



# MHPSS Bulletin

## January-February

*A bulletin to connect people, networks, and organizations across British Columbia, fostering the sharing of resources and building knowledge in the field of mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Past issues of the bulletin and recordings of Lunch and Learn webinars will be available on our website using the button below.*

[Provincial Psychosocial Services](#)

## Education & Learning Opportunities

**New! Public Online Course (Free) by Provincial Psychosocial Services**

- [Eco-Anxiety and Climate Distress](#): Learn about ecological/ environmental stress and distress, how it affects you and your community, and ways to mitigate it.
- [Getting Through Tough Days](#): Learn about how stress affects you and practical ways that can help you get through those particularly tough days.

### Wellness Exchange Series

The Wellness Exchange consists of five one-hour interactive workshops designed to support mental and emotional well-being.

[Register here](#) or read more information in this [flyer](#) (PDF).

#### Problem Solving

- Tuesday, Feb 17: 7-8pm (PST)
- Thursday, Feb 19: 12-1pm (PST)

#### Positive Activities

### Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is intended for anyone interested in learning more about how to provide emotional and practical support during emergencies and crises.

#### Next Session:

Weekend: February 21 & 28, 2026: 9am-1pm PST, register [here](#)

- Tuesday, Feb 24: 7-8pm (PST)
- Thursday, Feb 26: 12-1pm (PST)

*(Please note that due to high interest in PFA, registration on this form does not guarantee spot – a confirmation email will be sent when your spot is secured).*

### **Managing Reactions**

- Tuesday, March 3: 7-8pm (PST)
- Thursday, March 5: 12-1pm (PST)

### **Helpful Thinking**

- Tuesday, March 10: 7-8pm (PST)
- Thursday, March 12: 12-1pm (PST)

### **Healthy Connections**

- Tuesday, March 17: 7-8pm (PST)
- Thursday, March 19: 12-1pm (PST)

*All courses and trainings listed in this Bulletin are voluntary and intended to provide additional learning opportunities. They do not replace or fulfill any mandatory training requirements set by an organization.*

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## **Lunch and Learn Webinar**

**February 4 at Noon-1pm**

**Kristi Rintoul and Tobias Jones- United Way BC**

Building on their experience and reputation as a trusted partner, United Way British Columbia's Emergency Response team supports communities in times of crisis by bringing together governments, First Nations, Elders, local leaders, and community members. Our focus is on strengthening community resilience—helping people prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

During this Lunch and Learn, we will provide a high-level overview of United Way British Columbia's provincial work and program priorities. From there, we will take a deeper dive into our Emergency Response, Recovery & Resilience portfolio: how United Way BC shows up in emergency contexts, the philosophy that guides our approach, what community-led recovery looks like in practice, and the role of our Social Sector Activation Guidebook. We will highlight specific examples, including our wildfire response efforts and our Kapwa Strong initiative following the tragedy at the Lapu Lapu Day festival in Vancouver.

### **Speakers**

Kristi Rintoul, Senior Director, Community Impact and Investment, United Way BC Since 2016, Kristi has stewarded millions in regional investments, facilitated critical conversations on issues such as the toxic drug crisis and the capacity of the not-for-profit sector, and supported the merger of eight United Way offices across the province. She also played a key role in developing United Way BC's Emergency Response function, helping to sustain essential multisectoral work during major wildfires and floods.

Tobias Jones, Emergency Response Manager, United Way BC Tobias coordinates United Way BC's Emergency Response work across the province, supporting both immediate response and long-term recovery and resilience-building. Since 2020, he has helped establish the Emergency Response portfolio and advance the organization's strategy for cross-provincial resilience.

**Please register in advance but feel free to share the invitation. This session will be recorded and sent out to registrants as well as hosted on our [website's education page](#) which also contains past bulletins and past Lunch and Learn recordings.**

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/0c633bcb-706c-4455-8848-7084b790b7ca@31f660a5-192a-4db3-92ba-ca424f1b259e>

*Email Nikki to get added directly to the distribution list for all future webinar invitations [edu.pps@phsa.ca](mailto:edu.pps@phsa.ca)*

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## Engaging and Useful Links to Explore

Check out the **Athabasca University News** for 'Climate Change Taking Toll on Teen Mental Health, Study Finds' and other stories. [Climate change taking toll on teen mental health, study finds | News | Athabasca University](#)

***Climate Resilience and Mental Health Initiatives Library*** [Climate Resilience and Mental Health Initiatives Library — Mental Health and Climate Change](#)

**MyHealthAlberta.ca** offers a number of excellent mental health resources for emergencies and disasters such as 'Preparing Emotionally for a Disaster or Emergency' and 'Helping your Child or Teen Prepare Emotionally for a Disaster or Emergency'. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/preparing-emotionally-disaster-emergency.aspx>

As an excellent source for mental health and wellness resources services available in British Columbia, check out the **Virtual Mental Health Supports** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/virtual-mental-health-supports>

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# Setting Yourself Up for the New Year

Author: David Hutton

*This article has been edited with the use of AI (ChatGPT)*

The start of a new year often arrives with a familiar mix of hope and pressure. We tell ourselves this is the year we will be calmer, more balanced, more resilient. Yet experience teaches us something quieter and more honest: stress will come, uncertainty will arrive uninvited, and life will continue to ask things of us whether we feel ready or not. Setting yourself up for the year ahead is not about eliminating stressors; it is about preparing how you will meet them.

One helpful place to begin is by shifting the question from *"How do I stop stress?"* to *"What helps me stay grounded when stress shows up?"* Stress is not a personal failure or a sign you are doing something wrong. In many cases, it is a reasonable response to real demands, losses, and responsibilities. When you stop arguing with the presence of stress, you free up energy to respond to it more skillfully.

Preparation starts with awareness. Take a moment to reflect on what tends to tax you most — not in theory, but in your actual life. Is it time pressure, conflict, uncertainty, emotional labour, or the feeling of carrying too much alone? Naming your common stressors is not about dwelling on them; it is about recognizing patterns so they don't catch you by surprise. Stress feels heavier when it arrives unnamed and unexplained.

Equally important is identifying what reliably steadies you. This does not need to be dramatic or aspirational. Often, it is the simplest practices that are most protective: regular movement, moments of quiet, time outdoors, meaningful connection, or brief pauses where you remind yourself that you are doing the best you can with what you have. The goal is not perfection or constant calm, but enough steadiness to take the next step without becoming overwhelmed by the whole road ahead.

Boundaries also matter, especially in a world that rewards constant availability. Setting yourself up for the year means being honest about your limits and practicing small acts of self-respect before you are exhausted. This might look like saying no earlier, asking for help sooner, or letting "good enough" be sufficient more often. Boundaries are not barriers to caring; they are what make sustainable caring possible.

Finally, remember that resilience is not something you summon only in crisis. It is built quietly, day by day, through ordinary choices that support your nervous system and sense of agency. You will still have difficult moments this year. You may still feel stretched, tired, or uncertain at times. But if you prepare with compassion rather than pressure, you give yourself something far more valuable than a resolution: the capacity to remain present, to adapt, and to keep moving forward — one step at a time.

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## Definitions

**Psychosocial:** The term 'psychosocial' refers to the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person and the social dimension of a person. The *psychological* dimension includes the internal, emotional and thought processes, feelings and reactions, and the *social* dimension includes relationships, family and community network, social values and cultural practices. 'Psychosocial support' refers to the actions that address both psychological and social needs of individuals, families and communities. (Psychosocial interventions. A Handbook, page 25.)

*The title "MHPSS" in this bulletin refers to a broad approach to mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies. It does not signify the endorsement or inclusion of specific services or organizations.*

### **Provincial Psychosocial Services**

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