

# CAMHELPS

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



Issue: August 2021

## THE GRAND REOPENING

It has been almost 18 months since the World Health Organization declared the spread of COVID-19 to be a pandemic. Globally and locally, people have experienced an extended time of change, uncertainty, anxiety, physical distancing, masking....and the list goes on. Hopefully the pandemic experience has also provided opportunities for people to experience kindness, support, resilience, love, patience and a host of other good things.

Over the past several weeks and months at Camosun College, the number of employees working on-site has increased as the result of the removal of public health restrictions and direction from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training to expect the full resumption of on-campus activities by September.

In response, most college employees are returning to their pre-pandemic workplaces after an extended period of working remotely. For some employees hired during pandemic, this fall may be the first time working on-site and meeting colleagues face to face. And for employees who have been working on-site throughout the pandemic, the growing numbers of employees and students on campus this fall is a significant change in their work environment.

## RETURNING TO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

'Re-entry anxiety' is a COVID-inspired phrase that is being used to describe the unsettling feelings related to the gradual reduction in public health guidelines and mandates that have been in place for over a year to help prevent virus spread. As communities and workplaces are finally allowed to increase interpersonal contact with fewer COVID-19 related restrictions, some people are experiencing hesitancy, fear, and apprehension about the possible increased risk of infection, navigating new social expectations, and constructing new personal and family routines. In addition, the ongoing spread of various COVID-19 variants is a reminder that the pandemic is not over and that public health rules and restrictions could return in the future.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### Focus on what you can control

- Be patient with yourself – September is a significant adjustment to your work and home life. It's taken 18 months to get here. Don't expect yourself to adjust to these new circumstances overnight.
- Acknowledge your feelings and find helpful, safe ways to express your evolving pandemic-related feelings.
- Write in a journal, compose a song, express your feelings through art.
- Tap into your support network of close friends and confidants.
- Find strength and comfort in your spiritual traditions and ceremonies.
- Adapt any positive lifestyle habits you have adopted during the pandemic to the workplace. Make a personal commitment to build physical activity into your day. Locate quiet places to meditate or unplug for a moment. Eat healthy foods. Laugh.

## Be patient with others

- Recognize that everyone is at individual stages of readjusting to a fully operational campus.
- Respect and ask other about their preferred physical boundaries. Ask permission before entering someone's office or workspace.
- Remember that people's unique pandemic experiences may have been difficult, emotionally exhausting, or even traumatic.
- Be aware that colleagues or coworkers may have changed over the last 18 months. Don't assume they will interact or respond in similar ways as prior to the pandemic.
- Listen attentively to others without offering solutions.

## Prepare and plan

- Working on-site again might require new routines or supports involving family, elder or childcare. Make necessary arrangements sooner rather than later.
- Have conversations with family members about how working on-site may impact them or explore feelings they might have about your transition to the workplace. Children or other dependants may have grown accustomed to having you around. Reduce their anxiety through reassurance, collective problem solving, and enormous amounts of reassurance.
- Many people added new pets to their lives during the pandemic. Consider any requirements for pet care while you are at work.
- Be aware that your work environment experience may change: from quiet to noisy, from focussed to multiple interruptions, or from flexible time management to regular shift/office hours.

# RESOURCES

## Homewood Health

Homewood Health provides Camosun College employees with the following resources and supports:

- Professional counsellors can be contacted by calling Homewood 24/7 and arranging to speak with a counsellor. All calls are confidential.
  - Toll free: 1-800-663-1142
  - TTY: 1-888-384-1152
- [Homeweb](#) – Homewood's website has a wide variety of health articles and e-courses. Instructions for logging into the website can be found [here](#).
- [i-Volve](#) – Homewood's online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy program that supports managing anxiety.

## Camosun Resources

- [CamHelps Resources](#) – A curated list of resources, supports and content was compiled during the early stages of the pandemic. Many of these resources may still be helpful.
- [Returning to Different](#) – a 90 minute online workshop available to all employees that focuses on the mental well-being aspects of the Fall 2021 transition. Course offered August through September.
- [Camosun's Safe Start site](#) – Information about the college's COVID-19 health and safety measures.

## Additional Resources

- [COVID-19 Tip Sheet: Returning to the Workplace](#) – Mental Health Commission of Canada (PDF)
- [Return to the workplace: A psychological toolkit for heading back to work](#) – Canadian Mental Health Commission of Ontario (PDF)
- [COVID-19: Take Care of Yourself](#) – Canadian Mental Health Association of BC (webpage)
- [Why not everyone is ready to embrace post-pandemic life](#) – CBC News (video)

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**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.**



## MORE INFORMATION

Questions about Camosun's Employee Wellness resources can be sent to [healthytogether@camosun.bc.ca](mailto:healthytogether@camosun.bc.ca).

More information about the Employee Mental Well-being Support Plan can be found on the [Healthy Together SharePoint site](#).

