

## iCBT and Mental Health: Taking care of the mind so it can take care of everything else.

Mental health illnesses are quickly becoming a big concern in Canada's workplaces.

- One in five Canadians per year will experience a mental health problem or illness.
- Depression and anxiety are the most common concerns, making up about a quarter of new long-term disability claims.
- Earlier interventions can help prevent some of the large costs, giving employees the tools to help themselves.
- Programs and therapists remain out of reach for most Canadians with mental health concerns, due to cost, lack of availability or stigma.

CBT, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is a method used by counsellors and psychologists to teach people how to deal with triggers that cause anxiety, depression, and even insomnia. It works by helping you understand and change the thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are causing you problems.

iCBT is a new digital form of CBT, that you can access through your mobile device. It allows you to digitally work with a therapist to teach you the skills needed to change your responses to triggers. It also helps you to develop strategies to manage and reduce your anxiety.

- AbilitiCBT is an online program that has 10 modules that you work through at your own pace. Before you have access to the modules, you chat with a therapist by phone or video chat, and they monitor your progress through the modules, answering questions and helping you through the program. You have a full year to access the program online once you start. There is even a program that is geared towards COVID-related anxiety.
- ALAViDA is an alcohol and substance use solution that helps you toward a healthier life where substance use is no longer an issue. Traditional substance abuse treatment is very expensive and the programs that are sponsored are very limited in terms of space and waitlists. With ALAViDA, treatment is available right away, at a reasonable cost. iCBT modules and access to a therapist are focused on guidance and strategies developed by addiction therapists to start changing behaviour around substance use.
- MindBeacon is a guided program that is meant to help you build resilience to improve your mood, including symptoms related to depression, anxiety and PTSD. After a personal assessment, your therapist will customize a care path for you at your convenience. The program typically takes 6-10 weeks, and you have digital access to your therapist.

For all these programs, confidentiality is key and employee information will be kept private. Some iCBT programs are covered through the paramedical coverage of your benefit plan. Check with your plan to see if iCBT is covered for you.