

# numa

caring for the spirit in island health

## WHAT WE KNOW

Once upon a time, a health care worker on Vancouver Island said, "I'm bored. I wish something would change." And then the Creator, or the angels, or the Powers That Be, or Ahura Mazda, or the Universe heard this, and said, "OK". And dropped a brand new virus down on to the world.

A few months later, the health care worker woke up, and screamed: "Everything has changed! Nothing works the way it used to. Every day I have to learn a new way to use my PPE. I can't go near anyone. And I can't even get my coffee the way I used to!"

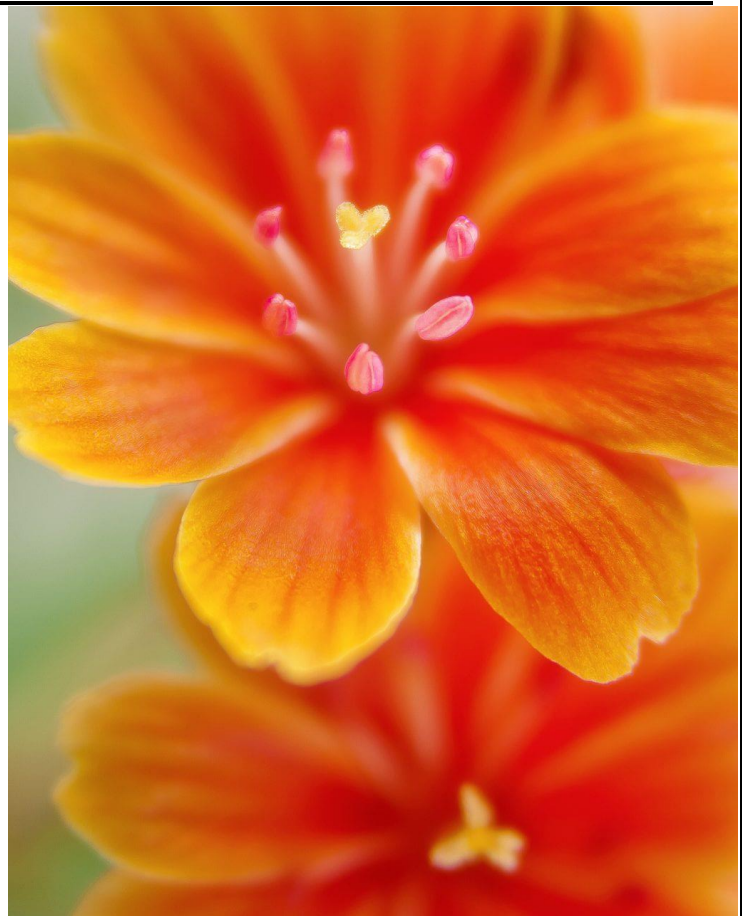
*If the future's looking dark  
we're the ones who have to shine;*

*If there's no one in control  
we're the ones who draw the line;*

*Though we live in trying times  
we're the ones who have to try;*

*Though we know that time has wings  
we're the ones who have to fly.*

Neil Peart



Epidemiologists will not agree with this version of how the pandemic started, but everyone will agree that things have changed. It affects us all. We have too much work, or not enough work. Meetings are all happening over the phone, or on Skype, or not at all. Normal activities have been cancelled, indefinitely. Even the parking lot is empty.

Most of us don't mind change if we get to decide what changes. This change has been imposed upon the whole world. This kind of change leaves us feeling exhausted, or maybe angry, or hopeless; but all of us feel afraid.

We tend to fear that which we do not know, and there is so much about this that no one knows. How long will this last? When will we get a vaccine? Where and when will the next outbreak be? Will my family be safe? Who out there is actually infected – am I infected? Why is this happening?

“Why?” is one of those questions with no answer, or 100 answers, but none of them really help us feel better. What can help us is to remember *what we do know*.

- Know that you are not alone: everyone is struggling.
- Know that you are not working alone; you are part of the Island Health team, and everyone is working to get us through this.
- Know that you are probably stronger than you think. We have not had to deal with anything like this in 100 years – we do not know our limits or our reserves.
- Know that you care: you care for your patients and residents; you care for your co-workers, you care for your self.
- Know that you are appreciated: by the people who make noise at 1900, and make signs, and wave at us. You are appreciated by your leaders who smile at you when you show up for work.
- Know that you are loved: by friends, by close co-workers, by family, by humanity as a whole – not for what you do but for who you are.

You are part of the solution to this pandemic; you are part of the answer. May you surprise yourself today by what you find you can do to help get through this.



Spiritual Health is here for you!

Spiritual/emotional support for patients, families and staff is available Monday thru Friday from 0800-2000.

How to request spiritual care?

**Email:** [SpiritualHealth@viha.ca](mailto:SpiritualHealth@viha.ca)

**Call to leave a message: 250-755-7691-ext. 54428**

Any questions regarding Island Health’s Spiritual Health program can be directed to Darren Colyn, Spiritual Health Leader at [darren.colyn@viha.ca](mailto:darren.colyn@viha.ca)

NUMA (Greek for “spirit/breath”) is produced by Island Health’s [Spiritual Health](#) team to draw awareness to issues of spirituality in health care. The editor of numa is Darren Colyn, Spiritual Health Leader.

To read past issues of NUMA go to [Spiritual Health’s Professional Practice webpage](#) and look under “Resources”.