

# FIT CITY NEWS

Physical and mental health enhancement information for employees

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## Seasonal Affective Disorder: More than the winter blues

As the days get shorter and there is less daylight, you may start to feel sad. You're not alone! While many people experience "winter blues," some people may have a type of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Approximately 15% of Canadians will report at least a mild case of SAD in their lifetime, while 2-3% will report serious cases. A first step in supporting yourself is to determine how much it interferes with your daily life.



### Do you have mild symptoms that have lasted less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling down but still able to take care of yourself and others
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having less energy than usual but still able to do your job, schoolwork, or housework

If so, these activities may help you feel better:

- Doing something you enjoy
- Spending time with family and friends
- Going outside in the sunlight
- Eating healthy and avoiding foods with lots of sugar

If these activities do not help or your symptoms are getting worse, talk to a health care provider.

### Do you have more severe symptoms that have lasted over 2 weeks?

- Social withdrawal
- Oversleeping
- Gaining weight
- Craving foods with lots of sugar like cakes, candies, and cookies

If so, consider seeking professional support and resources such as light therapy, medications, Vitamin D supplements or psychotherapy. [Cognitive behavioural therapy](#) (CBT) is a widely recommended approach for managing SAD. CBT helps individuals understand their thoughts, moods, and feelings while developing effective coping strategies.

CBT is available to all City staff through our [Employee Family Assistance Program](#). Call 1-800-663-1142 to request support or visit [Homeweb.ca](#) to access Homewood's Online CBT program, [Sentio](#).

Sources: [NIMH](#) and the [Canadian Psychological Association](#).

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## Register for our next all-staff meeting on Justice, Equity, Decolonization and Inclusion

Three times a year, the Equity Office invites all City staff to get together virtually to learn and get updates from City leaders and the Equity Office team about work underway to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace and city.

Register for the next session on Thursday Oct 26 from 10-11:30am [on Webex](#) or by emailing [equityoffice@vancouver.ca](mailto:equityoffice@vancouver.ca). This session will include an introduction to the City's updated Respect in the Workplace Policy and Workplace Restoration, as well as updates from Employee Resource Groups and Communities of Practice.

## Join or start an Employee Resource Group or Community of Practice

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups that come together around shared identities and experiences. ERGs are recognized as a best practice to support an inclusive workplace and are now common in many organizations. ERGs provide a space for connection, support, leadership development, and opportunities to positively impact the workplace. Similarly, Communities of Practice (CPs) are groups of staff organized around a specific topic, practice or task to learn and support each other in their equity journeys.

The City currently has several ERGs and CPs, supported by the Equity Office, that are open for staff to join. A few examples include:

- Indigenous ERG
- Black Staff ERG
- South Asian Canadian Staff ERG
- Trans, Genderdiverse, Non-binary ERG
- Staff with Disabilities ERG
- Caregivers ERG
- White Settlers for Accountability CP
- Racialized Settlers Take Action CP

Learn more by visiting [Currents](#) or contacting the Equity Office at [equityoffice@vancouver.ca](mailto:equityoffice@vancouver.ca).



## Support our 2023 United Way Campaign

**Our annual United Way of BC (UWBC) fundraising campaign takes place from September 12 to October 20. UWBC are a charitable organization dedicated to creating healthy, caring and inclusive communities in British Columbia. For over 30 years, the City has supported the charity through this annual employee fundraising campaign.**



**United Way**  
British Columbia

### Get involved in this year's campaign:

- Check out the [online auction](#). Consider donating an item, from yourself or your team, and get creative with your donations – an item, an experience, handcrafted items or a gift card. You can bid in the auction from September 12 to October 20. Scan the QR code to access the auction.
- Book an impact speaker by visiting <https://uwbc.ca/host-an-impact-speaker/>. United Way impact speakers share personal stories about how your support can make a real difference in communities. If you're a manager, consider booking an impact speaker for your next department or team meeting.
- Donate directly to the campaign via payroll donations; sign up to have a small amount deducted from each paycheque to make a big impact on helping people in your community. All donations \$20.00 and over will generate tax receipts automatically added to your T4. Visit <https://eaccess.uwbc.ca/crm/Start.jsp> to donate.
- Individual departments will also be hosting events ranging from hockey games to samosa and bake sales. Check in with your department's United Way campaign representative for department-specific events. Access campaign representative information on [Currents](#).

