

—A PART OF THE PPE FOR YOUR MIND™ SERIES—



# **PPE FOR YOUR MIND**

**FRONTLINER'S FIELD GUIDE**

**EDUCATIONAL EBOOK**

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## **BEFORE WE BEGIN**

If you're currently in serious mental distress, please immediately reach out to a healthcare professional for help. This book is an effective helping hand, but does not replace the direct care and interventions provided by mental health professionals who are specifically trained to help to alleviate acute mental distress.

# PPE FOR YOUR MIND FIELD GUIDE



**PART 1**  
**KNOWING WHEN  
YOU'RE NOT OKAY**

# Part 1: Knowing When You're Not Okay

This course is for you, our frontline health care professionals, first responders, and all other public safety personnel fighting for everyone at home.

Your mental wellness matters deeply to us, and it matters even more to those you help.

We know your state of mind is a critical part of staying effective and active on the job, at home, and in other parts of your life—that's why this course aims to help make your mental health healthier together.

It takes work. But the payoff is the ability to stay as strong as you've ever been facing unthinkable personal and professional sacrifices on the frontlines of a global outbreak.

Part of that work—is knowing when you're not okay. And that's okay.

Realizing this is not easy. We rely on our mind being healthy to function at our best, and sometimes thinking about our negative feelings can feel counter-productive.

But when we know when we're not okay, we learn better, understand better, and become better equipped to face whatever challenges may come our way. The healthy mind we nurture helps us deal with our emotions and feelings—especially when we struggle.

Taking time to care for both your physical health and your mental health can help minimize our fear, anxiety, and stress.

That's why PPE for your mind is so important

It helps us protect not only our mental health, but our physical health at the same time.

Remember, a healthier mind can lead us to a healthier body.

Part of knowing when your not okay is being able to separate your job from your life – your life is your life. While your work may come home with you, it's important you come home first to the ones you love, and who love you so very much.

Fear is a powerful force. Especially in a pandemic.

And a powerful force can only be overcome by an even greater power.

Know that a big part of the power you possess comes from embracing our emotional experiences, our fears, and our anxieties—no matter how painful.

Let your fears go unchecked and their power manifests itself in your life, potentially leaving a lasting negative impact.

Believe this—you are stronger than your fears.

Through connecting and talking to others who feel or have felt similar to how you feel, you will find a common thread—and that's fear of the unknown.

This can be at the core of many of our anxieties and stresses.

Fears many of us share.

Such as, will I get the virus?

Will I pass it on to my loved ones?

Will I get access to the proper protective gear and mental health tools I need?

Will life be the same after this?

Will we be okay?

Confronted with choices that are not easy to make – between protecting you and your family, doing your job, facing life-or-death decisions, can leave you feeling isolated.

That's why we talk about it. We're all in this together, doing the best we can with what we can.

For those of us with a tough exterior, misguided by the stigmas of strength, it can be hard to do.

Feeling emotions is not a sign of weakness.

It's part of our humanity.

Talk about your feelings just once and the benefits can be immediately worth it, helping to make your mental health healthier one small bit at a time.

Discussing our fears with likeminded people or professionals also allows us to shine a common light on our fears, anxieties, and worries—talking helps us take care of not only our minds, but our body as well.

It's OK to talk about your fears.

It's OK to talk about your challenges.

It's OK to be not okay.

By giving ourselves permission NOT to be okay, negative feelings lose a bit of their punch. We embrace our flaws and our struggles to figure out a way to overcome them.

Give yourself permission to be yourself.

It is important that we put perspective on what is happening around us, find meaning in what is going on, know that we are not alone, and try to not lose track of our purpose in life.

It's easy to let negative thoughts and feelings creep in during a pandemic of any kind, especially one on a global scale. Keeping a positive mindset can go a long way in managing through the difficult times.

Positivity helps us build resilience.

Resilience inside *you* helps your mind accept what you are dealing with, regardless of how difficult the situation. It helps you rise above challenges and not stop until seeing solutions through.

Resilience helps stoke our courage and perseverance to fight back and never give up. It's what will allow you to survive and thrive.

We recognize the hardships you face. The fear simply going to work brings you. We understand the anxiety of the unknown and truly appreciate your courage, sacrifice and commitment.

Know this—you can get through these times intact—and through each part of this book we'll give you the education and important tools and strategies you need to do so.

It's our goal to help you maintain a clear state of mind, mental attitude, and strong body.

Although it seems like this will last forever, the current global pandemic is only a brief period in time. A very tough time we will get through together.

To start, adopt an I CAN, I WILL, THIS IS POSSIBLE attitude and strive to find balance in your life.

Balance between work and play – things we enjoy and love – being connected to one another, and things that give us a sense of accomplishment.

Taking the the time to reflect on what we are grateful for can also help keep you humble and balances your perspective on the outside world.

One of the strongest ways to protect your psychological health with PPE for your mind, is to arm yourself with knowledge, tools, skills, and practices to make your mental health healthier.

Some of that knowledge comes from recognizing that there are some things we can control – and some things we simply can't

We can't control physical PPE supply.

How many patients flood our emergency rooms.

Where the next outbreak will occur.

What WE CAN CONTROL is the self-care we give ourselves.

We can control the effort we put into doing the very best job we can, with the equipment and resources we have available to us.

A big piece of that self-care is caring for your friends, your family, and the important people in your life, which we'll learn about in part 4.

It is okay to feel pain.

It is okay to feel fear, worry, anxiety, and stress.

It is okay to feel uncertain.

It is okay to feel grief.

When you're not okay, conquer your fears, anxieties, and stresses by writing them down and talking to someone about how you are feeling.

We know that when it comes to the lack of physical protection, PPE, we're all aware, afraid, and uncertain—at the mercy of forces out of our control.

But with PPE for your mind, we CAN control the knowledge, tools, skills and best practices we learn, to safeguard your mental health with limitless supply.



## **Part 1 Key Takeaways**

Admitting you need help is a good thing.

Talk as much as you can with as many people as you can.

Explore your feelings and write them down.

Educate yourself on the different aspects of effects & healing

Connect with others who have shared experiences

Maintain the PPE for your mind & share what works

Good mental health can be learned.

# PPE FOR YOUR MIND FIELD GUIDE



**PART 2**

**TOOLS & STRATEGIES  
TO RELIEVE FEAR,  
ANXIETY & STRESS**

## Part 2: Strategies to Relieve Fear, Anxiety, and Stress

All of the tips, tools, and strategies you will learn in Part 2 are dedicated to helping you achieve healthier mental health through self-care. To help alleviate anxiety, stress, and fear, we'll provide you with knowledge, tools and strategies to help you cope through difficult situations and navigate tough times.

Together, we'll take the time to understand self-care, how to effectively develop a self-care plan unique to your needs, and put our plans into action—learning how to maintain the progress we make.

Caring for ourselves is incredibly important — especially if we're responsible for caring for someone other than ourselves. Similar to an airplane, where in an emergency you put your oxygen mask on first so that you can help others. Self-care can save not only your life, but also the lives of others.

There's a simple analogy that we use to help us understand how the impact of what you see and hear affects your life over time.

It's called the sh\*t bucket.

And the truth is, we all have one.

Over time, the difficult situations we go through fills our bucket more and more. Until it overflows. And that's when things can get messy, affecting not just you, but the important people in your life.

We need to do anything we can so our sh\*t bucket doesn't make our lives, well—really sh\*tty.

It's about emptying it early and emptying it often.

How do we do that?

First, we understand self-care

Understanding self-care means understanding our fears. Because fear can erode our ability to provide self-care. It can prevent us from doing what we need to do so we can be the best we can be.

As we learned in Part 1, the key to overcoming any fear is first identifying what you're facing.

Common fears we all face, such as the fear of the unknown, or the fear of becoming ill, can fill up your bucket faster, leading to problems nobody wants to deal with.

Know that an initial component to overcoming fears—or other distressing emotions that can prevent our ability to provide self-care—is first accepting that those feelings are there. Don't let feelings of sadness, depression, despair, and desperation prevent you from giving yourself what you need.

You need self-care. We all do. It's a big part of PPE for your mind.

We remind ourselves of this because when you're responsible for the care of others, it's easy to get consumed in back-to-back situations and lose yourself in the process.

Often, it feels easier to care for others than it is to care for ourselves. That's why we must be resilient in our efforts to practice and promote self-care.

Self-care gets a bad rap as being overly self-indulgent or making you look weak—and many stigmas still surround self-care. Such as self-care results in laziness or that it's selfish to spend time on yourself. None of those are true.

It's actually our own misconceptions about self-care that we need to change to help make our mental health healthier. Because learning to take care of yourself is a sign of strength. Not weakness.

### **Quick Tips for Self-Care**

Understand how self-care can be nurtured in your life

Create a self-care plan and allow it to evolve with your needs.

Look after your mental & physical health equally

Focus on healthy eating & drinking

Take meal and mental health breaks as needed

Sometimes when we wrestle with our feelings & emotions it's easy to lose sight of the bigger goal.

That's why we recommend taking a Tema Timeout.

The Tema Timeout is a simple tool that allows you to step away and take the time and space you need to build your resilience.

Just breathe.

Try to take a couple of deep cleansing breaths every time you wash your hands.

Find a space alone

Go for a walk

Drink some water

Find a comfort you enjoy

Talk, talk, talk to someone about how you feel.

By taking a Tema Timeout to yourself, you give yourself permission to be *not okay* and allow yourself to feel your emotions. Even the emotions that don't feel good and you want to eliminate.

Emotions are your body's way of signalling that something is wrong and that some kind of action is needed. Trying to bury or stuff feelings down is similar to denying your body what it biologically needs.

We all know what happens when things inside us want to escape and we ignore them.

They may go away for a while as you distract yourself, but the urge comes back, and it comes back with greater intensity. The same goes for emotions. Instead of turning away from them, if you instead let yourself feel them, their intensity will eventually dissipate until you are back to baseline/normal.

By reserving time in your self-care plan to sort through and deal with your emotions, you can help protect your mental health in a simple way.

A good self-care plan helps you enhance your health and wellbeing, manage your stress, and maintain your balance between work and life.

Start by creating a flexible routine that works for you. Start small. It doesn't need to be some elaborate production. You can always add to it and expand as you see fit.

Remember that self-care is really about discipline – ensuring that you're focusing on the things that will foster meaningful connections, recharging your batteries, rest your body & mind, fulfill your goals, and provide outlets for discharging pent up tension.

Do what feels good without hiding from your problems. Create your self-care plan with an honest consideration of how each part of your life contributes to your well-being. It can be tough to do, but you have to make critical decisions on where you choose to best spend your time.

If you can—write your plan down and keep it handy in a few different places. Share your plan with likeminded individuals and ask them if they have any advice that helps them personally. Your self-care plan could also be the catalyst for the important people in your life to practice more self-care themselves.

Now, nobody is perfect, and nobody has the perfect life—we all deal with things we don't want to, don't like to, but have to anyways.

But developing and cultivating a toolkit of effective self-care strategies, filled with some of the tools and strategies we've already learned, goes a long way to managing those factors that bring stress and negative emotion into our lives.

### ***Tips on creating a self-care plan***

*Plan meals and healthy snacks*

*Include physical activity and regular exercise*

*Make time for family and friends*

*Save space for your hobbies*

*Get as much sleep as you can, when and where possible*

With a good self-care plan we can enhance our health and wellbeing, manage our stress, and maintain our balance between work and life.

As we've learned, even with a plan—sometimes we all need a Tema Timeout.

Stay disciplined like your life depends on it. We envision self-care as bubble-baths and massages. But self-care is just as much about having the self-discipline to shut off the TV and go to bed early enough to ensure a good night's sleep. It's about eating balanced healthy meals, even if you don't feel like it. It's about the little stuff, that when put together, has a significant impact on achieving healthier mental health.

Set realistic expectations for the sake of ourselves—and for others. The unimaginable sacrifices you have to make, and the incredibly difficult things you experience will not magically disappear—sometimes they stay with us for life. That's why it's so important to maintain our mental health by talking about our issues and working toward healing.

Walk away from negativity. We know the importance of positivity and how we can heal through meaning. Focus on the amazing things you have in your life and realize you can get through this with the people who love you so much, right by your side.

Set and maintain boundaries. Gentle but firm boundaries. This can be a tough one – especially for helpers. Helpers want to help. Disappointing people feels uncomfortable, so we avoid it by

saying 'yes' to everything, and before we know it our bucket is overflowing – we're stressed, overwhelmed, and burnt out. So, don't be afraid to say *no*—don't be afraid to say *wait*.

Embrace your fears and don't let them distract you from your self-care plan. It's natural to have a fear of the unknown, or the bad things we know can happen—it's okay to be scared. Especially now. This is new to us all, nobody expects you to have the answers to save the world. Talking about our fears and communicating openly with others lets us face them together.

***Key takeaways***

*Create and maintain your self-care plan*

*Understand what is and isn't making you happy*

*Stick to a flexible routine centred around your own self-care*

*Set realistic expectations for yourself and be kind to yourself*

*Don't be afraid to take a Tema timeout.*

*Talk to others about how you're feeling and share your plan*

*Reach out to a healthcare professional if you need more help.*

# **PPE FOR YOUR MIND FIELD GUIDE**



## **PART 3**

# **THE TEMA MODEL OF SUPPORT FOR FAMILY & PEERS**



## Part 3: The Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers

Let's take a step back for a moment and talk about how The Tema Model of Support came to life.

We're called the Tema Foundation in honour of Tema Conter.

Because to us, Tema was a daughter, a sister, a friend—and more.

On January 27, 1988, at the age of 25, Tema was murdered by a convicted serial killer who had spent most of his life in jail.

She was a guiding light. A shining star.

There are no words to describe the devastation her death brought upon her family, her friends—and the first responders who took that call.

It's because of her, them, and us that we link together as partners in mental health.

To heal each other.

This is how The Tema Foundation was born.

*IN HONOUR OF TEMA, WE CLIMB TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE. FOR THOSE ON THE FRONT LINES. FIGHTING THE INFINITE CHALLENGES WE FACE—TOGETHER AS ONE.*

Our powerful story starts in a place familiar to many.

For those we strive to help, it's ground zero. A place of darkness and despair, filled with tragedy and triggers.

A place many never return from—what we're fighting against.

This isn't a sad story. It simply has a sad beginning.

This is a comeback story. A combat story. A story that carries on Tema's compassion, care, and countless other virtues that support our community.

Our story is non-fiction. As real as life gets.

It's written as we go.

And with every page that turns—those we help—forge ahead. Ascending a dangerous mountain of mental health.

Staring down the summit. Pushing toward the peak.

When they slip, we tighten our grip. When they fall, we link together and reach down.

Way down.

Until we feel something that pulls them back up. This is what brings us together again.

Now, you're a part of the Tema Foundation story.

Let's climb toward a brighter future together.

In this book we'll introduce you to an important tool we teach at The Tema Foundation. It's an effective step-by-step family & peer support tool to help others.

Especially helpful during a time when we all need a little more help from those around us.

We're talking about The Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers

T.E.M.A

Think of it as a road map to help guide and support the crucial conversations that need to happen when you're trying to help someone you're worried about.

You can easily remember this effective tool by simply spelling Tema's name.

T—for taking action.

E—for engaging in discussion

M—for making meaningful connections

A—for accessing help.

Our Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers is designed to help you meet the needs of those in your life who might be struggling at work, at home, or in the community with mental health and wellness.

As we'll learn in Part 4, caring for the important people in your life is a critical part of making your mental health healthier.

That's why the Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers is so key.

It can help build your confidence in helping the people around you who are trying to make sense out of what is currently happening in their life.

Let's look at all 4 steps and how you can use them in the real world.

### **Step 1 – T: Take Action**

We can all play a role in having a meaningful impact on a colleague, a friend, a family member, or a person in our network who might be struggling.

The first step to doing that using the Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers is to take action.

Taking action often starts with observing and recognizing different or worrisome behaviour or behavioural changes.

It also involves thinking about what a person might need and how you might be helpful—and then approaching that person and communicating what you have observed.

For most of us, approaching someone about sensitive personal issues can be uncomfortable, but that initial fear can be overcome by knowing your peer-support could be saving someone's life.

*Tips for Taking Action:*

*Observe behaviour and do initial research*

*Ask others who might know what is happening*

*Find the right time to ask who you are trying to help how they are feeling*

*Offer to make more time to talk in a safe environment*

*If at first you don't succeed, try and try again*

*Communicate your concerns and reinforce that you care*

When it comes down to it, you're lighting a path forward for someone who needs a helping hand—whether they know it or not. That's why just taking action is such an important first step.

It lets us show we care, open an honest conversation, identify shared experiences, and access help for the friends, family, and coworkers we are trying to support.

### **Step 2—E: Engage in Discussion**

After you take action and approach someone who might be struggling, step 2 is to engage in a safe, healthy, and respectful conversation.

Having a conversation with someone about their personal issues is never easy. It can be everything from awkward and difficult, to downright awful.

In fact, sometimes just the thought of engaging in a deep discussion with a family member or friend about the worries we have for them, or approaching a coworker—never mind a boss or superior, can be enough to induce fear, anxiety, and stress.

It's important to face those fears and push forward because it can *also* be an incredibly rewarding and beautiful experience that is a catalyst for positive change in both your lives.

The key to overcoming the fear, anxiety, and stress that can pop up with peer-support, is to ensure that it's done in a way that is respectful and helpful for everyone involved.

If the person you're trying to help does open up, sometimes you won't know what to say.

Especially when that person starts sharing their darkest moments or feelings. There is no need to panic. Just remember to show compassion, empathy, acceptance, and support. Remind them about what you've already learned, that it's okay to be not okay or some strategies to relieve fear, anxiety, and stress they are feeling.

Some things to keep in mind when you are starting a difficult conversation are to be direct, be respectful, show empathy, and be sure pick to the right time and the right location.

The more you do it, the better you get at it and the easier it will be to identify the shared experiences we all have.

### **Step 3—M: Meaningful Connections**

Step 3 of The Tema Model of Support is about making Meaningful Connections.

We make meaningful connections to help strengthen our ability to relate and provide peer-support.

When we put the effort into engaging in a discussion with someone, we form small bonds that make up the foundation of our relationship. These meaningful connections that we create strengthen the core support structure between you and the person you're trying to help, making it easier to make a positive difference.

Remember that connecting with others through meaningful shared experiences are vital to not only those we are trying to help, but our mental health as well.

That's because humans have a natural need for positive connections in their life, no matter what stage we're at.

For your friends, your family, your coworkers—you play a big part in making their mental health healthy—maybe a bigger piece than you might realize, through so many different ways.

By caring, being empathetic, staying positive, providing an open ear and open mind—or sometimes just calling to say 'hi' is all you need to sustain a meaningful connection with an important person in your life.

Because when we provide a meaningful connection with someone, not only is it possibly a huge lifeline to them for the problems they face, but potentially for you as well.

Meaningful connections are effective this way because they are founded in an unselfish place. A place of learning, understanding, giving, and empathy. They are naturally more authentic and have a more positive impact because meaningful connections are not built on the expectation of getting something in return.

*Tips For Creating Meaningful Connections:*

*Value the other person and make the most of your connection*

*Understand and validate their feelings and experiences*

*Get comfortable reaching out of your comfort zone*

*Stay positive and take a mutual break if needed*

*A genuine, authentic, and natural approach is always best*

*Look for similarities in yourself rather than differences*

*Learn what a safe environment means for you both*

*Be a good listener and provide an honest perspective*

By keeping those who we strive to help in mind, we can create a truly meaningful connection that allows us to understand how we can better help the important people in our lives.

#### **Step 4—A: Access help**

The final step in the Tema Model of Support is Step 4: Access Help

This is the step where you can seek additional support structures either in your organization, or through outside resources to help make mental health healthier for your family and peers.

Accessing help in an effective way means putting to use what you've learned so far to find out what will work best for the person you're trying to help.

To start, look for existing support within your organization or network, such as counsellors, social workers, psychologists, other professionals that line up with what you think they need.

Also don't forget to consider if your family member or peer has benefits or insurance that provides them with the proper coverage they need to access the help they need.

Understand how quickly can you access the support needed and relay your ideas with the person you're trying to help for their feedback. There might be outside resources available by phone, online, texting, or virtual sessions that are easier to access—much like this course.

When you don't know what to do, just ask—ask the person struggling what would be helpful, ask for direction from another peer, or ask a professional who can ensure confidentiality.

By first taking action, then engaging in discussion and creating a meaningful connection, then providing access to help for your family and peers, you have done more than just use the Tema Model of Support.

You have gone above and beyond to help make their mental health healthier and be the link for the important people in your life.

**Part 3 Key Takeaways:**

Take action by observing and discovering the issues

Engage in discussion by staying genuine and empathetic

Meaningful connections thrive when we try

Access help for those who you think need it.

Share the Tema Model of Support for Family & Peers with others

# PPE FOR YOUR MIND FIELD GUIDE



**PART 4**

**CARING FOR  
IMPORTANT PEOPLE  
IN YOUR LIFE**

## Part 4: Caring for Important People in Your Life

As a frontline worker battling on the frontlines for the benefit of us all, we know the risks simply going to work can bring—and what that can do to your mental health and well being.

We also know that it's not just *your* mental health that's impacted.

Whether it's a partner or parent, a coworker or child, family member or friend — these people bring joy into our home life and remind us of what really matters at the end of the day.

And while it's often difficult for health care professionals, first responders, and other public safety personnel to emotionally transition between work and home life—there are things we can do to make that transition easier so the important people in our lives aren't negatively impacted.

Your state of mind can affect the important people in your life in a lot of different ways.

First, let's reflect on who those people really are.

They are the friends you rely on when you need help. The family you go to for special dinners. They are the coworkers we see daily. Our children we love to spend time with.

The important people in our lives come in all shapes and sizes, but what makes them important is all the same.

We care for them.

In this part of PPE for your mind, we're going to focus on learning how to engage and care for those important people in our lives, helping to make their mental health healthier along with our own.

It can be difficult for loved ones to really understand what you do and why you spend so much time away from the family working or taking care of others. Especially when your work means sacrificing valuable time with them. It can make those around you feel confused and concerned.

Our family and friends worry about us and are often the first to see these signs. So, it's crucial that you stay connected and communicate with your loved ones about how you're doing.

And don't forget your sh\*t bucket.

If your bucket is getting full—let them know. Explain to them the importance of emptying it early and often.



They might even enjoy your newfound analogy.

Because, after all—they're the ones who we can be our true selves with.

And if we bring work home along with us—when we're naturally ourselves—work can creep into our home life at the wrong time and negatively impact the people we care about.

Engaging in an honest conversation with the important people in your life about what your job requires is actually an effective way to care for them. By providing them with understanding and knowledge, you can help alleviate their fear of the unknown of what you're going through, which they may certainly feel considering what you do to keep everyone else safe.

Here are some quick tips on talking to the important people in your life about the impact your job has on both you and them:

- Explain your job to them in a way that helps them understand how what you see and hear and feel impacts you in both good and bad ways.
- Provide opportunities for your loved ones to openly discuss their worries and fears about your work and how it impacts you.
- Acknowledge and validate their feelings or concerns about your work and what you are doing.
- Explain the importance of your work – and why you have to do what you do.
- Reassure your loved ones that you all will get through this. They need to hear that you are always glad to come home – although your job may make you worried and scared, when you come home you feel good to be with your loved ones.
- Try to give your loved ones reassurance that you love them, regardless of how tough it may get.
- Make a conscious decision to remove your emotional armour when you come home to your family. They need you with them, and you need them with you.

You may dread these conversations but talking about what you do and how it impacts you emotionally is often a vital discussion that is essential in helping your family and friends better understand how you can help care for each other.

For parents, when it comes to children—if you're not feeling your best, they will feel it too. Kids will be worried, and will want to help in their own way. Sharing your emotions with them when the time is right will NOT traumatize them.

In fact, it will be a huge relief.

If you try to deny that you're struggling and stuff your feelings down, they will only use their vivid imagination to fill in the blanks—possibly considering scary or irrational scenarios.

By sincerely telling your child that it's ok to feel what you're feeling, you're reinforcing that message to yourself. Try communicating that it's ok to not be ok, and let them know you're seeking help and everything will be ok.

Doing this allows your child to be ok with their OWN emotions, which is important for building a solid foundation for their future.

*Tips To Care for the Important People in Your Life:*

*Stay connected and communicate openly*

*Acknowledge and appreciate their help*

*Tell your loved ones you love them*

*Celebrate their victories and achievements*

*Keep your kids in the loop when it's appropriate*

*Share your self-care plan with family & peers*

Simply letting your family and friends know that you are struggling can help more than you might think. That's because being open and honest about how you're feeling with the important people in your life can make it easier for you to care for them—and yourself at the same time.

They don't need all the details they just need to know that what you are feeling is impacting you in a way that's leaving your mental health and behaviour in a bad spot.

Remember to be aware of your reactions to your family members when they inevitably try to help. They love you and will go to great lengths to protect you, sometimes whether you like it or not.

So, it's natural to feel like those close to us are striking a negative chord in our minds now and again. We can sometimes interpret help as an invasion of privacy and that can lead to feelings of irritation or annoyance.

If people in your life *are* irritating or annoying you, remember to confront these feeling and explore them.

Acknowledge their attempt to help you.

Convey what is unhelpful about what they're doing.

Explain what do you need them to do instead.

By clearly articulating this for yourself, you can give your family/loved ones a clearer road map. They will welcome this. You're not being a jerk. They WANT to help and will be relieved at being told exactly what to do.

When you're experiencing poor sleep habits, irritability, moodiness, relationship struggles, isolation or sadness—our loved ones can be the first people we go to when we're first facing the problems on our own.

Recognize this as a sign of a stress response and seek help to manage emotions/behaviours.

**Part 4 Key Takeaways**

- Identify ways to connect with family & peers
- Be honest and upfront with your loved ones
- Confront and explore negative feelings
- Let someone know if you're struggling
- Caring for your important people helps your self-care

Now, this might be the end of our educational eBook, but it's just the beginning of our journey together. We strongly encourage you to share all what you've learned to help make mental health healthier for those on the frontlines fighting for the benefit of us all.

You can find more PPE for Your Mind Field Guide content on our website at [www.tema.foundation/MentalHealthPPE](http://www.tema.foundation/MentalHealthPPE), along with many other pieces of supplementary course materials that are completely free to use.

Thank you for everything you do.

We promise to continue to be the link for your healthier mental health. If you would like to get in touch with us to partner, volunteer, donate, or incorporate one of our curriculums into your organization, please email us at [info@tema.foundation](mailto:info@tema.foundation).

From everyone here at The Tema Foundation—stay well, stay safe, stay strong.