

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**British Columbians Urged to Protect Their Mental Health During Times of Uncertainty**

VANCOUVER, March 16, 2020 — Federation of Associations for Counselling Therapists in British Columbia (FACTBC), a society of 14 professional associations that collectively represent over 6,000 counsellors and therapists practicing throughout British Columbia, encourages the public to be aware of their mental health and be intentional about self-care.

While we value the informal and supportive help that is being offered on various social media platforms, please bear in mind that counselling should only be offered by trained professionals who know how to provide appropriate clinical support and who know how to manage confidentiality even in remote and technology-based practice as is now being required.

"In a time of global health uncertainty, it is imperative to protect your mental health and seek qualified professional support as needed," Dr. Glen Grigg, Chair of FACTBC.

**Self-care in response to anxiety and stress**

- Anxiety and stress are natural responses to uncertainty and possible danger; there is no reason to be "alarmed" about feeling alarmed
- Anxiety and stress have triggers; limit your information-seeking to specific times and to reliable sources. Turn off or mute other sources of news and information that can interrupt to cause your anxiety or stress to be triggered
- Emotional reactions are often mitigated by taking action; after receiving information about the possible spread of the coronavirus, plan to do practical things to look after the safety of self and others, things like washing your hands, working out how to maintain social distance and avoid crowds, and providing yourself with calm and comfort through things like music and art
- When your emotions are overwhelming, and do not respond to self-care and social support, seek professional help

**If you need professional support by way of a counselling therapist:**

- In BC, there is no legislated standard for who is a qualified and accountable, so this function has been taken up by professional associations
- FACTBC has a list of associations whose members are accountable to a code of ethics and standard of practice: [www.factbc.org/member-associations/](http://www.factbc.org/member-associations/)

For more information: [www.factbc.org](http://www.factbc.org)