

## **ASSESSING FOR MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (ME/CFS)**

The following criteria were established by an Expert Subcommittee of Health Canada who selected an Expert Medical Consensus Panel to outline the Diagnostic and Treatment Protocols and produce a Clinical Working Case Definition of ME/CFS. Clients who meet these criteria would meet the definition for ME/CFS. Approximately one hundred and fifty thousand Canadians or four hundred and twenty-two people per one hundred thousand people will experience ME/CFS. ME/CFS is now considered a severe medical condition that causes a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities and can affect people of any gender, race, age or class.

### **a) Primary Symptoms:**

- i) Debilitating fatigue.
- ii) Decreased memory for recent events – time sequence.
- iii) Decreased ability to attend to tasks (i.e., work tasks, reading, following conversations or television shows).
- iv) Decreased ability to complete numerical calculations.
- v) Poor word finding ability.
- vi) Muscular pain especially upper back or neck.
- vii) Joint pain (without edema or signs of inflammation).
- viii) Decreased muscular endurance or strength.
- ix) Panic or anxiety attacks.
- x) Increase in symptoms following exercise.
- xi) Clinical depression.

**b) Most Frequent Activities of Daily Living Affected:**

- i) Difficult working at a previously performed job because of decreased memory, decreased cognitive ability, fatigue, pain and decreased endurance.
- ii) Completing self-care in a timely manner (under two hours).
- iii) Reading books and remembering what was read.
- iv) Watching television or movies and following story lines.
- v) Participating in exercise, recreational or social activities.
- vi) Walking more than short distances.
- vii) Climbing stairs.
- viii) Performing housework.
- ix) Shopping.
- x) Performing activities requiring sustained overhead reach such as washing, drying, setting, or combing hair.
- xi) Driving.