

Covid-19 Psychological First Aid Service: Information and Signup

Experiencing stress associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic? You are not alone.

Information about our Service

The BCPA Covid-19 Psychological First Aid Service is designed to help *any BC resident* aged 19+ who is experiencing stress, anxiety, or uncertainty due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Please read all of the information before completing the request form below.

What is the BCPA COVID-19 Psychological First Aid Service?

The BCPA Psychological First Aid Service offers “Psychological First Aid” telephone calls, free of charge, to any BC resident (19+) affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was created by the BC Psychological Association in partnership with the University of British Columbia.

What is psychological first aid?

Psychological First Aid is a brief (up to 30 minute) telephone consultation to provide you with information and strategies to help you cope with the stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is designed to help people who usually cope with daily life pretty well, but who might be feeling overwhelmed during this very stressful time.

Is psychological first aid the same as therapy?

Psychological First Aid is not the same as psychological therapy. The psychologist who calls to provide Psychological First Aid will not become your on-going care provider and you will not be treated for mental health concerns.

What if I am in crisis or feeling suicidal?

The Psychological First Aid Service is not the same as a crisis line. If you are in crisis, please go to <https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/> or call 1-800-SUICIDE. If your crisis is an emergency, call 911. As we are providing this service on the phone, we will ask you to provide an emergency contact. Psychologists are required to collect this number in case of emergency.

How many times can I use this service?

You can use the service as many times as you like. If you would like to receive a Psychological First Aid phone call again, simply fill out another online request form on the day that you would like service.

Who will be calling me?

Individual psychologists registered with the College of Psychology of British Columbia are volunteering their time to provide this service. Please note that as many psychologists are now working from home, they may be using their personal phones to contact you - be on the lookout for a call from a *blocked number* within 48hrs of completing the form as this may be a psychologist calling.

How does it work?

Fill in the brief form below and a psychologist will call you within 24-48 hours. Calls are returned between 9am and 9pm, 7 days a week.

**Please note that wait times may be longer on weekends.*

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Because psychological first aid is not therapy, the psychologist who speaks with you will not keep notes on the content of your conversation. Any information that you provide on your request form will be recorded and kept (e.g., the date of your request, your name and phone, the name and phone number of your emergency contact etc.). We will also record which psychologist(s) called you and when, and the general resolution of that call.

Even though psychological first aid is not therapy, because you will be speaking with a Registered Psychologist, we want to make sure you know the rules and laws that psychologists are obligated to follow. There are specific situations where psychologists might have to break your privacy. **If a psychologist is convinced that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is experiencing abuse or neglect, they are legally required to share their concern with the appropriate agency. If a psychologist is convinced that there is an imminent risk that you will physically harm yourself or someone else, they are legally required to notify the appropriate agency or authority.** In the context of a brief psychological first aid phone call, we do not expect the psychologist you speak with to have to break your confidentiality. Also, if any of these situations did arise, the psychologist would make every effort to discuss it fully with you before taking any action, and they would limit disclosure to what is legally necessary.

What happens if I miss the call from the psychologist?

If you are not able to answer when the psychologist calls, they will leave a brief message for you, and your name will remain at the top of the “active list” so that another psychologist can call again. You will receive up to two phone calls from this service. If you miss both phone calls but still require services, simply complete the form again and you will be re-added to the queue.

What if I want to continue seeing the psychologist after the pandemic?

The psychologist who provides you pro bono Psychological First Aid during the pandemic would not be able to later charge you for their services, as this would be considered unethical. If you feel you would benefit from obtaining formal therapeutic help from a Registered Psychologist, we encourage you to refer to the BCPA website or College of Psychologists of BC website to locate a Registered Psychologist who can provide you with longer term support.

Concerns or Complaints

If you have concerns that this service has not met professional standards, you may contact the College of Psychologists of British Columbia. For further information about the complaint process, please review the College's website: <http://www.collegeofpsychologists.bc.ca>.

General inquiries about this service can be directed to the BC Psychological Association at psychsupport@psychologists.bc.ca.

What if I need more than a Psychological First Aid phone call?

Feel like you need a higher level of psychological support? Free services include those provided the Canadian Mental Health Association <https://cmha.bc.ca/covid-19/>. If you wish to seek the services of a registered psychologist, the BCPA provides a referral service https://www.psychologists.bc.ca/find_psychologist. To find out about other mental health services in your region, call 211 or go to <http://www.bc211.ca/home>.

Request a Support Call : Consent

By entering my information and completing this form, I am confirming that I have read and understood the information on this page and I consent to these terms.