

Working Well: The strategy for psychological safety is 'early and often'

Author:

Dr. Theresa Newlove, R.Psych (Director of Psychological Health, Safety & Wellness)

We have all learned of the importance of PPE (personal protective equipment) and the very specific, sequential steps of 'donning' and 'doffing'. Following this sequence of steps protects the physical safety of direct care workers. Donning another type of 'protective equipment' – psychological protective equipment is equally critical to our wellbeing. The strategy for safety is early and often. As the scale of the pandemic becomes increasingly evident, our minds and bodies respond as they typically would to a traumatic event. Expect changes in how you think, how your body feels and your emotional responses. These responses, although difficult, are typical. The usual advice is that you can expect these responses will diminish in frequency and intensity over a few weeks. If the typical responses to a critical or traumatic event do not diminish over time – seeking help is critical. The pandemic continues and as a result - the advice is different. Right now we are in a unique situation. Not only have we experienced a critical event, but we continue to be part of it. Don't wait -- seek support sooner rather than later. Notice right now how you are feeling and take steps to access support. Start with resources that you can easily access online:

- [Starling](#)
- [PHSA Workplace Wellness resources](#)

If you would like to speak to a trained professional, there are a number of no-cost resources currently available to you:

- Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) through [Homewood Health](#)
- PHSA Psychosocial Staff Support (confidential) - workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca or 604-875-2982
- [BC Psychology Association](#)

Working well during COVID-19

Looking after yourself is an important part of living a happy and healthy life. Join us for upcoming wellness sessions to practice mindfulness, learn about healthy strategies for managing stress and anxiety during COVID-19, and ways to support your overall well-being.

- [Mindfulness Meditation Series](#)
- [Calming Your Mind in Challenging Times](#)
- [COVID-19: Strategies for Managing Stress](#)
- [Virtual Yoga](#): Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00 - 12:20 p.m. via Zoom

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Take the 21 day Self-Care Challenge starting Tuesday April 14. Sign up on [LearningHub](#) to receive the daily Self-Care Challenge email.

This is the fourth article in the “Working well” series by PHSA’s health promotion team, led by Dr. Theresa Newlove. For more tips on staying healthy and psychologically well during this challenging time, check out previous articles below:

Dr. Newlove is now the director, psychological health and safety on PHSA’s human resources team. In this new role, she is responsible for driving a culture of promoting and protecting the psychological well-being and safety of employees across PHSA. You might know Theresa from her work at BC Children’s Hospital and BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre, where she was director of workplace wellness, culture and experience and founder of the successful [“Wellelevator”](#) events at the Oak Street campus and 1333 West Broadway. She remains committed to her BC Children’s and BC Women’s portfolio and will continue with the great work she started there. Look for the “Working well” series every week in PHSA News.

PHSA’s Psychological Health and Safety team supports the mental health of all employees in any PHSA program, service, or division. To learn more about the programs and services available to staff, visit us on [POD](#) or at [PHSA.ca](#). Questions? Email healthpromotion@phsa.ca.