



**Mood Disorders Society of Canada**  
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada  
[www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca) | [www.troublesl'humeur.ca](http://www.troublesl'humeur.ca)



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## **Mood Disorders Society of Canada and The Arthritis Society Launch *Work With Us* – A New Workplace Self-Management and Awareness Program for Depression and/or Arthritis**

**January 14, 2014** — Together with The Arthritis Society, Mood Disorders Society of Canada has launched *Work With Us*, a program for Canadians living with depression and/or arthritis. This initiative provides access to free, innovative tools that help people actively self-manage chronic conditions, understand the link between physical and mental health and make accommodations to support health and wellness at work.

With three year support from Employment and Social Development Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability Component, *Work With Us* is a unique partnership and one of the first of its kind to focus on both physical and mental health in Canada. Both organizations recognize that approximately 7.1 million Canadians now live with arthritis and depression, and that these conditions frequently strike during the peak earning years.

“By working together to help people overcome not just the physical challenges but also the mental and emotional hurdles of arthritis, we are empowering them to live well,” says Joanne Simons, Chief Mission Officer for The Arthritis Society. “In that sense, this new program is a natural extension of our growing body of resources for self-management, and of our commitment to set lives in motion.”

The program is also dedicated to addressing some of the challenges faced by Canadians in entering and remaining in the workforce. In 2011 alone, the Mental Health Commission of Canada estimated that mental illness was linked to more than \$6 billion in business losses due to reduced productivity and turnover. The Arthritis Alliance has also found that wage-based productivity costs associated with conditions like rheumatoid arthritis could be as high as \$45.1 billion by 2020.

Starting in January 2014, the *Work With Us* program will be available free to workplaces across Canada and will offer support materials and training for volunteers interested in delivering education sessions. The program is available in both official languages and features:

- Customizable presentations;
- Training, including a useful Presenter's Guide;
- Videos featuring first-hand accounts of self-management techniques and approaches;
- Workplace materials including posters; and
- Other downloadable awareness materials.

All of the *Work With Us* program tools support the goal of addressing the stigma around mental health and arthritis, while increasing access to important resources that support wellness. Webinars will be available to facilitate access in remote locations and new resources will be featured through social media, in addition to the project's website.

For more information on this free workplace offering, please visit us at: [www.workwithus.ca](http://www.workwithus.ca) and [www.travaillezavecnous.ca](http://www.travaillezavecnous.ca), or follow us on Twitter @WorkWithUsCA and Facebook /WorkWithUsCanada.

**About the Mood Disorders Society of Canada:**

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada was launched in 2001 to provide people with mood disorders, their families and caregivers a strong, cohesive voice at the national level on issues relating to mental health and mental illness. With particular regard to depression, bipolar disorder and other associated mood disorders, the MDSC aims to improve access to treatment, inform research, shape program development as well as government policy on improving the quality of life of individuals affected by mood disorders.

**About the Arthritis Society:**

The Arthritis Society's mission is to provide leadership and funding for research, advocacy and solutions to improve the quality of life for Canadians affected by arthritis. As a leader within Canada's broader arthritis community, The Society conducts research to better understand the impact of arthritis, advocates for progressive arthritis policies, works with stakeholders to promote appropriate standards of care and delivers educational programs to empower those living with arthritis to self-manage their disease.

**For more information on *Work With Us*, please contact:**

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