

Congratulations on your acceptance to Banff Centre online programming!

Residencies and programs at Banff Centre can be a transformative experience for art, practice, personal and professional goals, perspective and often identity. This overall experience can be celebratory and exciting; at the same time, it can challenge your resilience and well-being.

The current global pandemic with its uncertainty and change thrust upon us has exacerbated this challenge, greatly impacting our anxieties, vulnerabilities, and fear. We strongly encourage you to consider how you will prepare yourself for your program so you can arrive well, fully participate, and have a rewarding and impactful experience.

It is helpful to reflect on the tools and strategies you are currently employing at home to maintain your well-being as well as the support networks and usual self-care practices you have relied upon for balance during Covid-19. Whether it is a mindfulness or yoga practice, reaching out to an Elder or community member, a session with your therapist, a walk outside or in nature, or a coffee with a friend, think through the actions you can take when you recognize signs of increasing stress and anxiety to address and diffuse the challenges you may encounter through online programming and practice (difficult conversations, managing expectations of self and others, isolation, frustration with technology, intense program pace and/or challenging materials, etc.).

To guide this self-reflection, below are:

- (1) Some suggestions for actions to take before, during and after your program
- (2) An Online Program Self Care Worksheet to guide you through this process with particular attention paid to challenges experienced during online programming
- (3) Some ideas for finding local wellness and mental health resources or services, as well as examples of resources and services specific to Canada.

Before you begin the program:

- reflect on the support systems, network and self-care strategies you employ to feel centered, calm and engaged (physical exercise, socialization, cooking, alone time, music/video games, gathering with family and friends, regular sleep, healthy food)
- manage expectations of your program, work to be accomplished, Banff Centre facilitation and faculty; experiment with setting goals while being flexible and open to the various possibilities your experience in an online program at Banff Centre may hold.
- think about your daily routine at home, work and in your practice; how that may be impacted and how it may be adjusted.
- reflect on your “pressure points” and stressors. How can you anticipate them during your online program? How will you identify and address them?

During the program:

- set aside time to regularly check in with loved ones/friends/supports to ground yourself, to share experiences
- establish a daily routine early on with some flexibility built in to allow for breaks and processing of program learnings
- monitor how you are doing and reach out to a trusted resource if you need support

At end of program:

- take time to reflect on your experience and learnings, and what you most want to take away from the program to incorporate into your practice, work, life, etc.
- consider reaching out to connections you made with other participants in your program to share experiences and support each other in meeting goals set within the program
- think about how you will balance your ‘home’ routine and obligations with the transformations and clarifications you experienced in your program

Online Program Self-Care Worksheet

During this time of Covid-19, stress and anxiety are direct challenges many face to their well-being. The first step to managing overwhelming uncertainty and fear is to take stock of what your current stressors are and how your body experiences stress. The next step is reflecting on what conscious efforts you can take to engage healthy coping mechanisms that minimize the impact of stress on your well-being. Taking the time to establish a self-care plan while you are calm and centered will provide peace of mind when you feel your anxiety rising.

Use this document as it best suits you - e.g., fill out the pdf directly, print it off and fill it in, read and reflect, or journal.

Self-Reflection (Tip: Write these down somewhere)

1. What are 5 signs I'm experiencing more stress and challenge in my life?

Ex. How do I tend to think, feel (emotionally, physically) and act?

2a. What are 5 things I do to cope with stress & challenges?

Ex. What helps me relax and re-center? How do I take care of my physical health and body? Who do I reach out to?

2b. Does each one feel healthy or unhealthy?

3. What are my top 5 strengths or "superpowers"? When am I "at my best"?

Online Programming Self-Care: Focuses, Challenges & Solutions

3 things I'm looking forward to, or 3 personal learning objectives:

What obstacles or challenges might I experience? What is a realistic action I could take for each?

Ex. How could I use some of my current strategies and/or strengths?

Obstacle, Challenge, Stressor	Solution, Action, Self-Care Strategy

3 achievable & healthy practices to take care of myself during my program:

Healthy Routine or Practice (+ how often)	How will I make sure I take action? (e.g., reminders, ask for support/accountability)

Who can I reach out to if I'm feeling stressed or struggling?

Ex. Family, friends, health providers or practitioners, traditional healers, Elders, local urgent care services or helplines

Name/Service	Contact Information