

July 16, 2020 [Health & Wellness](#) [Across PHSA](#)

# Co-existing with COVID-19: the new social etiquette

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Summer has finally arrived in B.C., and as excited as many of us are to [get back to our “normal”](#), we are recognizing that co-existing with COVID-19 brings many questions and changes to how we socialize with others. What are the new rules for social engagement? How can we navigate in a calm, kind and safe manner when we must remain vigilant? What are our social norms as we start to leave our homes and venture out more?

People will often look at others for behaviour cues when deciding how to navigate unfamiliar situations, but how do we reconcile when we see behaviour that we do not believe to be safe? What is more important; individual best interests or societal best interests?

## “Kindness looks different now”

There are a lot of variables in how people are responding to more opportunities for social engagement and activities while we are learning how to coexist with COVID. What we are seeing may not always align with the guidance of our health experts, and we are not always sure how to react. Living through a pandemic is new to us, so we don't have recent memories to rely on to help guide us. Are aspects of our personality sending us behavioural cues on how to cope with the coronavirus? Studies have shown that extraversion and conscientiousness in particular, are relevant to people's engagement or lack of, with social distancing and hand washing requirements.

What role does [cognitive dissonance](#) - the discomfort people feel when a belief and a behaviour contradict each other - play in our decision making?

Self-awareness may be the key to helping us make choices that don't leave us with a “hangover” type of response, where we have regrets about decisions we have made, or awkward situations we have encountered. Feeling unsure or unsafe in situations can lead to excessive [rumination](#).

Dr. David Dick, PhD, [says](#), “What we can do is pay attention, be kind to ourselves and each other, and try not let the old rules of etiquette lead us to feel insulted or to put each other in danger. Kindness looks different now, and we’ll need constant reminders of this until its new face feels familiar.” We have learned that these situations can bring out both the best and the worst in people.

## Compassion and care – for yourself and others

Communication and compassion for ourselves and others will be the key to help us learn how best to diffuse our awkward or tense moments. Some tips that might help to bring harmony and reduce anxiety:

When someone is standing too close to you, you can say “I think we should have more distance here” with a gentle tone.

Be prepared: Consider carrying a mask with you when going out in public, in case you are asked to wear it, or have it handy to wear when required. This can help relieve anxiety for yourself or others.

Manners are even more critical in difficult situations, to prevent escalation.

Be aware of your immediate surroundings. Stay alert.

If you don’t feel ready to accept invitations for social interactions, be ready with a heartfelt and insightful response such as “It sounds wonderful, but we are all staying home right now and not taking any chances.”

Keep your hands by your sides during greetings; you can verbally greet the person, and perhaps gesture with your arms towards yourself and a nod.

Avoid public shaming

Please share your tips in the comment box below on how you successfully navigated an awkward social COVID etiquette moment.

## PHSA Resources

Visit PHSA’s [Supporting Our Workforce page](#) for articles, resources, and tools that provide psychosocial support during COVID-19.

## Interested in learning more how to support yourself and others?

Resilience at Work (R@W) workshop: Interested in learning how to maintain or boost your resilience during COVID-19? Register on the LearningHub for [Resilience in the Workplace – Co-Existing with COVID-19: What is your plan?](#) These 90 minute interactive Zoom sessions are facilitated by R@W accredited practitioners and offered either as an open forum (any PHSA employee can sign up), or for teams. Leaders can request sessions for their teams by contacting [psychhealthsafety@phsa.ca](mailto:psychhealthsafety@phsa.ca).

Employee Psychosocial Check-In: Training for Leaders sessions: For managers, supervisors, and directors. [Sign up here](#) to join this 1.0 hour session and learn, step-by-step, how to provide a first-line response to staff who are experience psychological distress in the workplace.

July 16, 2020 [Health & Wellness](#) [Across PHSA](#)

# Sunny Hill programs adapting to deliver high-touch level of care remotely

**VAN BOREK, HANAH [VCH]**

Communications Specialist

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Teams at Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children see children from all over British Columbia either on site or through outreach. Before COVID-19, Sunny Hill staff were already beginning to incorporate digital tools like telehealth and videoconferencing into their practice. Such tools are especially useful in supporting patients with lengthy travel to clinics residing in distant communities such as Prince Rupert or Fort St. John.

The onset of COVID-19 accelerated the need for Virtual Health technology within Sunny Hill as providers, clinicians and staff rushed to find workarounds to pandemic measures.

Services within Sunny Hill include everything from tone management, therapeutic recreation, positioning and mobility, to hearing loss, visual impairment and developmental coordination disorders. Patients range in age from newborn to young adult and require treatment for complex medical, physical and developmental needs. Sunny Hill patients often need extra support for managing life at home and in their communities.

Many Sunny Hill clinicians and therapists approach their cases with the long-term goal of helping patients and families adapt rehabilitation and care to their day-to-day lives. This requires a close relationship between clinician and family. Navigating this work while keeping families safe from COVID-19 added a new layer of challenges, but also some surprising gains thanks to Virtual Health.

## Increased family involvement and time saved

Leeann Taylor, program manager for the Acute Rehabilitation inpatient unit at Sunny Hill, has seen how virtual meetings support cohesiveness among family units and care teams.

“Patients are assigned to a full care team meeting each week for half an hour, which can be difficult for both parents or guardians to attend,” said Leeann. “One usually needs to look after the patient’s siblings or remain at the office. By way of video conference, we’ve noticed both family members become more involved as they can make it to more meetings together remotely while juggling their regular responsibilities.”



“In terms of outpatient visits, it often takes time for our care staff to coordinate offsite appointments,” added Leeann. “Being able to see patients where they live gives insight into how they’re managing at home and allows clinicians to offer tips for improving their quality of life. When visits can happen virtually, it expedites the process and these important consultations can be done sooner. For the purpose of supporting at-home visits, I can see us continuing to use virtual tools in the future.”

Within the BC Autism Assessment Network at Sunny Hill, Program Manager Tracy Conley has seen Virtual Health enhance connectedness with families.

“Clinicians are actually spending more time with families by staying linked virtually. For patients undergoing autism assessments, while we can’t complete their full diagnoses without the in-person piece, clinicians have continued to interview families over Zoom maintaining the connection and assuring parents their case isn’t forgotten but being actively worked on.”

“For some cases involving youth, we’re finding patients are actually quite comfortable and responding well to Virtual Health technology because it’s already part of their lifestyle and how they connect with their friends. In fact, they’re even more adept than the clinicians at times.”

Tracy remarked that technical ability is sometimes a hurdle, “For most staff, when a glitch happens like the video screen freezing, they can troubleshoot and find a solution, but it’s been a part of the learning curve for our team.”

## Adapting tests and workshops to an online platform

Nevertheless, Sunny Hill staff are proving their capacity to be flexible and adapt to new technology. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) as part of the assistive technology team have recently begun implementing tests traditionally done on paper to an online method representing a significant practice change. Additionally, SLPs were able to leverage Zoom as an alternative means to hold intervention workshops for children with complex communication needs.

Other Virtual Health wins for Sunny Hill include the successful rescheduling of 82 face-to-face Tone Management appointments held either by Zoom or by phone. The Sunny Hill Feeding and Nutrition team went as far as developing take-home handouts to assist families in preparing for virtual feeding assessments with instructions on camera positioning and environmental setup.

Across Sunny Hill, countless other examples of clinicians, physicians and case managers going the extra mile to make Virtual Health work demonstrate their commitment to finding the right solutions for patients. While nothing is more personable than face-to-face appointments, staff continue to raise the bar to reach their typical standard of “high touch” care with the help of Virtual Health.

Part of the Provincial Health Services Authority, Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children provides specialized development and rehabilitation services for children, youth and their families. As of August 30, 2020, it will be co-located with other BC Children’s Hospital programs on Oak Street in Vancouver. For more information, visit [bcchildrens.ca](https://bcchildrens.ca).

The Office of Virtual Health leads and provides strategic direction for the overall Virtual Health initiative across PHSA. For more information, please visit the OVH [webpage](#) or send an email to [officeofvirtualhealth@phsa.ca](mailto:officeofvirtualhealth@phsa.ca).

July 16, 2020 [Health & Wellness](#) [Across PHSA](#)

# Self-care: where do we start?

## HEALTH PROMOTION

Health Promotion Coordinator

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PHSA staff have gone above and beyond like never before to support British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even as we move into a phase of co-existing with COVID, we know there are many staff members who may not have been prioritizing their own self-care while so focused on the care of others. Adjusting to rapid changes has likely impacted our healthy routines that may have been in place.

International Self-Care Day is on July 24 and offers the opportunity to encourage staff to “put on their own oxygen mask”, re-commit to their own care and come up with a plan to holistically support their emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual well-being. It’s about prioritizing taking care of ourselves.

Self-care is a personal matter, and it will look different for everyone. To help create and support a balanced self-care routine, we have categorized five areas of wellness tied to self-care: emotional, mental, physical, social and spiritual.

Join us from July 20 to 24 to build your own self-care kit that will support your wellness in any—or all!—of these [five areas](#). Sign up for Five Days of Self-Care to participate in various activities throughout the week, to have some fun, and meet some cool people. Interested? [Sign up here.](#)

As an added bonus, the weekend of Self-Care Day (July 24-26), there will be a special perk available to PHSA employees to support your self-care. Check out the [PHSA employee perks page](#) to learn more!

## PHSA Resources

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Watch for upcoming resources and opportunities for connection in support of Self-Care Day, July 24, 2020.

## Interested in learning more how to support yourself and others?

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July 16, 2020 [People Across PHSA](#) , [BC Cancer](#) , [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) , [BC Children's and BC Women's](#) , [BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services](#)

## Dr. Bonnie Henry "spotted" sporting a BC Cancer - Victoria screening sticker

**SETO, SUSAN [PHSA]**

Communications Officer

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Since the start of the pandemic, BC Cancer has adopted universal screening to assess each person entering its sites for COVID-19 symptoms. Universal screening along with other protective measures, such as conducting virtual and phone appointments with patients, work-from-home options for staff, physical distancing, and increased cleaning protocols, have prevented the potential spread of COVID-19 at our centres.

As part of the daily screening process at BC Cancer - Victoria, each patient, staff or visitor is screened for COVID-19 symptoms and once cleared, they receive a coloured sticker to wear before entering the building. The sticker alerts staff that this person has been screened. The colour of the sticker changes daily and is communicated to staff each morning via an all-staff email. The morning emails are fun and informative and include a photo of a staff member wearing the screening dot colour of the day.

On Friday, July 10, BC Cancer - Victoria staff were surprised with a photo of B.C.'s provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, sporting a pink screening dot on her badge. Dr. Henry is widely known to have a penchant for pink as seen with the release of her signature John Fluevog shoes to support the fight against COVID-19. Through the coordination of teams at BC Cancer and the Ministry of Health, Dr. Henry kindly agreed to provide a photo of herself showing the pink dot sticker on her badge.



*Dr. Bonnie Henry sent in a photo of herself with a pink screening dot to include in a BC Cancer - Victoria all-staff email.*

"We thought it would be a huge morale boost for staff if we could get a photo of Dr. Bonnie Henry, wearing one of our screening dots. We have all been watching the briefings from Dr. Henry and Minister Dix and we are grateful that we have such competent leadership helping us navigate this unprecedented storm. The photo of Dr. Henry with her pink screening dot reminds us all to 'Be Calm, Be Kind and Be Safe.'" - Kelly Nystedt, executive director, and Dr. Jason Hart, executive medical director, BC Cancer - Victoria

Dr. Henry has been applauded for her success in keeping the COVID-19 numbers low in our province. Thank you Dr. Henry for all that you do and showing your support for BC Cancer's screening process!