# The Working Mind
## For Veterinary Medicine



## Together, we can change the conversation around mental health in veterinary medicine.

Veterinary medicine is an emotionally demanding profession. Compassion fatigue, client interactions, moral distress, grief, and workplace pressures experienced by veterinary teams require support that reflects the realities of our profession.

**The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) has partnered with Opening Minds, an initiative of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, to adapt The Working Mind program for veterinary medicine. This work is informed by veterinary professionals, facilitators from the veterinary profession, and researchers specializing in Canadian veterinary mental health.**

**We invite provincial veterinary medical associations, provincial veterinary technician and technologist associations, veterinary clinics and hospitals, continuing education providers, and veterinary academic institutions to bring this important program to their conferences, meetings, continuing education events, and teams.**

## The Need is Real

### *Veterinary support team*[1]

**18%** experience serious psychological distress.

**71%** report high levels of emotional exhaustion.

### *Veterinarians*[2]

**64%** report high levels of traumatic stress.

**26%** reported suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts in the past 12 months.

**Sources:**


[1]Volk JO, Schimmack U, Strand EB, Reinhard A, Vasconcelos J, Hahn J, Stiefelmeyer K, Probyn-Smith K. Executive summary of the Merck Animal Health Veterinarian Wellbeing Study III and Veterinary Support Staff Study. J Am Vet Med Assoc. 2022 Jul 1;260(12):1547-1553. doi: 10.2460/javma.22.03.0134. PMID: 35943942.

[2]Perret, J. L., Best, C. O., Coe, J. B., Greer, A. L., Khosa, D. K., & Jones-Bitton, A. (2020). Prevalence of mental health outcomes among Canadian veterinarians. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 256(3), 365–375. https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.256.3.365


## What Makes This Program Different?

Unlike general healthcare or workplace mental health training, The Working Mind Veterinary Medicine is built around the realities of veterinary practice. Practice-based workplace scenarios and personal stories of mental health, illness and recovery shared by veterinary professionals are central to this learning, bringing lived experience, depth, and perspective to the discussions. The courses are facilitated by veterinary professionals who understand the culture of the veterinary workplace and profession.

- **Recognize early changes and understand traumatic stress injuries**
- **Create psychologically healthy workplaces**
- **Reduce stigma surrounding mental illness**
- **Build coping strategies**
- **Support colleagues with confidence**
- **Reduce the risk of psychological injury in veterinary work**

### Already Underway

The BCVTA has committed to offering The Working Mind for Veterinary Medicine at its 2027 conference, demonstrating leadership in supporting the psychological health of veterinary professionals.

### Together, we can build a healthier veterinary profession.

This is an opportunity to lead meaningful change, for today's veterinary professionals and for the future of veterinary medicine in Canada.

An **OPENING MINDS** program in partnership with:

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association

Association canadienne des médecins vétérinaires

**With support from:**

petsecure
CANADA'S PET INSURANCE

# Partner with the CVMA

Bring The Working Mind Veterinary Medicine to your conferences, meetings, continuing education events, and teams.

## Virtual or In-Person Format Available

### The Working Mind EMPLOYEE

5 hour Facilitator-Led Workshop

*Designed for all veterinary professionals who do not have responsibilities for overseeing, guiding or supporting the work and performance of other team members.*

Participants learn practical strategies to recognize and reduce mental health stigma, monitor their mental health using the Mental Health Continuum, recognize post-traumatic stress injuries, have compassionate conversations about mental health, strengthen resilience using the Big 4 Coping Strategies, and access available supports when needed.

### The Working Mind MANAGER/LEADER

7 hour Facilitator-Led Workshop

*Designed for veterinary professionals who have responsibilities for overseeing, guiding or supporting the work and performance of other team members.*

Participants learn all the concepts from the Employee course through the lens of being a leader, plus practical strategies to support conversations on employee mental health, foster psychologically healthier workplaces, respond to critical incidents, support recovery, and navigate return-to-work planning and workplace accommodations.

## Delivered by Veterinary Professionals



**Leann Benedetti, DVM, TICC, PCC, CCFP; BSc**
*Founder- The Veterinary Coach*
Leann is a veterinarian and Trauma-Informed Certified Coach with decades of clinical experience. Having supported the introduction and adaptation of The Working Mind to veterinary medicine, Leann brings a deep and nuanced understanding of the human complexities and emotional demands of veterinary practice to conversations about psychological health, injury and workplace wellbeing.



**Marie Holowaychuk, DVM, DACVECC**
*Founder- Reviving Veterinary Medicine*
Marie is a board-certified veterinary emergency and critical care specialist and certified coach with over 20 years of experience in clinical practice and academia. Author of A Compassionate Calling and founder of Reviving Veterinary Medicine, she speaks internationally on mental health and career sustainability for frontline veterinary teams.



**Lucie Langevin-Neil, RVT, CVPM, PCC.**
*Founder: Covet Coaching*
With more than 25 years of experience in veterinary medicine, Lucie has worked across clinical practice, leadership, coaching, and organizational development. As the author of The Next Version of You, she is passionate about helping people break free from what is holding them back and step fully into their potential. Lucie is fully bilingual (English and French) and will be facilitating The Working Mind for Veterinary Medicine courses in both official languages.



**Rebecca Lynes, DVM**
*Registered Psychotherapist (qualifying)*
With 16 years of experience as a practicing small animal veterinarian, Rebecca has seen firsthand the impact that burnout, anxiety, compassion fatigue, and the unique pressures of veterinary medicine can have on individuals and teams. Rebecca holds a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology and is a Registered Psychotherapist (Qualifying) in Ontario. Her goal is to help veterinary professionals improve their quality of life through self-reflection and self-discovery, while creating a safe, supportive, and compassionate space for growth and healing.

### Partnership Logistics

*Those wishing to host the program would typically:*

- Schedule the Employee and/or Manager/Leader course during their conference or educational programming.
- Provide meeting space for live, in-person, or virtual platform.
- Cover facilitator +/- moderator honorarium, travel expenses for live-in person courses, and Opening Minds licensing fees.

***The CVMA coordinates facilitator and moderator scheduling.***

**Questions? Let's Connect.**
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