

## **An Awareness Session On the Importance of Mental Health During the Pandemic**



*OAG staff members during a wellness session on mental health by Let's Talk Psychologists.*

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) partnered with Let's Talk Psychologists to Host an awareness session on the importance of Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders. As the new coronavirus continues to spread, so do anxieties about COVID-19 and its uncertainties. OAG in collaboration with Let's Talk Psychologists organized an awareness session to discuss mental health issues and how to manage coronavirus-related stress.

Speaking at the event was Hazel De Klerk, a Clinical Social Worker from Let's Talk Psychologists who discussed the effects of COVID-19 on individuals, how to deal with mental health and finding effective coping mechanisms. De Klerk uttered that we are all currently living in a pandemic that no one was ready or prepared for.

The third wave has taken more from us than we could have ever imagined; COVID-19 has taken away the lives of our loved ones and those who are close to us, each family has been touched one way or another. De Klerk shared with the OAG staff some helpful tips to get one through the pandemic. One way to lessen worry is to ground yourself in the present moment through mindfulness.

“Mindfulness is a great technique that can help reduce stress during challenging times,” says De Klerk. In the final minutes of the session, De Klerk also discussed the stigma around mental health and counselling.