

# Working Well: Kindness and tolerance staying safe and connected during COVID-19

**Author:**

Dr. Theresa Newlove, R.Psych (Director of Workplace Wellness, Culture & Experience)

---

*"Throughout your response to the many challenges that arose with COVID-19, you have demonstrated courage, compassion and focus. You have worked as a team, and in doing so you have made us proud." - [Benoit Morin, president & CEO and Tim Manning, chair, PHSA board of directors](#)*

As PHSA undertakes thoughtful and deliberate planning of a phased transition, it is helpful to recognize that experiencing prolonged uncertainty associated with COVID-19 has activated both physiological and psychological stress reactions. The transition and reintegration will look different across PHSA sites, clinics, programs and units. Supporting and understanding individual ways of coping make us stronger together. [Cultivating tolerance and celebrating differences](#) helps us build bridges and capitalize on those differences in the workplace.

As we move into our new phase of co-existing with COVID-19, plans are underway to ensure that employees are working in an environment that meets their psychological and physical health and safety needs. In the context of universal safety measures, individual perceptions of 'safety' may differ. Colleagues may take measures that they deem necessary to feel safe that might not align with our safety behaviour. Practicing tolerance and kindness while suspending judgement of individual practices creates a safe workplace.

From a strengths-based framework, let's consider ways to help our co-workers feel safe and 'part of'. We are all learning and coping together. This is the perfect opportunity to connect, expand our networks, and enhance our [resilience](#). Individuals are at different places and comfort levels with their sense of safety. As our actions demonstrate that we understand others, we display respect.

**Let's ask ourselves:**

- How can I promote safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment, as well as respect for diversity in my workplace?
- How can I support a healthy work environment where all employees feel valued and respected for their ideas and roles within PHSA?

"We're going to be into this for months yet, that's for sure...it's hard on people and I understand that. That's why it's so important that we be kind to one another. In the end, that's all we really have is kindness." - Dr. Bonnie Henry

Let's continue to practice Dr. Henry's advice and be kind, be calm and be safe.

## **Looking for information and resources to support you during COVID-19?**

- Visit PHSA's [Supporting Our Workforce page](#) for articles, resources, and tools that provide psychosocial support during COVID-19.
- See [PHSA's Health Promotion page](#) for health and wellness resources and current initiatives.
- Access the [COVID-19 Pandemic Toolkit for Staff](#) from Homewood Health, PHSA's Employee and Family Assistance Provider.
- Don't hesitate to call Homewood Health, PHSA's [Employee & Family Assistance Program](#) (EFAP) provider, to speak with a clinical counsellor at 1-800-663-1142 or [www.homeweb.ca](http://www.homeweb.ca). Homewood Health offers free and confidential coaching and counselling services for staff through video, phone, private online chat, or private messaging.