

CAMHELPS

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



TOPIC: Nurture Your spirit

In times when people are beset by unwelcome circumstances beyond their control, they can find themselves asking some big questions:

- Why did this happen to me?
- What is really important in my life?
- What keeps me grounded in spite of my circumstances?

In the face of the uncertainty, loss, anxiety, and depression that have spread wider and faster than the COVID-19 virus itself, the positive associations between mental well-being and spirituality are being noticed. Spiritual practices and beliefs are associated with reduced levels of pain, anxiety and depression; and improved mental well-being outcomes for individuals who have experienced trauma. Since spirituality is concerned with internal, and sometimes eternal issues, it can help provide a different perspective on uncontrollable events, suffering, and issues of ultimate meaning.

When practiced in community with others, spirituality and faith can be a strong source of encouragement, connection, and support. The behaviours encouraged in many spiritual traditions such as hope, commitment, love and forgiveness have been associated with stronger immune systems and overall improvements to physical and mental health. Spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, and ritual have been connected to a decrease in the stress hormones norepinephrine and cortisol which results in decreased stress, anxiety, depression and other stress-related illnesses.

Spirituality is not necessarily tied to any particular religious belief, dogma, or tradition but, for some people, spiritual development is formed in the context of specific religious traditions, each with their own approaches to worship, beliefs, sacred texts and traditions.

Whether your spiritual life is cultivated in silence, in exuberance, in nature, in a religious building, in private or with others, it can be a powerful support, comfort, and resting place during the journey through the COVID-19 experience.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

DO things that 'fill you up'

People engage in a variety of things to help them connect with themselves, others, and the natural world. Here are some examples of what this connection could look like...

- spend time enjoying nature – take a walk in the woods, near the ocean, or any other place where you find a sense of peacefulness;
- join a virtual book club to meet with other people to explore new ideas and perhaps challenge existing viewpoints;
- spend time in silent meditation, reflection or prayer;
- keep a daily 'Thankfulness Journal' of things that you are grateful for;
- seek out beautiful things...
 - take a virtual tour of the world's most iconic galleries and museums;
 - listen to music that lifts your spirits and gives you energy;
 - write a poem, paint a painting, sing a song.
- learn more about different religions or your own beliefs.

BE your values

With the closure of many recreational activities, shopping malls, sports arenas and other venues where we would normally spend our time, staying at home and physically isolating may provide the time to do some personal reflection about our values, priorities, and self-awareness. The following examples might spark some new personal practices or commitments:

- I will **stay** focused in the present, to be alert, unhurried and attentive;
- I will **be** honest with myself and with others;
- I will **find** time and a place to where I can cultivate a still, peaceful state of mind;
- I will **extend** forgiveness towards myself and others;
- I will **discover** a deeper sense of empathy for others;
- I will **provide** comfort and hope to someone who is in need;
- I will **learn** when to speak or act, and when to remain silent or still.

KNOW your own resourcefulness

Each person has experience and insight into the things that support their ability to navigate complexity and change. Consider the following questions as a starting point for learning more about the various resources you turn to when looking for guidance and inspiration:

- Where do I find a sense of meaning and purpose?
- What are my values? Where have I learned them or seen them modelled?
- What brings me a deep sense of joy?
- Who have I turned to in the past for comfort, encouragement, and hope?
- What qualities do I have that could be used to support someone else?
- Who is someone from history that overcame adversity or challenges? What can I learn from their story?
- Which books or sacred writings have I found meaningful or inspirational during previous periods of change and challenge?

RESOURCES

Look around for inspiration and beauty

Some of the world's best museums and galleries have created virtual tours and walk-throughs. The [Google Arts and Culture](#) site has links to [hundreds of museums](#) that you can visit virtually. Here are a few places to start:

- [The Louvre](#)
- [The Guggenheim](#)
- [The Vatican](#)
- [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#)
- [Royal British Columbia Museum](#)

Experience the outdoors

You don't have to go far to immerse yourself in nature. Check out the [Capital Regional District Regional Park and Trail Maps](#). Remember to practice current physical distancing requirements.

You can experience some of the world's most notable historic sites from your own home. It's a different way to get outdoors while staying inside:

- [Stonehenge](#)
- [Taj Mahal](#)
- [Machu Picchu](#)
- [Acropolis of Athens](#)

Grab a book – Join a discussion

Ask around about joining a book club – chances are someone you know is in one. Consider suggesting a selection from [Goodread's](#) collection of top rated book club books.

Participate in Community

[Camosun's C3 initiative](#) has lots of ways that you can connect with others around various spirit building activities.

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

the Vancouver Island Crisis Line provides 24/7 support, crisis intervention, information, and resources to Island residents

the KUU-US Crisis Response Service at 1-800-588-8717 - OR

the KUU-US Crisis Response Service provides 24/7 culturally-aware crisis support to Indigenous people in B.C.

in the event of an emergency [call 911](#).

WORKING REMOTELY RESOURCES

[10 General Tips for Working Remotely](#)

[Remote Work Guidelines](#)

[Tips For Workplace Leaders in 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)