

## WORKING WELL during COVID-19

The following is a collection of information, resources and strategies to support you *working well* during isolation. For more information, please visit [Workplace Wellness: Coping during COVID-19](#) or e-mail [workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca](mailto:workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca).

## WORKING WELL FROM HOME: STRATEGIES

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- **Make a schedule for the entire day**  
Include all of your activities for as 12 hour day: eating, leisure\*, home-schooling, outside time, working, and self-care activities.
- **Keep track of your schedule.**  
At the end of the day, compare your planned schedule with your actual schedule. See how well your schedule aligned with what you thought you were going to do. Adjust your schedule for the next day and continue to work towards a realistic and achievable daily schedule.
- **Designate a work area**  
If possible, situate your home office in a spot with natural light. Move some of your favourite items to the workplace, such as a plant or photo. Try to keep your work-related materials in one spot in your home or have a place where you can put your work materials away. With you work materials in one place, you can 'leave work' at the end of the day.
- **Take your breaks and lunch**  
We know that many individuals are having to segment their work day creatively to adjust for home-based needs. If you are not having a virtual coffee break with a colleague, turn your computer/phone off during your break. Follow your schedule and do the activity you planned during your break. Make sure your outlook calendar reflects the time you are not available.
- **Dress as though you are at work**  
To get into the work mindset, put on your 'work clothes' before starting your work day. This will also make it easier to transition back to your 'personal time' when you change into your 'home clothes' at the end of the day. Don't worry about your hair - unless you have a barber or hairdresser in your home - we are all in the same boat.
- **Socialize with your work colleagues**  
We are all missing the 'incidental' socialization from being together in the workplace. Consider planning an online coffee break with a colleague(s). Maintain your team 'social norms' – e.g. celebrating birthdays and other important events. Designate a virtual social coordinator for the team and/or ask team members to take turns planning virtual team social events.
- **Connect using video capability**  
Virtual meetings, where we can see each other, are typically more energizing than phone only meetings. We are social beings. Seeing each other helps us feel connected. Worried about a messy house? Use a Zoom background!

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- **Don't worry about the pets, kids, partners, family members**

We understand the challenges of working at home. We might see or hear the children, pets, and family members of our colleagues in the background. That's okay – we are working from home.
- **Check in with each other**

Take a few minutes at the beginning of a virtual meeting to check-in with each other – how are you are doing? What do you have planned for today? Is there anything you need? For managers, consider asking your individual team members – what kind of regular check-in would be helpful for them?
- **Outside time during the work day**

Consider have a phone meeting while being outside. Schedule a walk during one of your work-day breaks or sit outside to eat your lunch. It is important to have some social distance 'outside time'. Take a photo of your outside time – share it with your colleagues.
- **Mark the end of your work day**

Signify the end of the work day. Close and/or put away your work related material. Make dinner, go for a walk or a bike ride, change into your comfy clothes, call a friend, family member, have a 'zoom' party, in-house dance party, etc.
- **Revive or start new hobbies or activities**

Now that you are not commuting to work you may have more time for other activities. Pick up that musical instrument, try out a new recipe, start a new hobby/craft, work through your 'to do' list at home, reach out to people you have not connected with for a long time or read those books that have been sitting around. Be curious and creative for how you can use your 'extra' time without all the usual distractions.
- **Self-Care**

Taking care of ourselves is even more critical than ever. We may be feeling a range of experiences – notice your experiences and thoughts. Working from home can result in spending more time in our 'head' without the typical distractions of leaving the home, going to the workplace and our other day to day activities. Consider 'buddying' up with team members for self-care accountability and/or set up a team self-care challenge. If you notice some of your experiences are becoming more intense or difficult, reach out for help. See below: **'Psychological Wellbeing: An early and often strategy'**
- **\*PLANNING Leisure time**

We can think of leisure as a quadrant with dimensions of SOCIAL – INDIVIDUAL and ACTIVE – PASSIVE. **Social/Active** activities would include regular scheduled video social; calls, virtual dance party, games with household members, virtual baking lessons with grandparents. **Individual/Active** activities can include reading, engaging in a hobby, writing a letter, going for a social distance walk/run/dog walk. A **Social/Passive** activity could be a movie night with household members. **Individual/Passive** activities include watching Netflix/TV, listening to music or sitting outside in the good weather.

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING: AN EARLY AND OFTEN STRATEGY

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We have all learned of the importance of PPE (personal protective equipment) and the very specific, sequential steps of ‘donning’ and ‘doffing’. Following the sequence of steps protects the physical safety of direct care workers. Donning another type of PPE (*Psychological* protective equipment) is equally critical to our overall health and well-being. The strategy for safety is: **early and often**. As we have experienced the new, changing and ongoing updates related to the pandemic 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. It is recommended that if the typical responses to a critical or traumatic event do not diminish over time – seeking help is critical. 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.

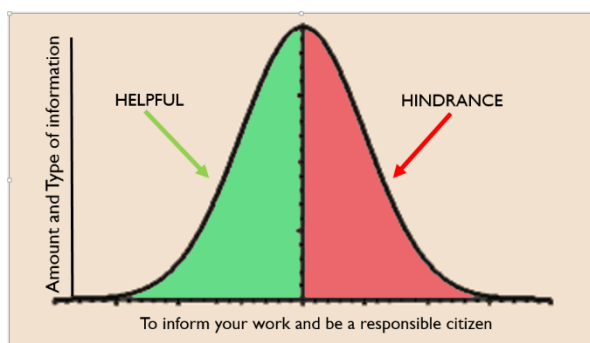
#### Additional resources:

Check out the Mental Health Commission of Canada's [How am I doing? Self-assessment](#). Scan the QR code on the bottom of the page for the full assessment.

### WORKING WELL FROM HOME: ONLINE RESOURCES

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- [BCCDC Dos and Don'ts of Self-isolation](#)
- [MHCC – How to choose your information](#)
- [Homewood Health Pandemic Toolkit for Staff](#)
- [Homewood Health Pandemic Toolkit for Leaders](#)
- [Balancing Work and Elder-care through the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- [A Guide to Managing Your \(Newly\) Remote Workers](#)



Limit the amount of information about Covid-19 (e.g. TV, social media) to only information that will help inform your behaviour as a responsible citizen or in the workplace.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING ONLINE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

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#### MENTAL HEALTH

- [BCMHSUS - Tips for supporting your mental health through the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Anxiety BC - Coping with COVID-19](#)
- [Living with Worry and Anxiety amidst Global Uncertainty](#)
- [Care for Caregivers: Mental Health Support for HCWs](#)
- [Living with Uncertainty during COVID-19](#)
- [The Contagion We Can Control](#)
- [Wellness Together Canada](#)

#### GRIEF

- [Anticipatory Grief during COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 and the Grief Process](#)
- [That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief](#)

#### MINDFULNESS

- [PHSA Mindfulness Resources](#)
- [Five mindfulness tips for HCPs during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)



### PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

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#### **The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)**

- Offered through Homewood Health, PHSA's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is here to support you 24/7 with free, confidential counselling through video counselling, phone, private online chat, or private messaging.
- EFAP is available to all PHSA employees - full-time, part-time, or casual - as well as dependent family members.
- To access this service: phone 1-800-663-1142 or request services online at <https://homewoodhealth.com/corporate/contact-eap-efap>

#### **PHSA Staff Psychosocial Support Service**

- This confidential service is being offered to support PHSA staff who may be experiencing heightened feelings of stress or anxiety as a result of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and working in a healthcare environment.
- You can expect a confidential, 15-30 minute conversation with a colleague who has experience in providing support and sharing helpful coping strategies or additional resources to support you.
- Additional Information: <http://www.phsa.ca/staff-resources-site/Documents/PHSA-Staff-Support-Service-Info.pdf>

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- To access this service: email [workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca](mailto:workplacewellness@cw.bc.ca), and provide your phone number and time window(s) that you will be available for a call

### BC Psychological Association Covid-19 Resources

- The BCPA Covid-19 Psychological Support Service offers “Psychological First Aid” telephone calls (up to 30 minutes), free of charge, to any BC resident (19+) who is experiencing stress, anxiety, or uncertainty due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic by providing information and strategies to help cope with the associated stress.
- Additional information: <https://www.psychologists.bc.ca/covid-19-resources>

Take a moment to see where you are in the 'fear', 'learning' and 'growth' stages of coping with COVID-19? We know that we will be moving to a new normal in the coming months. Consider what it would take to be in the growth stage, a stage or readiness to embark on our 'new normal'. Connect with ourselves and others and reach out for support to be where and who you want to be.



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### SELF-CARE

- Here are a few self-care practices from the 'Psychological Wellbeing' resources.

**Continue to make social connection a priority.** Phone calls and video chats are a great stress-busting, mood-boosting way to spend time with the people you love.

**Stay active.** There are many ways you can keep fit at home such as climbing stairs or following free tutorials and workouts through YouTube.

**Take up a relaxation practice.** Yoga, mindfulness, meditation and deep breathing can help reduce overall levels of stress. Check out the [Breathr App](#) from Kelty Mental Health.

**Limit how often you check the news.** Stay informed through credible sources once or twice a day for updates instead of constant social media updates.



**Maintain a routine.** If you are spending more time at home, it is important to continue with a regular routine including when you wake up/go to bed and meal times.

**Gratitude.** It's important to acknowledge and accept grief and sadness during this time. Alongside those feelings, take time to reflect on what you are thankful for each day.

**Seek help.** If you need more support during this time, there are many resources available. Consider reaching out to the Peer Psychosocial Support service.

**Live in the Present.** Focus on this day or this week. What are your present responsibilities, tasks, and activities that will help you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy?

### EMPLOYEE PERKS

As a way to say THANK YOU, a growing list of retailers such as Starbucks, Nando's and Chevron, are offering discounts to Health Care Workers. Check out <http://www.phsa.ca/staff-resources/employee-perks> for details.

