

SPONSOR CONTENT

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Online mental health resource launched to support the education community

As North America's largest educator-owned fraternal insurer, Teachers Life is uniquely positioned to support its members on one of the biggest health issues currently facing the profession: mental health.

On October 5, Teachers Life is launching ReadyforLife.ca, the only online mental health resource of its kind dedicated to the unique needs of educators across Canada.

"We have seen an increase in mental health-related insurance claims over the last number of years – this is more or less consistent with the industry – but because our core value is to serve the needs of our teachers and members across the country, we felt it was important to develop this resource," says Teachers Life president and CEO Mark Cummings.

He says ReadyforLife.ca includes input from leading mental health experts to educate Teachers Life members about the subject and provide useful information. The resource features content from the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ontario (CMHA Ontario) and Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO).

The not-for-profit organization's commitment to mental health awareness and education is long-term.

"ReadyforLife.ca will be updated on an ongoing basis as we go forward, so it's always fresh and relevant for our teachers and members across the country," adds Mr. Cummings. "They are on the front lines with our youth every day, so we feel it's important for them to have access to a resource like this."

He notes that their feedback and insights will also help shape the resource as it is continually tailored to meet the needs of Teachers Life members.

In addition to the value of the information on the site for the individual educator, the company also recognizes the important role educators play in the lives and well-being of students.

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Mark Cummings is Teachers Life president and CEO

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As part of its mandate, Teachers Life's commitment also extends outside the school grounds and into the community. One of Teachers Life's major partnerships is with CMHA Ontario and the Ontario Hockey League (OHL).

"We sponsor a program called Talk Today that provides mental health support and raises awareness throughout OHL communities," says Mr. Cummings. The program also includes public address and video announcements in the venues and further outreach through social media.

Teachers Life has also been involved in several other initiatives such as sponsoring CMHO's annual video



Teachers are uniquely placed to champion the mental health and wellness of youth. ISTOCK.COM

contest, Change the View. This project invites youth to share their experiences with mental health and well-being by making a short video aimed at removing the stigma around mental health issues.

These projects align with raising awareness and removing the negative perceptions that can be associated with mental illness, says Mr. Cummings.

"I think it has been buried in the past; people didn't feel comfortable raising it," he adds.

"One objective of ReadyforLife.ca is to erode stigma and take that negativity off the table and say, 'This is something we need to talk about.' We need to build awareness so people don't feel uncomfortable raising it and then, if they need help, provide the resources and the avenues for them to get the help and support they need,"

This content was produced by Randall Anthony Communications, in partnership with The Globe and Mail's advertising department. The Globe's editorial department was not involved in its creation.

says Mr. Cummings.

"It's a first step, and it's a sustained commitment. We really want to provide this support and assistance for our policy-holders and the entire Canadian education community – teachers dealing with their own situations and teachers dealing with situations

they encounter in the classroom with the children they teach on a day-to-day basis," says Mr. Cummings.

"Teachers have a tough job. We're proud of the work that they do each and every day, and anything we can do to assist them is something that we want to look at doing."

ABOUT

UNESCO initiative focuses on teachers' role

World Teachers' Day – held every year on October 5 – is a UNESCO initiative to focus on the issues that impact teachers around the world.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) is marking the day by highlighting the need for safe and caring schools.

The CTF, which represents more than 232,000 teachers across the country, chose the theme because of a growing concern expressed by its member organizations about violence in schools.

In a 2014 CTF national survey, 90.6 per cent of more than 5,000 teachers who responded indicated safe and caring schools as a major priority for the Federation's advocacy efforts during the 2015 federal election.

In June 2014 – the latest available numbers – Statistics Canada reported there were 756,900 teachers and professors in Canada. Of these, 68 per cent were women and the majority worked full-time.



A unique mental health resource for the education community.

- ✦ Understand your mental health
- ✦ Champion students' mental health
- ✦ Learn about mental health in the workplace

Together, we're ReadyForLife.ca

