

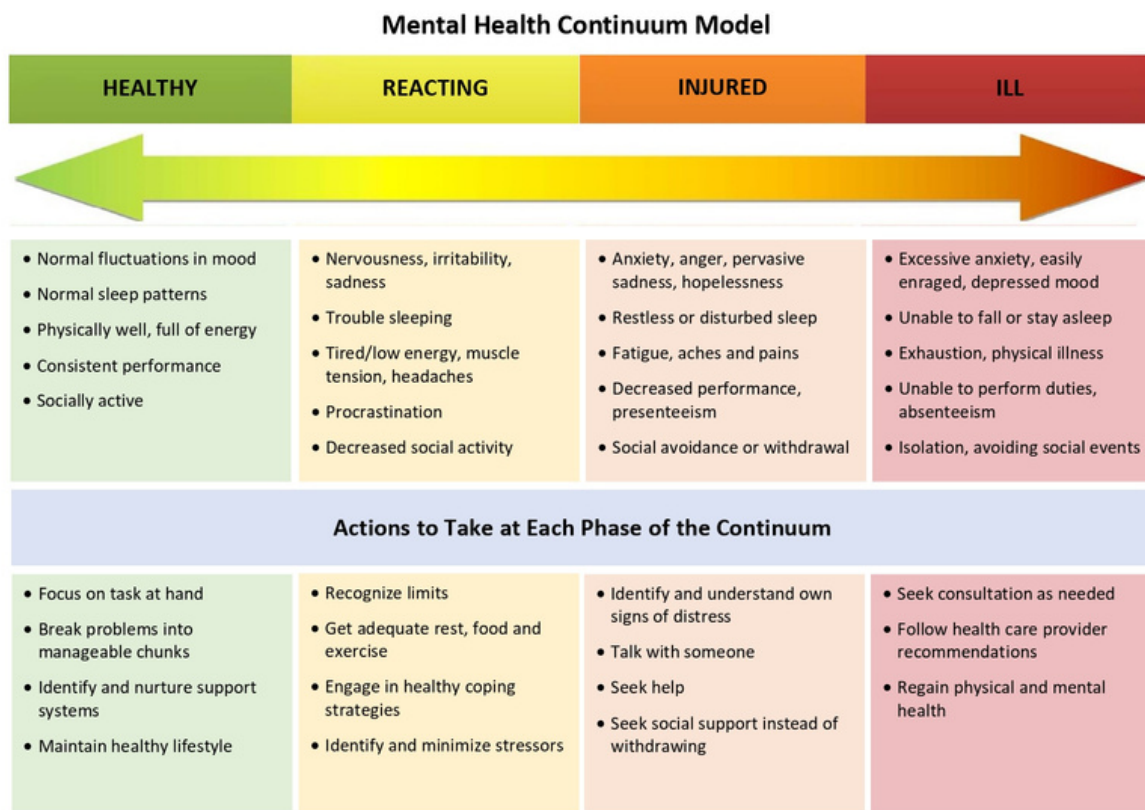
The Mental Health Continuum Model

One of the reasons leaders and employees don't talk about mental health and well-being is because they don't have the appropriate language.

The Mental Health Continuum provides an easy way for laypeople to talk about their state of mental well-being.

Mental health is not a fixed state, nor is it an on or off state. It is fluid, and we slip up and down the continuum depending on the things going on around and inside us. One does not need to be clinically ill to be hurt. A non-clinical concept called **Operational Stress Injury*** describes how our brains can be injured.

Four key factors contribute to stress injuries: **trauma, fatigue, grief, and moral conflict**. The aggregated effect of these factors - both at home and at work - determines how well we can perform.



Adapted from the Department of National Defence

***Note:** MHI founder, Stéphane Grenier, was instrumental in changing the mental health culture in the Canadian Armed Forces. After coining the term **"Operational Stress Injury"** to allow the military to see mental injury in the same light as a physical wound, he founded the Operational Stress Injury Social Support program that provides help for mentally injured soldiers and veterans.

The Mental Health Continuum Model

The colours on the continuum provide a simple way of naming what you are feeling or observing without using clinical language. This approach helps reduce stigma and makes people more comfortable and confident sharing what is going on with them.

Important Questions to Ask Yourself

What does it look like when you are stressed?

Where would those reactions fit on the continuum?

What usually precedes those responses?

Have you observed any of these behaviours in your team members?

Remember to take actions associated with the colour you find yourself in as a way to help you move back to a healthy (green) state of mental health.