

CAMHELPS

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



TOPIC: CARE FOR OTHERS

Without question, one of the hallmarks of Camosun College's workplace culture is how colleagues and coworkers care for each other during uncertain or difficult times. Under normal circumstances, our daily face-to-face interactions make it easier to provide support to people we work with. Our physical proximity to each other also helps Workplace Leaders to know if someone in their workgroup might be struggling or in need of specialized supports.

With most of our services temporarily transitioned to the virtual world, it might seem more challenging to know how to express your care and concern. Workplace Leaders might be uncertain about how to promote the mental well-being of their workgroup or how to respond in instances where an employee's mental well-being is showing signs of change.

Fortunately, there are lots of opportunities for colleagues, coworkers, and Workplace Leaders to create a virtual work environment where care and support can be demonstrated. It's not about doing anything new, it's about finding new ways to create and encourage resiliency, empowerment, and appreciation.

Read on to learn what you can do and what resources are available to help nurture a culture of care and concern for each other and for your workgroups through this disorienting time.

WHAT YOU CAN

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Camosun's core capability of 'Foster and Nurture Relationships' is a great starting place to think about how to care for each other. Our shared circumstances might actually provide an ideal opportunity to see this capability in action.

Maintaining positive workplace relationships is at the heart of everything we do. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone, everywhere. Our collective experience holds the potential to rally colleagues and workgroups around innovation, commitment to service, and the ability to successfully pivot when situations change.

Three aspects of fostering and nurturing relationships that everyone can practice include: generosity, recognition and connection. Here are some ideas on how to do that:

BE GENEROUS

- Generous with feedback – provide coworkers and entire teams with regular, specific, timely feedback about their accomplishments – big and small. Remain transparent about workgroup and individual priorities and link them to workgroup and individual contributions;
- Generous with time – relationships take time whether in person or on a screen. Make sure you are as available as possible. Employees will respond to the COVID-19 situation differently – some may need more affirmation, encouragement, or information than others. Slow down long enough to listen to what individuals or entire workgroups are asking for;
- Generous with openness to new ideas or suggestions – sometimes disruption can be a catalyst for innovation or improvement. Create a virtual, online list where ideas and suggestions can be captured and explored further.

PRACTICE APPRECIATION

- Acknowledge that COVID-19 has transported everyone into a world with new complexities, realities, and uncertainty. Help keep each other grounded by acknowledging individual and workgroup accomplishments;
- Dedicate time at each virtual meeting to giving or receiving encouragement and recognition;
- Create a Teams channel dedicated to team successes and shout outs.

COMMIT TO CONNECT

- Make it a habit to check in. It can be tempting for virtual teams and workplace leaders to assume ‘no news is good news’ when in fact, no news can be harmful to relationships and workgroup cohesion;
- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with employees and entire workgroups. Allow or create space or casual chit-chat. This kind of banter is a great way to help people focus, decompress, and feel heard and valued;
- Pay attention to each other. Employees may not be stressed about their work, but may be dealing with intense concerns about things unrelated to work such as finances or the health and safety of beloved family members, seniors and elders.
- If you become concerned about the mental well-being of someone, reach out with kindness and ask how they are doing. Then listen. And possibly listen some more. Acknowledge that you are not trying to be a therapist or mental health professional. Most often, using active listening skills are enough in the moment. Extend compassion. Clumsy kindness is often more appreciated than perfected silence.

If your concern persists or you notice further changes in someone’s mood or behaviour (e.g.: uncharacteristic indifference, anger, or withdrawal), share your concerns with someone you trust (e.g.: Workplace Leader, Human Resources Consultant, or Camosun’s Employee Health Advisors). Voicing your concerns isn’t gossip if it comes from a good hearted, well intentioned place.

RESOURCES

HOMEWOOD HEALTH – our Employee and Family Assistance Program provides an extensive collection of resources, supports, coaching and e-courses available to employees of Camosun College and their families. Homewood resources include, but are not limited to:

- [Homewood Health Active Listening Overview](#) (PDF)
- [Homewood Health Getting Along with Others](#) (PDF)
- [Homewood Health Supporting Each Other Through Difficult Times](#) (PDF)
- [Homewood Health i-Volve program, an online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy program to support managing anxiety](#) (promotional PDF)
- [Homewood Health Managing the Impact of COVID-19](#)

To contact Homewood Health:

- By phone: 1-800-663-1142 (available 24/7)
- [Login into Homeweb](#) – Homewood Health's website.

MICROSOFT TEAMS – A messenger-based program that allows employees to communicate with each other through chat, phone calls, and video.

- [How to install Teams on your computer](#)
- [Microsoft's Online End User Training Site for Teams](#)
- [Microsoft Teams – Quick Tips and Tricks](#) (PDF)

CAMOSUN RESOURCES

- [Seeking Medical Support in a Virtual Environment](#)
- [Healthy Together! Resiliency Resources](#)

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 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)