

Guided CBT Program Coping with Chronic Conditions



WHAT ARE CHRONIC CONDITIONS?

The term “chronic conditions” refers to diseases, illnesses, and conditions that progress slowly or that are prevalent over a lifetime. They can be treated but, in most cases, cannot be cured.

Today, 3 out of 5 Canadians aged 20 and older are living with at least one chronic disease.¹ As the life expectancy of Canadians continues to rise, individuals are more likely to experience chronic conditions. Chronic conditions result in greater demands for health services, as well as productivity losses, workplace absenteeism and escalating costs to the Canadian economy.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Chronic conditions often have negative psychological and mental health impacts on individuals who live with them. For example, it is estimated that individuals living with chronic physical health conditions are twice as likely to experience depression and anxiety compared to the general population². In addition, depression and anxiety have been shown to lead to worse medical outcomes in people living with a chronic physical health condition.^{3,4}

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

MindBeacon’s Coping with Chronic Conditions program is an internet delivered treatment based on principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which has been shown to be an effective intervention for reducing psychological distress in people living with chronic health conditions.⁵

The Coping with Chronic Conditions program provides access over 12 weeks to our platform and includes information and reading materials as well as skills-based exercises. The entire program is completed under the guidance of a therapist who helps to tailor the material to each individual client’s needs, empowering them with a toolkit of skills to carry into the future. Clients continue to have unlimited access to the platform following completion of the program, allowing them to consistently review the readings and exercises on their own.

¹ <https://cagh-acsm.org/sites/default/files/resources/2016/10/elmslie.pdf>

² <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/the-relationship-between-mental-health-mental-illness-and-chronic-physical-conditions/>

³ Moussavi, S., Chatterji, S., Verdes, E., Tandon, A., Patel, V., & Ustun, B. (2007). Depression, chronic diseases, and decrements in health: results from the World Health Surveys. *The Lancet*, 370(9590), 851-858.

⁴ Roy-Byrne, P. P., Davidson, K. W., Kessler, R. C., Asmundson, G. J., Goodwin, R. D., Kubzansky, L., ... & Stein, M. B. (2008). Anxiety disorders and comorbid medical illness. *General hospital psychiatry*, 30(3), 208-225.

⁵ Beltman, M., Voshaar, R., & Speckens, A. (2010). Cognitive-behavioural therapy for depression in people with a somatic disease: Meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 197(1), 11-19. doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.109.064675



WHO SHOULD ENROLL?

Individuals over the age of 16 who are looking for help in coping with a chronic illness. This program is most suitable for those experiencing mild to moderate distress or impairment resulting from their chronic condition.

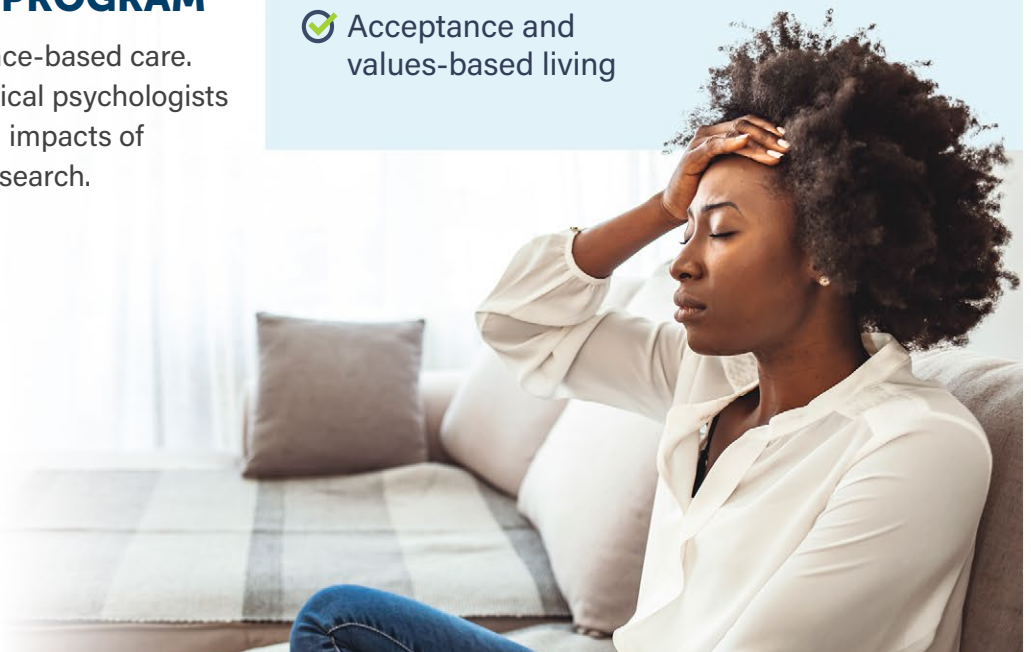
RESEARCH BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

MindBeacon is committed to evidence-based care. Our programs are developed by clinical psychologists with expertise in CBT, psychological impacts of chronic conditions, and empirical research.

COPING WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS PROGRAM TOOLKIT & MODULES

Topics covered in the coping with chronic conditions program include:

- ✔ Understanding chronic conditions
- ✔ Learning to manage common symptoms of chronic conditions (pain, fatigue and sleep difficulties)
- ✔ Understanding the impact of stress on chronic conditions
- ✔ Understanding the link between depression and anxiety and chronic conditions
- ✔ Stress management
- ✔ Behavioural activation
- ✔ Managing worry
- ✔ Challenging negative thoughts and developing more balanced thinking
- ✔ Communicating effectively with health care providers
- ✔ Mindfulness
- ✔ Acceptance and values-based living



YOUR MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is a Guided CBT Program?

CBT has been shown to be an effective intervention for reducing psychological distress in people living with chronic health conditions⁵. Importantly, research also supports the effectiveness of internet CBT as an alternative to face-to-face therapy for helping individuals with chronic conditions manage psychological distress.^{6,7}

With MindBeacon, individuals receive internet-CBT at their own pace and on their own schedule, with their dedicated therapist guiding them throughout. Our program content includes readings and exercises that have all been developed by clinical experts to help individuals develop the skills they need to thrive. Clients can access the program when and where it suits them and send messages to their therapist when something is on their mind.

How can this program help individuals living with chronic conditions?

The goal of this program is to help individuals live their best possible life despite their chronic health condition. MindBeacon does not provide treatment for the medical conditions themselves, but can help individuals develop strategies for self-management of their condition, and for coping with the impact of the condition on mood, anxiety, stress, and activity level.

What sorts of conditions are appropriate?

This program does not make reference to any particular condition. It provides education about self-management of chronic illnesses, coping with common symptoms (pain, fatigue, and sleep disturbance), stress management, dealing with negative emotions (i.e., anxiety or depression), and communication skills.

In general the program is best suited for individuals whose conditions are associated with mild to moderate impairment, have a chronic rather than acute course, and are being medically managed.

Thus, appropriate conditions may vary, but could include:

- ✔ Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- ✔ Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)/ Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- ✔ Diabetes
- ✔ Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
- ✔ Fibromyalgia
- ✔ Chronic fatigue
- ✔ Heart disease
- ✔ Hypertension
- ✔ Autoimmune disorders: Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

What sorts of conditions are not appropriate?

This program is not appropriate for individuals meeting the below criteria:

- ✔ Individuals who do not have the medical component of their condition managed (i.e., anyone who is not being followed by a physician for their health concern).
- ✔ Individuals living with illnesses that are terminal or have high risk of death, including but not limited to Alzheimer's Disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS aka Lou Gehrig's Disease), cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, dementia, emphysema, liver disease, renal or respiratory/pulmonary disease, and stroke.
- ✔ Individuals experiencing chronic pain as the dominant complaint; MindBeacon provides a specific program for coping with chronic pain.
- ✔ Individuals experiencing severe distress or impairment (i.e., at a level more appropriate for face-to-face therapy).

⁶ White, V., Linardon, J., Stone, J., Holmes-Truscott, E., Olive, L., Mikocka-Walus, A., . . . Speight, J. (2020). Online psychological interventions to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and general distress in those with chronic health conditions: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Psychological Medicine*, 1-26. doi:10.1017/S0033291720002251

⁷ Mehta, S., Peynenburg, V. A., & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2019). Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for chronic health conditions: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of behavioral medicine*, 42(2), 169-187. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-018-9984-x>