Knowing When to Rest

Sick Day or Mental Health Day?

Consider more than whether you can get through the day. Given your health and the work required, is attending advisable?

Notice changes in your functioning

Sleep and alertness	Am I struggling to stay awake or remain alert?
Concentration and thinking	Can I follow information and hold a thought?
Decisions and overwhelm	Can I make choices and respond to ordinary demands?
Emotional functioning	Are my emotions making everyday tasks or interactions harder?
Physical functioning	Are pain, fatigue or other symptoms affecting what I can do?

Ask yourself

How different is this from my usual functioning? What does my work require today? What essential responsibilities will I need to manage afterward?

Based on your experience, could continuing to work make your symptoms worse?

Three questions for your day off

1. **What can I take off my plate today?**
2. **What do I need help with?**
3. **What is one thing I can do that might help?**

You might need sleep, some peace and quiet, practical help or supportive company. An enjoyable activity can also help you unwind. Choose what fits your needs and capacity today.

Rebecca Helps, MTC
helpscounselling.com

Two ways to pause

Centring & Grounding

Centring turns attention inward. Grounding reconnects you with your surroundings. Choose what you have room for right now.

Centring

Gentle belly breathing

1. Rest a hand on your belly or lower ribs, if helpful.

2. Breathe in gently and notice a little expansion.

3. Let the air out slowly and easily.

4. If comfortable, try 3 counts in and 4 out, at your own pace.

5. After a few breaths, return to your usual rhythm.

If you feel dizzy, uncomfortable or more distressed, return to your usual breathing. You can look around the room to ground yourself.

Grounding

Look, Feel, Listen

Look
Notice a detail, or find three things that share a colour.

Feel
Notice contact with a surface. Explore its texture or temperature.

Listen
Give one nearby sound your attention.

One detail is enough. Return to it if your mind wanders.

When a day off is not enough

Seek support when symptoms persist, worsen or keep returning, or when rest helps only briefly. Follow existing care plans and get medical advice for unfamiliar or worsening physical symptoms.

Before an appointment, note what changed, when it began, how it affects work and home life, and what you have tried.

Support and next steps

HealthLink BC - Call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health advice. healthlinkbc.ca

Find mental health support · helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

Suicide Crisis Helpline - Call or text **9-8-8** anytime in Canada. 988.ca

For a medical emergency, call **9-1-1**.

Helps Counselling
Port Moody · Online in BC

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