues with you, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze and dispose of the tissue carefully.
- Avoiding any unnecessary physical contact with wild animals.

### Reduce the spread of COVID-19 – Wash your hands

Step 1: Wet hands with warm water.

Step 2: Apply soap.

Step 3: Wash hands for at least 20 seconds (including your palms, back of each hand, between fingers, thumbs and under nails).

Step 4: Rinse well.

Step 5: Dry hands well with paper towel.

Step 6: Turn off tap using paper towel.

### Other tips include:

- Carry a hand sanitizer with you to make frequent cleaning of hands easy.
- Always wash your hands before you eat.
- Be especially careful in busy airports and other public transport systems about touching things and then touching your face.
- Do not share snacks from packets or bowls that others are dipping their fingers into.
- Regularly clean, not just your hands, but commonly used surfaces and devices you touch or handle.

**Please refer to page 14 for infographics on handwashing.**

(Source: [Government of Canada](#), LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell)





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## Children and COVID-19

You can significantly lower the risk that children pose of spreading or catching viruses by:

- Explaining to them how germs spread and the importance of good hand and face hygiene.
- Keeping household surfaces clean, especially kitchens, bathrooms and door handles.
- Using clean clothes to wipe surfaces, so you don't transfer germs from one surface to another.
- Giving everyone their own towel and making sure they know not to share toothbrushes etc.

It is also important to remember that children's mental health may also be affected with the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. Please see the picture below that can help explain what we can control to ease the burden of what we can't.



(Source: [Thecounselingteacher.com](https://thecounselingteacher.com))



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## Five Steps to Protect your Mental Health during the Pandemic

In the midst of COVID-19, it is increasingly difficult to avoid the bleak headlines and bright-red news banners. Staying informed is, after all, one way many of us try to win back a semblance of control. But while it's natural to seek information about this unfolding public health crisis, we must also take steps to protect our mental health.

With guidance from Dr. Keith Dobson, clinical psychologist and professor at the University of Calgary, the Mental Health Commission of Canada has compiled the following tips to help Canadians protect their mental health as they strive to safeguard their physical well-being and that of their loved ones.

### 1 Understand the fight-or-flight response

It's normal to feel anxious in the face of a threat. Our body's fight-or-flight response is designed to keep us safe by heightening our response to perceived danger. Part of that response is the release of stress hormones, which increase heart rate, blood pressure, and overall alertness.

The brain is continuously seeking new informational cues to re-assess the threat level. Unfortunately, if we bombard ourselves with COVID-19 details, headlines, and images, we reinforce the threat signal and perpetuate the stress response. Remember, the information we allow in will affect how we feel - and we should monitor that intake with care.

Because of the impact stress has on our body's immune system, managing it during a pandemic is critical to the success of strategies designed to reduce contagion or the severity of the illness.

### 2 Be selective about news sources

Where we seek information matters! Credible sources, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization give us plain facts to counteract the sensationalism and fear-provoking imagery found in the news media. Updates from neighbours or other kinds of hearsay are more likely to include selective attention to fearful cases and stories.

Carefully choosing our sources is the best way to ensure accuracy. While there is plenty of fact-based content on social media, because of the way it works it is also much more likely to turn hearsay into misinformation. The facts - as fluid as they may be - are essential to facing the situation appropriately.

### 3 Consider the practical value of the information

Not all information is created equal. When we see images of workers in hazmat suits, empty streets, and armed guards, our brains detect a threat and react accordingly. Unfortunately, these images don't have a lot of value, as they convey very little meaningful or useful information. Where possible, focus on the facts in the story, not the extraneous details or peripheral images.

### 4 Don't discount the power of language

When the media reports that rates of infection are "skyrocketing," for example, it can trigger more anxious feelings than if they'd said "increasing." Although it may be difficult, it's important to see



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through the sensationalistic language and focus on the message and the practical takeaways. If a particular news source uses a lot of alarmist language, consider avoiding that outlet altogether.

### 5 Set boundaries on news consumption

With such a rapidly evolving situation, it can feel like even a few hours without an update will leave us in the dark. But while the information about COVID-19 is constant, it is also highly repetitive. The more often we receive information, the more it will play on our minds, and the more difficult it will be to disengage.

Try limiting your updates to between one and three designated times per day. In the interim, make a concentrated effort to place your attention elsewhere. When it's time to re-engage, it won't take long to catch up.

(Source: [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#))

## Financial Wellness

Financial concerns can be overwhelming during this difficult time and leave you feeling stressed and at times, powerless.

Through consultation with financial professional or use of the Online Financial Planning Service, you'll find the answers to your question along with the tools and resources you need to build a bright financial future.

\*This service does not provide advice about specific investment products, authorize loans or prepare tax returns.

### Financial Support during the crisis.

The Government of Canada and the GNB both announced measures to support Canadians who suffers job loss during the Covid-19 outbreak. New information on how to access these financial resources is shared with citizens on a regular basis. Please consult government sites for updated information on this subject.

**Please refer to page 14 for more information.**

Please note that all employees and managers can access support and guidance from our Employee and Family Assistance Program. Morneau Shepell can provide information and options on issues such as:

- Credit/debt management
- Budgeting
- Bankruptcy
- Financial aspects of separation/divorce
- Insurance
- Income tax planning
- Retirement planning

To access support, please call **Morneau Shepell at 1.844.880.9142.**





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## Eye Care

In this time of unusual uncertainty, some of us are working remotely and enjoying more screen entertainment, here are some simple tips and tricks to maintain optimal vision in the comfort of your home.

### 1 Your eyes are your best allies.

Overuse of electronic devices can result in eye fatigue, headaches, and sleep disorders. It is more important than ever to take care of your eyes if you want to continue to benefit from these devices while preserving your visual comfort.

### 2 Apply the 20-20-20 rule.

Do you work for hours in front of a screen – or have been binge-watching series on Netflix? Every 20 minutes take the time to look away for 20 seconds (at a minimum of 20 feet). A simple way to take care of our eyes and avoid eye fatigue.

### 3 Take care of your glasses to maintain optimal vision.

- Clean your lenses regularly using a microfiber cloth.
- In case of persistent stains, wash them with lukewarm water and mild soap and rinse them under clean water.
- Avoid paper and fabrics intended for other uses, such as paper towels, clothing, ties, etc. as these may scratch your lenses.

### 4 Do you wear progressive lenses and spend the day working remotely?

Lower your computer screen to view it without moving your head.

### 5 Have you heard of visual yoga?

Visit Essilor's Facebook page this week and discover specific exercises to relax your eyes... because we all need a bit of relaxation these days!

(Source: [Essilor](#))



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## Dealing with Stress, Anxiety, and How to Cope during a Pandemic

### Building resiliency in times of uncertainty

We are living in a complex world with change all around us. Naturally, this can make you feel uncertain or fearful about the present and future. The good news is that resiliency – the ability to thrive in times of change and uncertainty – is learned, and you can start building your resilience today. Use the tips below to take on a more flexible, resilient mindset.

### Manage your anxiety

While we all have our own personal response to a crisis, depending on our cultural, social and religious backgrounds, most of us will feel some level of anxiety during a pandemic. This can cause both physical and emotional reactions. To manage your anxiety and fear, try to put the potential threat or current events in context by keeping a broader, more hopeful perspective. You can “reframe” your thinking by focusing on your strength and resourcefulness. By seeing yourself as a survivor you can boost your confidence, accept the situation and focus on circumstances that you can control.

Also be watchful for physical affects of anxiety, such as trouble concentrating or difficulty sleeping. Concern about the pandemic may also intensify the effects of other stresses in our daily lives. This can impact your built-in physical stress response, which may leave you more vulnerable to the flu as well as other health risks. It is therefore important to take care of yourself and build your resilience.

### What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to effectively cope with, recover from or adapt to challenging life situations. A person who is resilient is able to cope with crisis situations due to behaviours, thoughts and actions that they have learned and developed.

The steps to building resilience differ from person to person, based on culture, values, beliefs and inter-personal relationships. However, some common resilience-building factors include having:

- a positive view of your strengths and abilities
- the capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out
- the ability to manage strong feelings and impulses
- a sense of purpose and long-term focus
- a social support network

### What to do if you are stressed because of the news

If you're feeling nervous about the coronavirus, you're not alone. Being concerned and empathetic about this outbreak is normal. However, you may experience feelings of discomfort, impacting concentration, productivity and even disrupting sleep patterns. Do not hesitate to contact your EFAP by contacting the 24/7 toll free number (1.844.880.9142) or online at [www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com).



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## **Twelve Daily Tips to Deal with Stress and Anxiety during the pandemic**

### **1 Create a daily To-Do list and establish a routine**

Make sure there are small, achievable tasks for each day (e.g. make a To-Do list for the following day each night before bed) in addition to bigger, multi-day ones. Try to wake up and go to sleep, eat meals, and exercise around the same time each day.

### **2 Meditation / Breathing Exercises**

It doesn't have to be structured or with an app, and you don't need to have any previous experience with meditation. If you want to try a guided meditation, the Headspace app is offering free recordings for "weathering the storm" during this time.

### **3 Set a limit for media/news consumption and parameter on the time of day you'll allow yourself to check in**

It's good to be informed, but checking the news too frequently isn't helpful.

### **4 EXERCISE**

If you're able to be outside, then do that (remember to practice social distancing). If you have to be inside, then there are SO many athletes and resources sharing at-home workouts that you can do with minimal to no equipment.

### **5 Once per day, give yourself a Reality Check**

Remind yourself of the facts of the immediate situation and acknowledge where you're extrapolating and/or catastrophizing.

### **6 Put your work away after normal working hours (as much as you can)**

Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you should always work. Set boundaries for yourself.

### **7 Virtually connect with your family and friends.**

Use FaceTime, Skype, etc. and get the social interaction that you're missing with physical distancing. You can even use these platforms to do yoga or eat a meal together.

### **8 Learn a new skill.**

This is really mentally engaging and gives us a big dopamine hit - new skills generally yield a lot of improvement very quickly, so you get a big sense of reward. Plus, it gives you something to focus on and direct your energy to.



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### **9 Eat as well as you can.**

Nutrition is definitely correlated with mental health, and though it is arguably more challenging to eat well when we're going to the grocery store less (or not at all) and relying more on pantry staples, it is possible. Lots of great bloggers are sharing adapted, pantry-friendly recipes (try The Minimalist Baker).

### **10 Plan something for the future.**

Give yourself a carrot to chase - like a vacation or outdoor project. Having something to look forward to helps immensely with motivation. Make the general plan and think about how you'll put it into action when the world returns to normal.

### **11 Practice an Attitude of Gratitude.**

When at all possible, think about the things that you CAN still do, and the life amenities that you still have available to you. Can you walk outside? Consciously be grateful for that. Start a gratitude journal.

### **12 Do your part to self-isolate/socially distance and give yourself a pat on the back for benefitting society.**

Feeling like part of a team and honoring your responsibility to society as a whole gives you a big sense of accomplishment. Consciously acknowledge that you're doing the right thing and take pride in the care you're showing your fellow humans.

(Source: [Haley Hunter Smith Canadian Cycling National Team](#))



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## Resources

### Mental Health Resources National, Provincial Crisis lines:

#### National Crisis Hotlines

- Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
- Crisis Services Canada 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645
- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line 1-855-242-3310
- Canada Drug Rehab Addiction Services Directory 1-877-746-1963
- National Eating Disorder Information Centre 1-866-633-4220

#### New-Brunswick Crisis Hotlines

- Chimo Helpline 1-800-667-5005

#### National Resources for Information about Mental Illness

- Bell Let's Talk (online material)
- Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (not a crisis line) 613-702-4446
- Canadian Mental Health Association 416-646-5557
- Canadian Psychological Association 1-888-472-0657
- Mood Disorders Society of Canada 613-921-5565
- Schizophrenia Society of Canada 1-800-263-5545
- Mental Health Commission 613-683-3755

#### New-Brunswick Resources

- Canadian Mental Health Association - New Brunswick Division 506-455-5231
- College of Psychologists of N.B. - Find a Psychologist 506-382-1994

#### NB Nursing Homes Resources

- Morneau Shepell Employee and Family Assistance Program 1.844.880.9142 (9143 en français)
- Morneau Shepell Employee and Family Assistance Program online:  
[www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com)

Prevention and counseling services are available to nursing home employees and their immediate family members. Services are accessible 24/7 by phone or online.





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## Tools (Webinars, Infographics, and Other)

### Complimentary Webinars- Morneau Shepell

Morneau Shepell have recorded several short webinars that tackle a number of topics related to the COVID-19 outbreak. You can find these videos by clicking on their names below to be taken directly to them. Feel free to view and share these with any of your coworkers or employees that may be looking for support or answers.

- [How to support your employees during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus \(About COVID-19\)](#)
- [Talking to your Child about COVID-19](#)
- [Emotional Well-being during COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Introduction to working remotely](#)

### Video

- [Tips for managing COVID-19 Anxiety](#)
  - (Source : Mental Health Commission of Canada)

### Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

- [Mental Health Resources](#)
  - (Source: Public Health)

## Infographics

### 1 Handwashing

- [Click here](#) to access an infographic on handwashing
  - Source: LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell
- [Click here](#) to access an infographic on handwashing (step-by-step)
  - Source: PHAC
- [Click here](#) to access an infographic on How to use hand sanitizer
  - Source: GNB

### 2 The Concept of Social (Physical) Distancing

Click on the information below to access two infographics on Social (Physical) Distancing.

- [What does Social Distancing mean?](#) (Source: PHAC)
- [How to Practice Social Distancing](#) (Source: LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell)

### 3 Financial Wellness

There is a wealth of information about existing assistance programs available through the federal and provincial governments. Please consult the government sites and the reference guide below for more information. Please note that new information is continually being updated.

- [Federal Government – Employment Insurance](#)
- [Provincial Government](#)
- Reference guide: [Support for NB workers and students affected by COVID-19](#)



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## 4 GNB Self-Assessment Tool

Before calling 811 use this self-assessment tool to help determine whether you should be tested for COVID-19. You can complete this assessment for yourself or on behalf of someone else, if they are not able.

- [COVID-19 Launch Self-Assessment](#)

For health care workers and staff, a dedicated phone line has been set-up should they develop symptoms compatible with COVID-19: 1 (833) 475-0724.



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## Appendix

### Wellness Resources for Management and Staff during Covid-19

(May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### 1 Podcast Series

**Carrying On: Mental Health Strategies for COVID-19 with Dr. Bill Howatt** (The Conference Board of Canada). [Click here](#) to Listen to Dr. Bill Howatt's daily Podcasts on Covid-19 listed under Podcasts in the right column. You can also access Dr. Howatt's podcast on Spotify.

#### 2 Canadian Psychological Association

Canadians with COVID-19 depend on health providers. The well-being of our health providers is critical to them being able to do their jobs. The Canadian Psychological Association would like to help.

**The CPA has called on all registered psychology practitioners to consider donating some of their time to provide psychological services to front line health care providers who may be feeling stressed, overwhelmed or distressed by being on the front lines of this health crisis.**

**If you are a front-line health service provider, and would like to contact a psychologist, please refer to the list below.** It is a listing of psychologists who have volunteered to provide psychological services to front line health care providers.

[Click here](#) to view the listing of psychologists is organized into province and territory as well as languages spoken. It is important that you choose one who is on the list of the province or territory in which you are located. The psychologists on the listing have agreed to return calls for requests for service within 24 hours of their receipt and to provide services at no charge.

#### 3 WellCan by Morneau Shepell (new app)

Morneau Shepell is proud to announce WellCan, a unique partnership of leading Canadian community and corporate organizations coming together to support the mental health and well-being of all Canadians, in the spirit of public service, and in a time of need for all. **This is a free mental health resource hub available to everyone in Canada.**

[Click here](#) to download the WellCan App can be downloaded free of charge.

#### 4 Toolkit for individuals – various topic

The outbreak of COVID-19 can be stressful for people. We know that fear and anxiety can be overwhelming. [Click here](#) to get tips for coping with the ever-changing reality that we are facing.



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### 5 Well-being Wednesdays by LifeWorks (Live, every Wednesday at noon AST)

Staying true to their mission of improving lives, improving businesses, Lifeworks is excited to launch an innovative way to deliver on their promise to their clients, their people, and the community.

All you need to join us live for Well-being Wednesdays is to visit the LifeWorks Facebook page. [Facebook](#).

### 6 Maintaining your mental well-being if you are a health care worker during the COVID-19 pandemic

### 7 Crisis Response Training for Essential Workers

The Mental Health Commission of Canada has recently developed **three crisis response training programs for essential workers**. We know that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, essential workers may experience depression and heightened anxiety due to the stress on their own health, the health of their family and friends, and the future of their livelihoods. These programs are specifically designed to help provide individuals with the tools and knowledge to better understand their own mental health and the mental health of others.

There are three different courses available:

[Crisis Response training - Caring for Yourself](#) - Participants will be introduced to the Mental Health Continuum and the Big 4 Coping Strategies, to help learn how to better understand their own mental wellness, notice if they might be moving into unwell areas, use practical actions to help with stress, and know when to reach out to get professional help.

[Crisis Response training - Caring for your Team](#) - Participants will be introduced to the Mental Health Continuum, the Big 4 Coping Strategies, and Ad Hoc Incident Review to help learn how to better understand their own and their team's mental wellness, notice if they might be moving into unwell areas, use practical actions to help with stress, and know when to reach out to get professional help.

[Crisis Response Training - Caring for Others](#) - will focus on how to create a safe space to have conversations about mental health and/or substance use problems. This training will prepare participants to have conversations confidently about mental health during a crisis, with their family, friends, communities, and workplaces. Participants will also be taught the skills required to respond to a mental health crisis until professional help arrives.

**Registration for these courses will be on a first-come, first-serve basis and will be available at no-cost for essential workers as defined by the Government of Canada [here](#).**

- To register for Caring for Yourself or Caring for your Team, click [here](#).
- To register for Caring for Others, click [here](#).

**These courses are available for a limited time.**



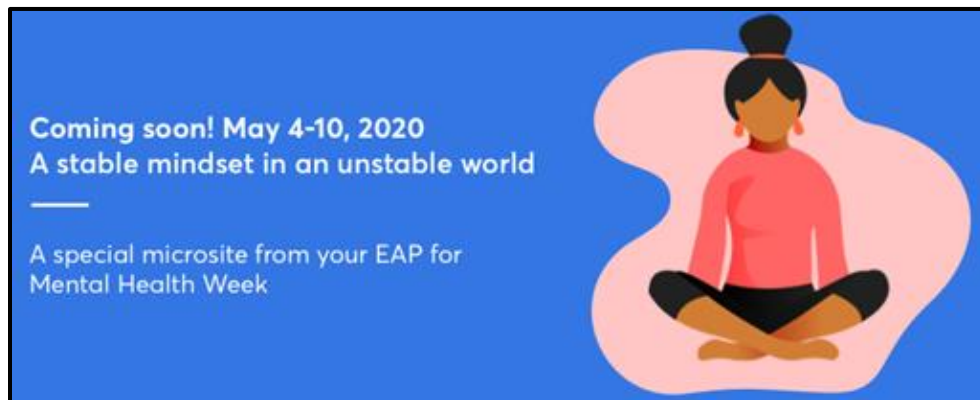
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\*Please note these courses should not serve as substitutes for The Working Mind (TWM), as they have been developed specifically for the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage all participants to complete TWM, once face-to-face courses resume. The NBANH will offer TWM training to the employers and employees when public health lifts the restrictions.

### 8 Mental Health Week (May 4-10, 2020)

May 4-10, 2020 is Mental Health Week in Canada. To help bring awareness to this important aspect of total well-being, Morneau Shepell by LifeWorks launching a new microsite – **A stable mindset in an unstable world.**



Through videos, infographics and articles, the microsite will explore:

- What is Headline Stress Disorder?
- How to protect your mental health while staying informed
- Real-life tips to manage anxiety
- And more!

The microsite is now live. To access it, go to: [www.workhealthlife.com](http://www.workhealthlife.com)