

# numa

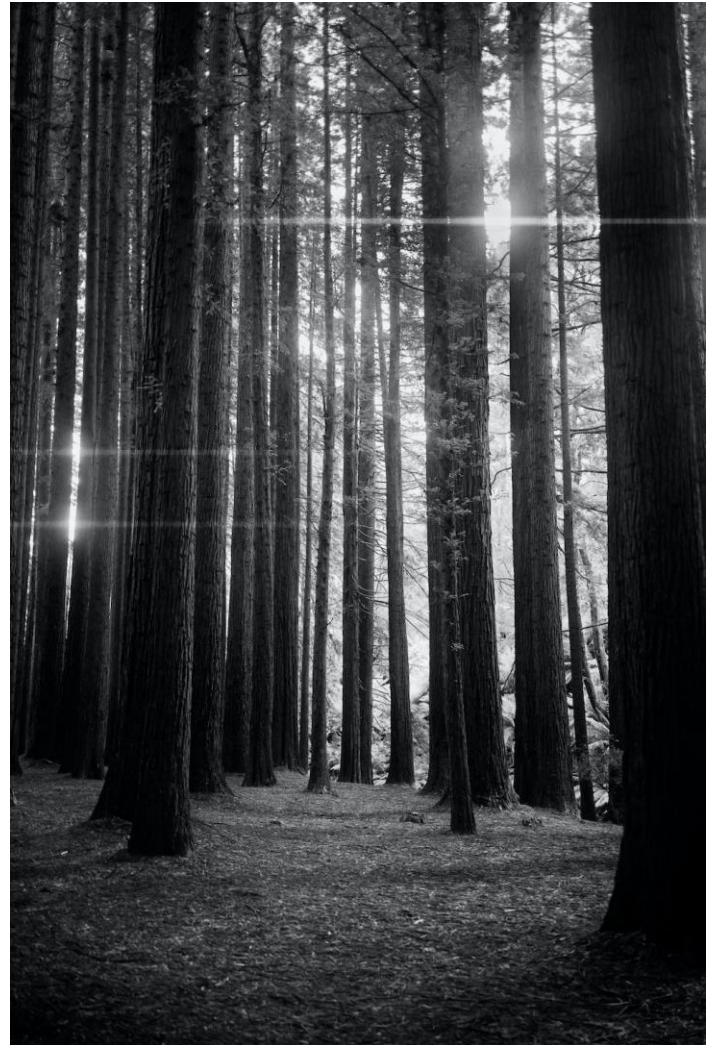
caring for the spirit in island health

## Meditation

It feels like we can't go anywhere lately without hearing the buzzword of meditation. I often hear from folks that they have been meaning to try meditation and cannot find the time, or that they are simply not good at it. Reflected in these responses is an ingrained culture of high demand, and even higher expectations.

Life in the 21st century can feel incredibly overwhelming and unattainable. The last thing we need right now is something *else* on the to-do list. I often wonder; is our increasingly popular "self-improvement" culture adding to feelings of inadequacy? What if we could believe that we were whole and enough, right here, right now? This human life is messy, complicated, and in constant motion. Stress, burnout, and other health struggles are becoming consistent and common. Can we agree that we are human **beings**, not human **doings**? Can we say "no" to doing more, and instead find an opportunity for pause, for less, for rest?

The object of meditation is not a striving towards emptying the mind into some state of thoughtless



"Meditation is not about stopping thoughts, but recognizing that we are more than our thoughts and our feelings."

Arianna Huffington

bliss. With some 70,000 thoughts a day, this expectation of ourselves is not kind or fair. We do not need another thing to strive to achieve, or to be good at. You are already good. You deserve stillness, regulation and peace in your body and mind. The culture we currently find ourselves in often does not support this centering posture. Meditation is a powerful tool to reclaim your human being,

not your human doing, status. Have you ever been lost in the woods? Suddenly, there is no path and you are entrenched in uneven ground. How exhausting, distracting and difficult is this to move through? Now imagine the forest's foliage as your thoughts and the path through the woods as your essence; thoughts do not live on the path. It can be very supportive to remain on the path, and observe the foliage from here without becoming entangled in the vines of racing thoughts, and losing our perspective.

Meditation practice supports noticing when you have wandered into the foliage of thoughts, and calls you back to the path, over and over again. To call your attention back to your essence, back to the present moment. This can be done by focusing on your breath, your heartbeat, or a mantra/saying to support presence each time you catch yourself wandering off the path. This practice can be done anytime, anywhere. There will be moments where the path is forgotten or feels inaccessible. There will also be times where you are able to catch the wandering

and stay on the path more consistently. Notice that you are not your thoughts. You are the witness to your thoughts. You can find distance from thoughts and emotions in the seat of the witness. This distance can invite pause, perspective and regulation. You may even find stillness and peace here. Pause right now, take a deep breath, and return to the path.

*Stephanie Blyth, Spiritual Health Practitioner, RJH*

## **World Meditation Day**

May 21, 2023

"I meditate  
so that my mind  
cannot complicate  
my life".

Sri Chinmoy

## **Meditation Opportunities**

### **Meditation Session**

RJH Pemberton Memorial Chapel

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1300-1330 & 1330-1400

Facilitator: Stephanie Blyth, SHP

### **Mindful Music Hour**

RJH Pemberton Memorial Chapel

May 29<sup>th</sup> / 1300-1400

Facilitator: Stephanie Blyth, SHP

### **VGH Meditation Session**

Stay tuned for details!

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 the [Spiritual Health public webpage](#).

Island Health's Spiritual Health team members acknowledge, with humility and gratitude, that we live and practice on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish, Nuuchah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw people. We commit ourselves to ongoing learning as we work towards reconciliation and strive to ensure that the spiritual beliefs and practices of all people are supported for their individual and collective wellbeing.