

# THE Accent

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

## Mental Health For All

### Mental Health Week

May 7-13, 2012

Mental Health Week is a designated week created by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to talk, reflect, engage and celebrate mental health for all. The theme of *Mental Health For All* represents the right of every Canadian to enjoy and have the best possible mental health. It's this attitude that represents ways in which all Canadians can actively protect and preserve their mental health at home, work and in their own community.



Maintaining our mental health means striking a balance in all aspects of your life: social, physical, spiritual, economic and mental. Reaching a balance is a learning process. At times, you may tip the scales too much in one direction and have to find your footing again.

Your personal balance will be unique, and your own individual challenge will be to stay mentally healthy by keeping that balance. *(Canadian Mental Health Association)*

*Wear yellow to raise awareness about mental health, May 7-13*

The Accent is an internal publication of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees. Comments, questions, concerns and suggestions should be sent to: Mark Barrett, PEI UPSE Communications and Campaigns Officer, at [mbarrett@peiupse.ca](mailto:mbarrett@peiupse.ca).

Note to members distributing The Accent:

Because the material contained in this publication is often of a time-sensitive nature, please post or distribute it as soon as possible.

*PEI UPSE is proud to represent over 5000 members in the public and private sectors.*

# Mental Fitness

Here are some ways to practice ...



## Learn ways to cope with negative thoughts

Negative thoughts can be insistent and loud. Learn to interrupt them. Don't try to block them (that never works), but don't let them take over. Try distracting yourself or comforting yourself, if you can't solve the problem right away.

## Exercise

Regular physical activity improves psychological well-being and can reduce depression and anxiety. Joining an exercise group or a gym can also reduce loneliness, since it connects you with a new set of people sharing a common goal.

## Do one thing at a time

For example, when you are out for a walk or spending time with friends, turn off your cell phone and stop making that mental "to do" list. Take in all the sights, sounds and smells you encounter.

## Share humour

Life often gets too serious, so when you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh, share it with someone you know. A little humour can go a long way to keeping us mentally fit!

## *Mental Health is Everyone's Concern*

- *Mental illness is the number one cause of disability in Canada costing companies nearly 14% of their net annual profits.*
- *Mental illness costs the Canadian economy a staggering \$51 billion a year, and each day 500,000 people will miss work due to mental health problems.*
- *Each year employers and insurers spend a whopping \$8.5 billion on long - term disability claims related to mental illness.*
- *The World Health Organization predicts that by the year 2020 depression will become the number two cause world-wide of years lost due to disability.*