



How Can You Improve Your Emotional Health?

Everyone knows that in order to lead a long and happy life, you need to live a healthy lifestyle that involves staying active, eating healthy food and cutting back on drinking or smoking. What people often overlook is that men's emotional health is just as important to their well-being as regular exercise and a balanced diet.

What is Emotional Health?

Emotional health is how you feel and see yourself around others, the way you manage your relationships with other people and how you deal with difficult situations today and from your past. Many people may think that being emotionally healthy simply means feeling good or positive all of the time. In fact being emotionally healthy is accepting and respecting emotions you experience and expressing feelings such as sadness, anger, or happiness in an acceptable way. Your ability to deal with these emotions when situations occur can be a sign of your emotional well-being.

Men who are emotionally healthy:

- can cope and express their emotions in a positive way
- overcome and deal with difficult emotional challenges now and from your past
- have a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives
- have a good balance of work and home life
- can build and maintain healthy relationships.

How to Deal with Current Emotions and Emotions from the Past

Some men have lived difficult lives, experiencing situations such as: being in residential school, the suicide of a loved one or being a victim of sexual abuse. Talking about your life story and important events that have occurred in your life to other men often reveals that you are not alone. You will often find many other men have experienced the same situations

in their lives. Identifying the root cause of your emotion is an important step in achieving emotional health, whether you are going through a divorce or you have experienced a death in your family from suicide or a boating accident.

A few ways you can start to improve your own emotional health:

- express your emotions in a positive way to those around you
- talk about your life story and important moments in your past to other men you are close to
- stay productive and creative to make yourself feel satisfied with your own work (go camping, fishing or hunting)
- attend men's groups in your community or start your own
- talk with an elder about strong emotions you may have
- stay active – physical exercise can help your emotional health.

— continues



“We need the opportunity, more chances, to share and say what is on our mind. Not just through research, but through men’s groups; this would be better and it would help us too.”¹



When to Get Help?

Take a look at the questions below. If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, then you may want to talk to a counsellor.²

- Do you feel angry, annoyed or out of control a lot of the time?
- Do you feel really anxious, worried or guilty?
- Have you experienced some major changes or problems at home, school or work?
- Do you have problems sleeping or eating either too much or not enough?

- Do you find it hard to talk to your family or close friends?
- Do you drink to get drunk in order to avoid your feelings?

If you think you need help dealing with your emotions, most health and social services departments in Inuit communities can provide counselling or help find the right

person to help you. Sometimes you can talk with the school counsellor, visit a nearby church to talk to the pastor or priest, talk with an elder you are comfortable with, or approach the elder’s council in your community. If there are no immediate services available for counselling, you can contact any of these organizations for help.

¹ Inuit Tuttarvingat. (2008). *Inuit Men Talking About Health*. National Aboriginal Health Organization. Page 30.

² These questions are published on the Young Men’s Health site, www.youngmenshealthsite.org/counseling.html.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Mamisarvik Trauma and Addictions Centre, located in Ottawa
Phone 613-563-3546 and ask to speak to a counsellor

Nuluaq Project, National Inuit Strategy for Abuse Prevention has a Web site which lists counselling services in all Inuit regions by community, www.pauktuutit.ca/nuluaq/service.asp?id=1003

Qajaq Men’s Network

Offers counselling services for men in Nunavik
Phone: 819-964-0770

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Inuit Tuttarvingat



1-877-602-4445
inuit@naho.ca
www.naho.ca/inuit/e/resources/

OTHER RESOURCES:

Inuit elders have many skills to cope with and overcome hard times. Their thoughts have been published in these Inuit Tuttarvingat publications:

Inuit Men Talking About Health
Suicide Prevention: Inuit Traditional Skills that Encouraged Resilience and Coping
Resilience: Overcoming Challenges and Moving on Positively

There are many positive programs that are helping Inuit men. You can watch videos about some of these programs and hear about Inuit men’s wellness in our TV show, *How are we as men?* You can watch it on www.inuitwellness.ca.