



Reducing Stress while in Hospital

Many people are at CAMH because they are having a hard time with difficult thoughts, feelings and experiences. Being in the hospital can feel stressful and unfamiliar. Readmission to the hospital can also be upsetting.

The CAMH care team is here to make you feel more comfortable during your stay. Together, you can come up with ideas to help you feel more grounded and less affected by stress.

This pamphlet will tell you what tools and resources are available.

Your care team

Your care team includes a group of health care professionals to support your physical, mental and social well-being during your stay. The care team helps with medication management, explaining your illness, preparing for discharge (leaving the hospital) and gives you tools, resources and strategies to feel more resilient.

Your care team may include:

- behavioural therapists
- nurses
- occupational therapists
- peer support workers
- physicians
- pharmacists
- program assistants
- psychiatrists
- recreational therapists
- social workers

Some clinical areas may have different people on their teams. You can ask who will be responsible during admission.

Questions for your care team

Your care team is there to answer any questions you have about your stay.

Here are some possible questions you can ask:

1. What is my legal status?
2. Who is involved in my care team?
3. What are my rights?
4. What medications am I taking, why am I taking them and what are the side effects?
5. What kind of groups or activities can I join?
6. What items are available if I feel overstimulated or agitated (e.g., ear plugs, fidgets, weighted blankets)?
7. How can my support network be more involved?
8. What are my options when I am discharged?

Your care team's role in your comfort

Here are things that the CAMH clinical team will do to help you feel more comfortable:

- Provide you with a unit tour.
- Ask you how you feel about being on the unit.
- Explain the unit, rules, routines and schedule.
- Discuss your care plan with you and involve you in making changes and updates.
- Ask you questions about your support network and who you want involved.
- Provide you with community resources as well as CAMH-related resources.
- Invite you to attend groups, activities and communal spaces on the unit and throughout the hospital, such as the Therapeutic Neighborhood, Sunshine Garden, Gifts of Light and the Patient and Family Learning Space (PFLS).
- Support you with discharge planning and goals.

Some people smoke when they are feeling stressed. CAMH is tobacco-free, so if you smoke, you can ask your care team about nicotine replacement therapy.

Off-site activities

While at CAMH, you may need to find alternatives to some of the stress-reducing activities you rely on if they are not available:

- Activities off the unit will require patients to have passes, which may not be possible for all patients due to legal status and safety concerns.
- You are encouraged to speak with your care team to understand your pass level. If you have a pass to leave the unit, ask your care team about what activities and options you have.
- If you do not have a pass to leave the unit, talk with your care team about similar activities that are possible on the unit.

The Safety and Comfort Plan

Your care team will work with you to develop a plan for dealing with unwelcome and/or uncomfortable situations. This plan will be recorded in your file as the Safety and Comfort Plan and will be completed with you.

To develop this plan, your care team will ask you questions about how you feel and what you need when stressed:

- What can cause you to feel stressed?
- What do you think, feel and do when the situation is difficult to manage?
- How can your care team support you?
- Who should be involved in your care from your support network?
- What are the different ways you handle stress?
- What helps you manage and reduce stress?
- What are some challenges from past health care experiences or worries and concerns that you may have?

Finding ways to manage stress

What are some strategies you enjoy?

- Reading a book or magazine (PFLS Book Cart, Unit books or bring your own book)
- Deep breathing, meditation or yoga
- Drinking a glass of water slowly
- Writing a story, journal or a letter
- Exercising (unit exercise room, CAMH gym)
- Getting fresh air
- Listening to music
- Participating in art activities
- Talking to a family member, friend, those around you or someone else in your support network
- Attending a group or an activity on the unit
- Learning a new skill or coping strategy
- Using a fidget toy or ear plugs

More tools available to support your comfort

In addition to the Safety and Comfort Plan, more tools are available on the unit to support your comfort and reduce stress:

- **Wellness cart and supplies:** Items of wellness are available to support patients during their stay in hospital (e.g., yoga mats, weighted blankets, stress balls, tactile stress toys, books, art supplies, puzzles, self-care and beauty items). Items may vary unit by unit.
- **Care plan:** Your care plan supports your admission, time in hospital and discharge. Your care team will create this plan and share it with you so that you have all the information you need about your stay.
- **This Is Me assessment:** This assessment allows you to share your perspective on your support networks and what is important to you. To create this, you will fill out answers to questions like:
 - What makes me feel safe?
 - What triggers make me feel less in control?
 - What does it look like when I am in distress?
 - What can others do to help?
 - What activities/coping strategies can I try to calm myself?

Feeling more at ease in hospital

Staying at the hospital can feel stressful and unfamiliar. If there are other ways that help you manage stress, please let your care team know. They will help you access those stress management or coping strategies as long as it's safe and supported by the unit policies and protocols.

Your CAMH care team are here to support you and make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Helpful resources

Looking for more information about what is available to help you manage your stress?

Select the link or use the QR code for a list of supports and resources.



<https://linktr.ee/camhpfls>

Resources

For **Access CAMH services**, call 416 535-8501, option 2.
<https://www.camh.ca/en/patients-and-families/access-camh>

Collaborative Learning College

Peer support, mindfulness and many other free courses
<https://clc.camh.ca>

Community Resource Sheets | CAMH

Information about services offered at CAMH and in the community to address various conditions and support needs
<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/guides-and-publications/community-resource-sheets>

Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) Program | CAMH

Free service for adults (18 years and older) dealing with depression, anxiety and related challenges
<https://www.camh.ca/en/patients-and-families/programs-and-services/ontario-structured-psychotherapy-osp-program>

RBC Patient and Family Learning Space

Health information, navigation support and free psychosocial programming
<https://www.camh.ca/en/pfls>

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If you have questions or feedback about services at CAMH, contact the Patient and Family Experience (PFE) Office:
 416 535-8501, ext. 32028; pfe@camh.ca

Family members can access the Family Resource Centre (FRC) and the RBC Patient and Family Learning Space (PFLS) for support, resources and help connecting to services.

1025 Queen St. W. (McCain Complex Care and Recovery Building)

FRC: 416 535-8501, ext. 32028; pfe@camh.ca

PFLS: 416 535-8501, ext. 33995; pfls@camh.ca;

www.camh.ca/pfls

To make a donation, please contact the CAMH Foundation:
 416 979-6909 foundation@camh.ca

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