



NEWS RELEASE

On the occasion of National Mental Health Week

LIKE A MESSAGE ON OUR VOICE MAIL, FEELING YOUR EMOTIONS IS RECEIVING A MESSAGE

MONTREAL, May 4, 2020 - After several weeks of fighting the pandemic, the Mouvement Santé mentale Québec (MSMQ) suggests that Quebecers take a break and ask themselves how they feel today. Since it is estimated that 90% of our waking time is spent on feeling emotions, the Movement offers one of the 7 tips to build mental health: **Feel**. MSMQ puts forward the importance of recognizing our emotions, because they are neither good nor bad, but a signal, a message to lead us to respond to a need. This tip is essential to deal with a crisis like the one we are experiencing and its beneficial effects can be measurable on both physical (including cardiovascular) and mental health.

"While we are all sailing in the midst of a storm, taking the time to listen to the emotions that inhabit us is like following our inner compass in order to stay on course towards dry land," explains Renée Ouimet, director of the Mouvement Santé mentale Québec. *To feel is to welcome and identify your emotions in order to better orient yourself. It is also taking the time to cultivate positive emotions in order to take breaks from what stresses us, scares us, discourages us and makes us sad. For example, by giving meaning to what we live, by maintaining our bonds and enthusiasm during virtual meetings with friends and family.* "

David Goudreault, the spokesperson for MSMQ, even adds that *"Not listening to our emotions is like removing the battery from our indoor smoke alarm to stop the noise that bothers us, without checking if the fire has started in our house."*

The importance of positive emotions in times of upheaval

We have to remember that we are in daily contact with emotions - be it joy, affection, sadness, anger, shame, pride, fear, surprise ... What bothers us sometimes, it is not so much the emotions themselves as the physical and mental reactions that they trigger in us. Emotions can stimulate us, slow us down, tire us, cause us anxiety or even make us lose our mind! The challenge is to consider emotions as allies, to learn how to decipher them in order to allow us to respond adequately to the resulting need.

"In the current situation, it could be tempting to push the emotions we feel far away, but different research on resilience teaches us that accepting our emotions, not repressing or avoiding them and not to see them as signs of weakness, allow a certain appeasement and better healing following a traumatic event," explains Serge Lecours, professor at the faculty of arts and sciences of the department of psychology at the Université de Montréal. *Confronting events is one of the solutions to improve our mental health.* "

The more we learn to listen to and accept the messages generated by our emotions, the less they need to ring loudly to get our attention and the more the physical and mental reactions decrease.

Sometimes certain emotions are too big, too heavy, take up too much space. In this case, taking a break for a few hours to free our minds can give us the strength we need to cope better. In addition, research has also shown that positive emotions are an essential active ingredient for coping with a crisis and coming out of it stronger. Their beneficial effects are measurable on physical and mental health. We can cultivate them, for example gratitude for what is good in a day, the sense that solidarity can give, the happiness of tasting a good tea, the pride of trying a new way of doing things, relaxation during a walk, the joy of hearing from someone you love.

Our ability to recognize, express, understand and assess our own emotions and those of others can even help us function in the community. Together, we can take a step back, support and help each other.

Tools to build mental health

Recognizing our emotions allows us not only to be more attentive to ourselves but also to others, to function better in the community, to learn to listen instead of advising. It helps us to develop our compassion, to try to understand how the other person sees the world before reacting.

Too often we put in the background the fact of strengthening our mental health. Yet it promotes resilience and it helps us to recover more easily from the storms of life. The MSMQ and its member groups offer numerous tools on etrebiendanssatete.ca and a rich web programming from May 4 to 10 during Mental Health Week. You can consult this link to find the list of conferences offered:

www.mouvementsmq.ca/sites/default/files/lancement-ressentir_programme_vd.pdf.

On the occasion of National Mental Health Week, the MSMQ wants to know how you are doing and invites the entire population to respond to this blank sentence and share it on social media: **Today I feel ... I surely need to ... So I'm going to ...** It is possible to fill it with words, pictures, music, singing, or dancing.

About the Mouvement Santé mentale Québec

The Mouvement santé mentale Québec, regrouping 13 member community organizations, is an essential leader in the promotion and prevention of psychological well-being in Quebec. For thirty years, he acted as a partner for Quebec Mental Health Week as a representative of the Canadian Mental Health Association, until his disaffiliation from the latter in 2016. Today, it is during Mental Health Week that the Movement launches its annual Mental Health Promotion Campaign. It is supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, FIG, Défi Santé and the Healthy Business Group.

To learn more about MSMQ, visit mouvementsmq.ca and follow us on social media: Facebook (@mouvementsmq), Instagram (@mouvement_santementaleqc), Twitter (@mouvementsmq), YouTube (@MouvementSantementaleQuébec), the Movement Blog (mouvementsmq.ca/blogue), LinkedIn (@mouvement-sante-mental-quebec).

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