



March 2020

Strategies for Working from Home

As many of us are learning, working from home is more complex than it sounds! The first thing to recognize is just that: this is not easy! Be kind to yourself. We can cope by being extra gentle with ourselves and others. Second, work itself may feel different than before. For one, many rely on daily social support from colleagues to fuel ideas and strengthen one another's work and the organization as a whole. Your home may also be filled with distractions you don't have a work; particularly if you have others working from home, and children trying to get school work done. As life challenges us these days, we must prioritize maintaining our mental health and cultivating a sense of wellness as best we can. Here are a few ideas:

Set up your office space:

- Choose a work space away from distraction if possible.
- If relevant, ensure confidentiality in your use of space and technology
- Talk with family about quiet hours and break times.
- Make it comfortable for you and clutter free.
- Take small breaks to give your eyes, neck, back and shoulders a rest.
- Consider making space in your office to stretch, move, and reset.

Set a routine and stick to a structured schedule that gives the whole family a sense of predictability and agency:

- Make a schedule with the family.
- Include regular sleep, eating, start and stop work times.
- Schedule mandatory breaks.
- If you live alone, schedule to connect with friends and colleagues.
- Try not to overschedule and consider time to care for family and yourself.
- Schedule in exercise and time outside.
- As we navigate a new normal, we can balance our schedules with compassion and connection. We can remind ourselves we are not alone and we are all learning profound lessons.

Communication

- Consider a brief period of self-reflection at the start of the day and acknowledge how your work matters to you, your clients, your organization, and the community.
- Keep communication open and positive at home.
- Review the schedule and routine and meet as a family every day.
- If you feel isolated or lonely, reach out via phone or videoconference.
- Try and check in with work colleagues to help alleviate feelings of isolation.
- If you are more introverted, let your needs be known and schedule in time alone.

Keep up good practices and self-care:

- Think of practicing self-care in four areas. Find your own ways to create a sense of balance. Here are a few examples:
- Emotional: spend time with those you care about, set respectful boundaries with time, energy and relationships. Give and receive love and support.
- Physical: eating healthy, sleep, exercise, drinking lots of water, massage. Move your body and get outdoors.
- Psychological: personal and professional development, take time to self-reflect, reach out for opportunities to grow and learn.
- Spiritual: prayer or meditation, spend time in nature, be present, practice gratitude and identify what is important to you in your

When you feel emotions run high in your work day, here is a simple practice to help regain a sense of focus and presence. The ACE cycle is created by Russ Harris PHD. He integrates core principles from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy:

A = Acknowledge your feelings:

- Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensation, urges.
- Observe what's going on in your inner world.
- Say to yourself something like, 'I'm noticing anxiety', or 'Here's grief', or 'There's my mind worrying' or 'I'm having a feeling of sadness' or 'I'm having thoughts about sickness'.

C = Come back into your body by trying out the following, or use your own ways:

- Slowly pushing your feet firmly into the floor.
- Slowly straighten up your back and spine; if sitting, sit upright and forward.
- Slowly pressing your fingertips together
- Slowly stretching your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders.
- Slow breathing; five seconds in, five seconds out.
- Press one hand on your forehead and one hand on your chest.

E = Engage in what you are doing:

- Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. For example:
- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see.
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear.
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth

How do I book an appointment with a counsellor?

Simply phone one of the numbers listed below. We would be pleased to help you arrange your appointment.



Vancouver Island
Counselling

Duncan 250 746 6900

Nanaimo 250 754 8222

Port Alberni 250 723 7001

Victoria / Lower Mainland
1 877 746 6911

