



The Wellness Hub's **Wellness Day**

**A guide for planning
a Wellness Day in
congregate settings**



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Why Plan a Wellness Day?



The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected long-term care homes and retirement homes (LTCHs & RHs) in Canada, which has put a great deal of stress on staff and their work environments.¹ The mental health, wellness, and occupational health of LTCH/RH staff were existing challenges that have intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.²

As the pandemic continues, LTCH/RH staff well-being is extremely important.² LTCHs/RHs participating in the Wellness Hub Research and Support Program are reporting severe staff burnout, challenges around moral injury, and psychological distress from prolonged exposure to stressors such as²:

1. the fear of contracting and transmitting the virus to co-workers, residents, and loved ones;
2. significant workload increases and understaffing;
3. inadequate protection from workplace risks; and
4. a sense of uncertainty due to constant changes in directives and perceived breaks in communication between the leadership team and frontline staff.

The *Wellness Day Guide* was developed in response to the above challenges to support LTCHs/RHs with planning a Wellness Day. The objective of a Wellness Day is to promote staff well-being through onsite and virtual facilitation, and provide access to evidence-based mental health resources tailored to the needs and settings of a particular site.

Planning Your Wellness Day

1. Choose a Date

- Select a date to hold your Wellness Day

TIPS:

- Align the date of your Wellness Day with an existing event
- Give your staff at least one month to prepare for your Wellness Day

2. Select a Location

- Please consider an area where people can sit comfortably while maintaining current IPAC protocols

NOTE:

Consider decreasing attendance numbers or leading multiple sessions in different rooms to maintain IPAC protocols.

3. Recruit Staff Support and Assign Tasks

- Identify qualified staff to assign Wellness Day tasks
 - e.g., Wellness Committee, Program Coordinator, Employee Engagement Specialist, Floor Leader, etc.

TIPS:

- Plan ahead to complete tasks at least a week prior to the Wellness Day

4. Select a Wellness Day Activity

- Select a Wellness Day activity based on the needs of your staff
 - Use the *Wellness Day Activities* on [page 8](#) to select an activity, and for more information about each wellness day activity see [pages 8-11](#).
 - Please consider asking staff which type of activity they would like to participate in during the Wellness Day during Huddle Meetings or distributing the *Wellness Hub Survey* ([pg. 14](#))

NOTE:

Each activity should be tailored to staff interest and suitable for the location of your home.

If your home needs further support, please reach out to the Wellness Hub team: wellnesshub@unityhealth.to

5. Select Additional Wellness Day Activities (optional)

- Select additional activities from the *Wellness Day Activities* list ([pg.8](#)) if your home plans to implement multiple activities in one day or several Wellness Days.

NOTE:

Consider different levels of ability/mobility to ensure activities are accessible.

6. Contact the Wellness Hub Team (optional)

- Contact the Wellness Hub Team (wellnesshub@unityhealth.to) or your assigned Facilitator to get additional Wellness Day information and guidance.

7. Identify Wellness Day Resources & Supplies

- Identify resources needed for your selected wellness activity (or activities).
 - e.g., chairs, water bottles, pen, paper, paint, space, etc.

8. Distribute a Sign-up Sheet to Staff

- Distribute *Wellness Hub's Sign-up Sheet* ([pg.14](#)) to staff

9. Review and Print Resources (if applicable)

- Print relevant resources from the [Wellness Hub CARE+ Package](#) to distribute to staff.
- Alternatively, if you have printed CARE+ packages, you may choose to display them or hand them out during your Wellness Day.

10. Promote the Wellness Day Activity

- Some ideas include:
 - During huddles
 - Email communications
 - Newsletters
 - Bottom of paystubs

This is not an exhaustive list.

11. Prepare Beverages and Snacks for the Wellness Day (optional)

12. Plan Another Wellness Day that Focuses on a Different Wellness Topic (optional)

Wellness Day Agenda

Before your Wellness Day:

- ✓ Ask staff for their opinions/preferred Wellness Day activities
- ✓ Select Wellness Day activity (or activities)
- ✓ Plan your Wellness Day while considering IPAC protocols
- ✓ Reach out to the Wellness Hub team to get guidance on your selected Wellness Day activity
- ✓ Recruit support from staff at your home and assign roles
- ✓ Promote the Wellness Day activity
- ✓ Distribute the *Wellness Hub Activity Sign-up Sheet*
- ✓ Send reminders the week of and day before the Wellness Day to participants and support staff
- ✓ Ask supporting staff to come a half-hour before the event to set up the activity

On the Day of Your Wellness Day:

- ✓ Support staff assembles Wellness Day activity
 - Please follow IPAC protocols
- ✓ Welcome and introduce the Wellness Day
- ✓ Implement selected Wellness Day activity (or activities)
- ✓ Review resources with participants (if applicable)
- ✓ Provide take-home hardcopy resources to participants (e.g., printed CARE+ packages)

Wellness Day Activities

Peer Support

This activity encourages staff and leadership to plan **peer and/or leadership-led discussions** that facilitate **group wellness discussions**. Peer support session(s) give participants the opportunity to connect, share health education resources, and provide emotional and social support in the workplace.

Please see the *Wellness Hub Peer Support Toolkit* for support with this activity (see page 9 for discussion questions and prompt suggestions). If you have any questions or require assistance with this resource, please email the Wellness Hub (wellnesshub@unityhealth.to) or contact your assigned Facilitator (if applicable).

Wellness Self-Assessment

Various factors constitute ideal psychological well-being and determine mental fitness. Thus, the following self-assessment scales could help an individual understand their current stress and anxiety level, coping capacity, and the factors that contribute to optimal mental health.

NOTE:

The results from these assessments cannot be used as a replacement for professional advice or to confirm a diagnosis.

1. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) – Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale designed by CAMH can help you understand your current level of stress and how well you are coping.

<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/coping-with-stress-and-anxiety>



2. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) - Mental Health Meter

The Mental Health Meter by CMHA can help you understand the various factors that determine optimal mental health and mental fitness. Some of the factors assessed by this scale include the ability to enjoy life, resilience, balance, self-actualization, and flexibility.

<https://cmha.ca/find-info/mental-health/check-in-on-your-mental-health/mental-health-meter/>



Wellness Day Planning Presentation (presented by the Wellness Hub)

The Wellness Hub team may be able to provide support in a scheduled planning meeting with the LTCH/RH point person upon request. Our team can help kick-start a Wellness Day at your LTCH/RH site and is prepared to support Wellness Day planning focused on the following: staff wellness, burnout, moral injury/low morale, mindfulness, grief and bereavement, mental health, and wellness support resources provided through the *Wellness Hub CARE+ Package*.

To review this resource, please click this link: <https://wellness-hub.ca/res/care-package/>

Resource Sign-up

This activity entails giving interested staff the opportunity to independently explore Wellness resources by signing up for an assigned timeslot (e.g., 30 minutes) within their workday.

Some wellness resources could include:

- The *Wellness Hub Care+ Package*
- Individuals using a laptop in a quiet room to use online wellness resources
- Assigning three specific wellness resources for individuals to review

A Moment for Staff Gratitude

Staff gratitude is essential for happy and healthy employees. Showing gratitude can improve employee mental health and well-being and can also boost work performance. It sets up positive energy in the workplace and can make team members feel valued and appreciated at work.





1. A Gratitude Wall

This activity allows staff to thank each other and feel like their efforts are being recognized and valued. It also gives them a moment to reflect on positive experiences at work.

What you will need:

- A bulletin board
- Small pieces of paper
- Pens or markers
- Thumbtacks

Step 1: Set up a bulletin board and label it “The Gratitude Wall.”

Step 2: Cut out small pieces of paper and have them available beside the gratitude wall.

Step 3: Beside the paper, also include a container with pens and markers.

Step 4: Have thumbtacks readily available on the bulletin board or alongside the paper and pens.

Step 5: Ask employees to post what they are thankful for at work on the bulletin board. These posts can be about the workplace, leadership, or other colleagues.

2. Gratitude Stones

This activity allows staff to remember things in their life that they are thankful for.

What you will need:

- Smooth and light-colored stones
- Markers

Step 1: Provide every staff member with 1-3 stones and a marker.

Step 2: Ask each employee to write something they are grateful for on each stone.

Step 3: Let employees keep their gratitude stones at their desks, in their lockers, or in their pockets. You can also keep a basket in a central location for all of the staff to place their gratitude stones in.



Customized Activities

Provide your team with customized activities that contribute to relaxing, having fun, and team building.

Other Ideas Include:

Art Session: Get artistic with colleagues by providing materials to create art pieces during a fun art session at your LTCH/RH. Staff could follow a YouTube video, paint a subject, follow a theme, follow a hired/volunteer artist, or follow an art therapist.

Book Club: Relax from the daily grind with a bi-weekly book club for employees to discuss literature, learn new topics, and foster relationships.

Bowling: Spend quality time with fellow employees by hosting an exciting bowling session at your local bowling alley.

Mindful Colouring: Relieve work stress by offering employees materials to escape into the world of creative and mindful adult colouring book pages.

Escape Room Challenge: As a group, staff try to escape a free virtual escape room together. Staff could also build their own 'trapped' room to escape from – you can find some ideas here.

Laugh Therapy: Ask a laugh therapist to help increase giggles and reduce stress in the workplace using humour therapy.

Meditation: Use guided meditation resources to host group meditation sessions that encourage employees to practice mindfulness and connect with others.

Show and Tell: Show and Tell at work gives staff the opportunity to learn more about each other by sharing pictures and personal stories.

Trivia Game: Ask questions about staff's favourite topics and about the history of the LTCH/RH.

Yoga: Use yoga resources to host yoga sessions that focus on improving breathing, flexibility, and well-being.

Scavenger Hunt: Leadership creates a list of specific and significant items for staff to find within the home. The first staff member to find all items wins.

Appendices

The supplementary resources include:

- Wellness Day Survey ([Page 13](#))
- Wellness Day Agenda & Activity Sign-Up Sheet ([Page 14](#))

Wellness Day Survey

**1. What topic(s) would you like to discuss during the upcoming Wellness Day?
(Please select all that apply)**

Burnout

Resilience

Mindfulness to reduce stress

PTSD

Anxiety

Depression

Grief and Bereavement

2. What activities listed below would you prefer to do in an upcoming Wellness Day? (Please select all that apply)

Group Wellness Discussion (a guided conversation)

Wellness Self-Assessment

Time to spend utilizing Wellness resources

A Gratitude Exercise

A group activity

Other (please specify in the space provided): _____

Please contact the Wellness Hub Team at wellnesshub@unityhealth.to if you would like an online copy of this survey.

[Site Name] Wellness Day Agenda & Activity Sign-up Sheet

Date:

Time:

Location: [Home Name] [Room/Space: if applicable]

Wellness Day Agenda

[Time] Activity

[Time] Activity

[Time] Activity

[Time] Activity

[Time] Activity

[Time] Activity

Activity Sign-up sheet

Activity Name	Description	Staff Name and Last Name
[Activity Name]	[Description]	
[Activity Name]	[Description]	
[Activity Name]	[Description]	
[Activity Name]	[Description]	

References

1. Canadian Institute for Health Information. The Impact of COVID-19 on Long-term Care in Canada: Focus on the First 6 Months, Published 2021. Accessed 20 December 2021. Available from: <https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/impact-covid-19-long-term-care-canada-first-6-months-report-en.pdf>
2. Supporting Long-Term Care Home (LTCH) and Retirement Home (RH) stakeholders through implementing and evaluating resources to promote vaccine confidence (Vaccine+) and wellness (CARE+). MOL and CIRN REB Protocol. 2021 Oct 4; 2:1–13.