

# Big White Wall®

Online support for mental health



**Big White Wall** is an online peer support and self-management tool for youth 16+ and adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety. The service is available through the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), and is free for people living in Ontario. Users can self-refer or be referred by a care provider.

## Big

Recognizes the infinite nature of human emotion

## White

Refers to the blank canvas users can use to express themselves

## Wall

Represents shelter/support and the barriers we sometimes need to break through to improve emotional health

Big White Wall helps users manage their own **mental health**. It is available around the clock, when other services are less likely to be available. In fact, 66% of logins to Big White Wall are after regular office hours. Users can talk **anonymously** with other members of the community who can relate to their feelings. Big White Wall is staffed by trained Wall Guides who make sure that the community is safe and supportive. Users also have access to online **guided support courses** on topics such as depression, anxiety, weight management, and smoking cessation.

For those looking for ways to express themselves through art therapy, Big White Wall provides an opportunity to **display feelings** using images, drawings, and words to make bricks that are posted to the Wall.

Big White Wall has been active in several countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand. Since its inception in 2007, this online tool has been used by more than 60,000 people. It was launched as a pilot in Ontario with Lakeridge Health, the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Services, and Women's College Hospital. Research in 700+ patients indicated a decrease in reported depression and increase in perceived mental health recovery.

**70%** of users saw improvement in at least one aspect of their well-being

**46%** of users reported sharing an issue for the first time

**51%** of users reported less mental health-related time off work using Big White Wall

#### Suitable for users:

- 16 years or older
- Seeking support for mild to moderate depression or anxiety
- At low risk of suicide/self-harm
- With a basic level of literacy
- With access to the Internet
- Who prefer an alternate/adjunct to face-to-face therapy
- Seeking community peer support
- Looking for after-hours mental health support

#### How to access

Providers can suggest Big White Wall to individuals, who can sign up themselves and begin using the service immediately by going to [otn.ca/bigwhitewall](https://otn.ca/bigwhitewall).

#### Contact information

For questions, contact: [theteam@bigwhitewall.ca](mailto:theteam@bigwhitewall.ca)