



From time to time we all face challenges in our lives. If you are struggling with difficult feelings and you're not sure what to do, here are some things to remember.

1. You are not alone.

You may feel alone when you are dealing with something that is hard to talk about. You could be feeling nervous, afraid, angry, or hurt. You are not alone in feeling this way.

Did you know that 1 in 5 people in Canada struggle with some kind of mental health challenge?ⁱ That means that if there are 30 students in your class at school, 6 of you might be struggling with something that is hard to talk about.

Did you also know that many celebrities also live with mental health challenges? Singer Demi Lovato recently opened up about living with an eating disorder and bipolar disorder; David Beckham, a famous soccer player, lives with obsessive compulsive disorder; and J.K. Rowling, the author of the *Harry Potter* series has struggled with depression.ⁱⁱ

Many people just like you are facing similar difficulties, and with help from others they are able to live happy and successful lives.

2. It's never too early – or too late – to ask for help.

As soon as you feel like something is different, it's important to ask for help. You could be feeling nervous, having trouble with friends or family, feeling angry or hurt, and you may not know why. You don't need to know why you feel a certain way, but the sooner you ask for help, the sooner you will start to feel like yourself again.

3. Your mental health is as important as your physical health.

When you fall down and scrape your knee, some disinfectant and a Band-Aid will help you feel better, but if you break your arm, you will need to ask a doctor for help or your arm won't heal properly.

Asking for help with your mental health works the same way. Sometimes you will have worries that go away after talking to a friend or your parents about it. Other times, talking to a friend won't help you feel better. You might feel worried all the time, think about hurting yourself, or feel out of control. These are examples of more serious mental health concerns and, much like the broken bone, you will need help from a trained professional to help you feel better. We have listed some phone numbers you can call for help at the end of this blog.

4. Don't take on other people's worries.

It's important to take care of ourselves when we are going through something difficult, and sometimes that means setting emotional boundaries. That means not adding other people's worries onto our own.

Caring about other people is important, but it can be hard to help ourselves when we have used up all our energy helping others. It isn't your job to take on the worries of your parents, siblings or friends.



Take care of yourself by spending time on activities that make you feel good, like listening to music, playing outside, talking to friends or working on a favourite hobby. Practicing self-care can help you feel better about the challenges you're facing in life.

5. Talking to an adult you trust can help.

Think of your mental health as a journey that is better taken with others alongside you. Talking to an adult you trust about your difficulties can help you feel safe, supported and cared for. A trusted adult could be a parent, a friend's parent, an older sibling, a teacher, or another adult who knows you well.

If you don't feel comfortable sharing your concerns with an adult you know, you have other options:

- You can call a Kids Help Phone counsellor for free at **1-800-668-6868** or chat with a counsellor online at www.kidshelpphone.ca.
- You can visit a Tangerine Walk-In Counselling location in Mississauga or Brampton – hours and locations are listed online at www.tangerinewalkin.com.
- If you are over the age of 12, you can call Mental Health Services for Children & Youth (Centralized Intake) at **905-451-4655** to ask for an appointment with a counsellor, and you don't need permission from your parents to do this.
- If you are under 18 and need help right away, you can call Peel Children's Centre's Crisis Response Service at **416-410-8615** any time of the day or night.
- If you are over 18 and need help right away, you can call CMHA Peel's Crisis Response Service at **905-278-9036** any time of the day or night.
- All of these services are free and confidential.

Remember, your feelings matter, and help is available. Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for help.

ⁱ Mental Illness & Addictions: Facts & Statistics (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health website)

ⁱⁱ 15 Celebs Who are Shutting Down Stigma About Mental Illness (MTV.com)