**Mental Health First-Aid Kit (For Journalists)**

#BellLetsTalk is an annual event intended to combat stigma surrounding mental illness. Social media is flooded with the hashtag as Bell will donate 5 cents to initiatives supporting mental health for every Tweet, Facebook share, text and call made. You will also undoubtedly see news articles discussing the event and the challenges facing those seeking help to maintain their mental health.

One thing you likely will not see, however, is journalists ourselves talking about the detrimental effects our profession can have on our own mental health. As journalists, it is our duty to bring attention to the injustices in the world but in the process we often forget that our newsrooms aren’t insulated; that we aren’t solely observers but also actors in our own drama.

One of these injustices is the lack of support in the newsroom for journalists dealing with mental illness. News organizations have a double standard when it comes to mental health: we call out the lack of mental health support in other industries and strive to make our mental health reporting better while simultaneously failing to establish welcoming and supportive environments for our peers.

This is unacceptable. Many journalists come into their jobs already dealing with mental illness, but our high-stress, sometimes traumatic profession can exacerbate these conditions and tear away at those who otherwise didn’t have to struggle to maintain their mental health.

So, it is with all this in mind that I’ve created this mental health first aid kid. Included you will find self-care tips from every Ryerson Review of Journalism staff member, a list of past articles from the RRJ discussing mental health, **x** and resources to be used if you are experiencing mental health issues. This kit is meant to assist and educate, but ultimately, the onus should not solely be on journalists struggling to maintain their mental health.

 Instead, our workplaces must shift to create a supportive environment to help us work through these issues. This means in-house counsellors, better insurance programs to help mitigate the cost of psychology and medication, back-to-work transition programs for those who need to take time off and an environment where employees don’t feel ashamed for taking this time to get well in the first place.

End mental health stigma.