



Creating community-based self-help strategies to improve mental health for all

## Before You Get Started: Getting the Most From the Bounce Back Program

Welcome to Bounce Back—a program designed to help adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood, or stress, with or without anxiety.

### What does the program involve?

Bounce Back offers two forms of help. The first is a DVD entitled *Living Life to the Full* which your family doctor has probably already given you. If you haven't seen the DVD, let your coach know because it is a great, easy-to-watch introduction to improving your quality of life. The second component of Bounce Back, the one you are about to start, we refer to as guided self-help. This involves introducing you to an established workbook-based program, developed in the UK, with telephone support from a local Bounce Back coach. The program is based on a five areas approach which addresses:

- Your life situation, problems, and difficulties
- Symptoms in the body
- Unhelpful thinking
- Altered feelings (moods or emotions)
- Altered behaviour and reduced activities

You and your Bounce Back coach can pick the workbooks that address your needs (such as sleep improvement or problem solving) and your coach will be contacting you several times over the coming weeks to help you get the most out of the materials.

### Who are the Bounce Back coaches and what do they do?

Have you ever started something—like a new project or a diet—and then found that you slowly lose your motivation for change? It really helps to have someone else to keep you on track. Because of this, we provide telephone coaching. Like a personal trainer at the gym, their role is to help you stay on track. Don't worry, they won't nag you—they are just there to assist you by explaining the self-help materials, offering suggestions, and working with you on problem areas.

Bounce Back coaches are individuals with excellent communication skills. They are not mental health clinicians but coaches who have been specially trained in the application of these specific program materials. They will arrange telephone appointments with you and mail you everything you will need. The materials are yours to keep.

### Am I still under the care of my family doctor?

Yes. Nothing changes in that regard. Bounce Back coaches are providing a service to you at the request of your doctor who maintains overall responsibility for your personal health care. Bounce Back coaches contact your doctor after the first telephone screening session and again when you have completed the program. The coach will communicate any changes in your mood and let your doctor know which books you completed.

### **How can I get the most from the Bounce Back materials?**

Don't just read the workbooks, but really try to work them into your day-to-day life. The workbooks are easy to read and offer a number of practical suggestions and exercises for you to try. Also, make some notes of the hints and tips your Bounce Back coach offers you in each session. The accompanying Session Summary Sheet provides a form for writing down things from each telephone session including when the next session will be. Finally, remember these are workbooks—and they require some work—but with the support of your coach, you'll find this easier than you think.

### **But what if I am struggling, feel stuck, or feel more depressed?**

Sometimes people find this approach isn't for them, or they feel worse, or other things going on in their lives interfere with working through the program. If so, please tell your coach, who may be able to find the motivation you need to continue. The program is a very effective one for helping people with mild or moderate levels of depression and anxiety. If your mood problems worsen and you feel very depressed, using the self-help workbooks alone won't be enough. If you are starting to feel like this, tell your Bounce Back coach. Using a mood rating scale, they will check with you at each contact about how you are doing and they may need to talk to your family doctor. They will also always ask you if you have thoughts of suicide.

We ask this of everyone so we can be sure to help people get the supports they need.

### **If you feel so bad you feel suicidal...**

Call your family doctor right away, call 1-800-SUICIDE, or 1-800-784-2433, or 911 or visit a hospital Emergency department.

### **When family and friends aren't really aware of what you are going through ...**

It is not uncommon to keep emotional issues bottled up inside. Often, we feel embarrassed or weak, even though anxiety and depression are extremely common experiences. One in eight Canadians will be affected by depression at some point in their lives. Approximately one-third of people living with a chronic physical condition or chronic pain will suffer depressed mood, and mood problems are very common among family caregivers. One of the course workbooks has been written for families and friends. It summarizes the key elements of the program and how to offer support. Ask your coach to send you this workbook if you think it could be useful in your circumstances. It can be helpful to have family and friends watch the DVD with you, or help you practice the skills in the workbooks.

### **What if I can't make a scheduled telephone appointment or need to contact my coach?**

Simply call your coach at 1-866-639-0522 and we'll reschedule.