

CAMHELPS

CamHelps provides you with tips and resources to support your mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic



TOPIC: Stay Connected

One of the most repeated calls to action during the COVID-19 outbreak has been for citizens to follow social or physical distancing protocols. A few months ago, most of us had never heard either of these two phrases but now they have become an oft-repeated mantra that reminds us how to keep ourselves and people around us safe.

Intentionally keeping the required six feet of separation from others has required a significant adjustment to our regular habits of gathering, eating, worshipping, shopping, or socializing in countless ways. We've been required to learn new ways of being together while not being in close physical proximity to each other.

At Camosun, social distancing has changed our way of working together as almost all instruction and college services have moved from the tangible to the virtual. Our physical workplaces that are normally filled with friends and colleagues who provide us with support, encouragement, and kindness have changed. Where we once spent our workdays sitting, learning, teaching, laughing, and working alongside each other, we now appear in individual boxes during online video conversations.

Fortunately, physical distancing does not have to mean social isolation. It may mean we need to temporarily adjust our expectations of being in relationship with others without the familiar social cues provided through physical closeness. Instead, evolving into more of a virtual community may teach us to listen more closely, focus more intently, and relate more authentically, rather than barricading ourselves behind walls of fear, anxiety, and mistrust.

Stay connected. Stay Safe.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Camosun Community Connects

One of Camosun College's strengths is the strong sense of community that we share. [C3: Camosun Community Connects](#) is a combined effort of Strategic Initiatives, Learning Services and Human Resources to keep our sense of community alive with various virtual activities that are still expanding:

- Contribute to the [Community Discussion Board](#);
- Gather the children and check out [Family Fun and Resources for Kids](#);
- Join the [Workplace Leaders Community of Practice](#);
- Become a [Resilience Champion](#); or
- Watch for new Camosun-led opportunities that are being added weekly.



Set Predictable Times to be Available

If you are a Workplace Leader, communicate to your workgroup specific times when you commit to be available for a phone call, video chat, or email exchange. Being available 'as and when required' is helpful, but establishing specific times shows a leadership commitment to nurturing valuable workplace relationships.

For others, be proactive and let colleagues, coworkers, friends and family members know about regular time slots when they can get in touch with you through the day or the week.

Show Some Kindness

Send someone – a co-worker or colleague – an email, text, or direct message with a genuine compliment or expression of gratitude. Personalized messages don't take much time and show you've purposefully chosen to think kindly of someone else. After all, each one of us can use a little extra kindness to counter the stress and uncertainty of our current situation.

Create Intentional Space for Connecting

Find ways to recreate the relaxed banter between colleagues by modelling and encouraging time to share the stories that would normally be shared if we were in our regular workplaces:

- Keep virtual meetings light and include time to focus on each other instead of just focussing on the work;
- Plan virtual coffee breaks, team lunch gatherings, tea parties, or try out a virtual potluck;
- Make a point to continue celebrating milestone events like birthdays or other accomplishments;
- Get creative with team meetings by picking themes such as crazy hat or tacky shirt day;
- Share and discuss a book, article, or story;
- Attend a webinar as a group;
- Participate in virtual exercise classes together; or
- Discover ways to play board games with workplace friends....cribbage anyone?

Find New Ways to Give Back

Although the need for volunteers in the South Island has not changed as the result of COVID-19, the way you can be involved as a volunteer certainly has. Stay connected beyond Camosun by exploring how to volunteer your time, your knowhow, or whatever else you can offer to organizations looking for some help. Reach out to [Volunteer Victoria](#) as a place to start.

RESOURCES

Camosun College Offerings:

- Join and participate in our [Camosun Community Connects \(C3\)](#)
- Take advantage of our learning opportunities by consulting the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning's (CETL) [Virtual Course Calendar](#)
- Enrol in one of the [TELFIN TFE WILNEW \(TTW\) Spring Offerings](#). TTW is an award-winning, blended delivery course which provides insight into an Indigenous world view; describes the impact of colonization and how it affects students

Fun Ideas to Stay Connected with your Virtual Workgroup:

- Implement some [Healthy Break Activities](#) as a team and find creative ways to take breaks together
- Consider some of [these suggestions](#) to help keep a remote team connected

Opportunities in our Community:

- Explore opportunities with [Volunteer Victoria](#) and check-out their [Tips for Volunteering During COVID-19](#)

If you are experiencing a mental well-being related emergency or need urgent support, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911

WORKING REMOTELY RESOURCES

[10 General Tips for Working Remotely](#) | [Remote Work Guidelines](#) |

[Tips For Workplace Leaders Supervising Remote Workers](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Questions about Camosun's Employee Wellness resources – including suggestions for future CamHelps – can be sent to healthytogether@camosun.bc.ca.

Frequently check Camosun's [COVID -19 information page](#) and [FAQs](#).

Workplace Leaders looking for support with managing remote workgroups can contact Nancy Ali, Organization and People Development Specialist (AliN@camosun.bc.ca)