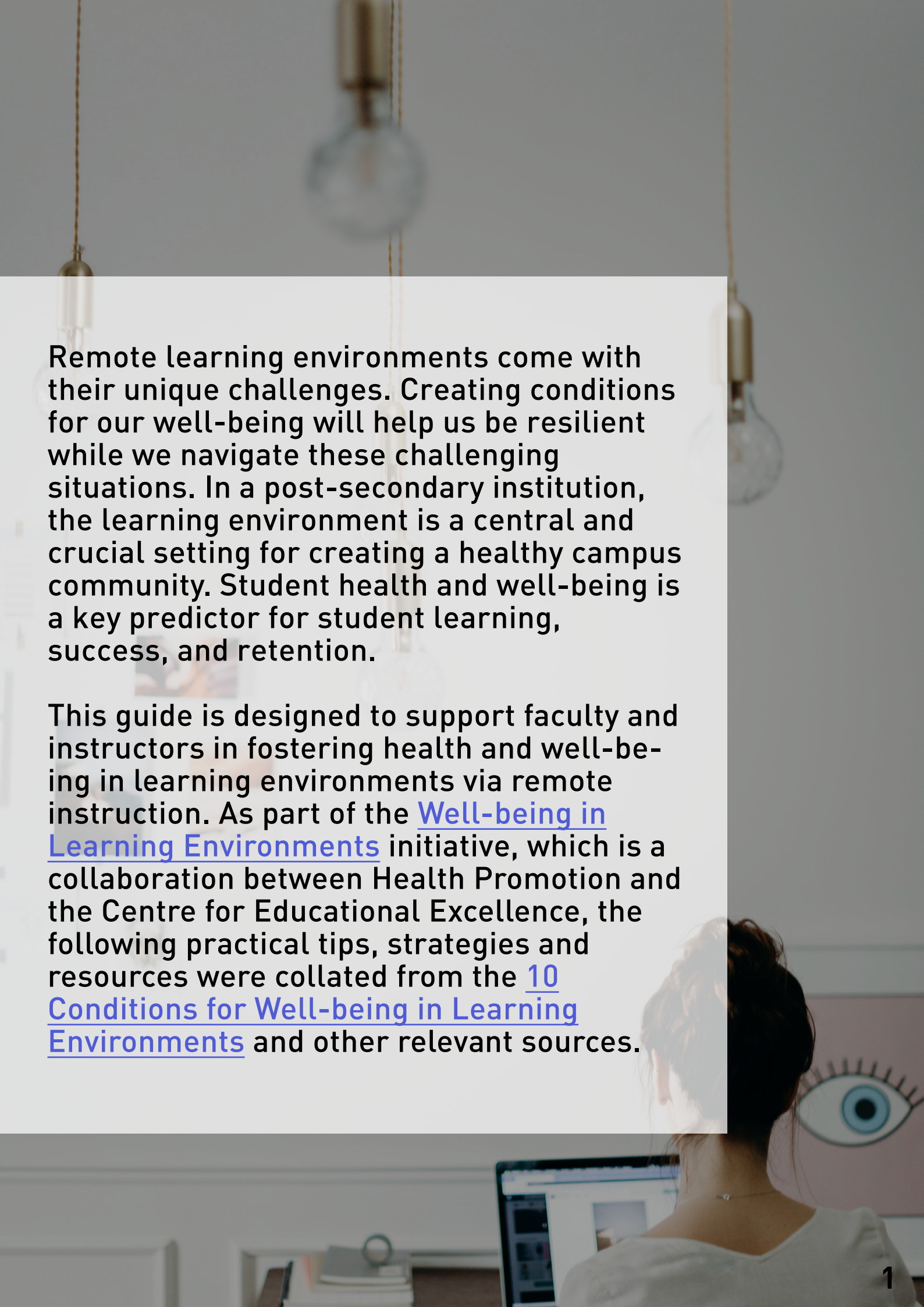
SFU HEALTH & COUNSELLING | HEALTH PROMOTION

10 WAYS TO EMBED WELL-BEING INTO REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



Remote learning environments come with their unique challenges. Creating conditions for our well-being will help us be resilient while we navigate these challenging situations. In a post-secondary institution, the learning environment is a central and crucial setting for creating a healthy campus community. Student health and well-being is a key predictor for student learning, success, and retention.

This guide is designed to support faculty and instructors in fostering health and well-being in learning environments via remote instruction. As part of the Well-being in Learning Environments initiative, which is a collaboration between Health Promotion and the Centre for Educational Excellence, the following practical tips, strategies and resources were collated from the 10 Conditions for Well-being in Learning Environments and other relevant sources.

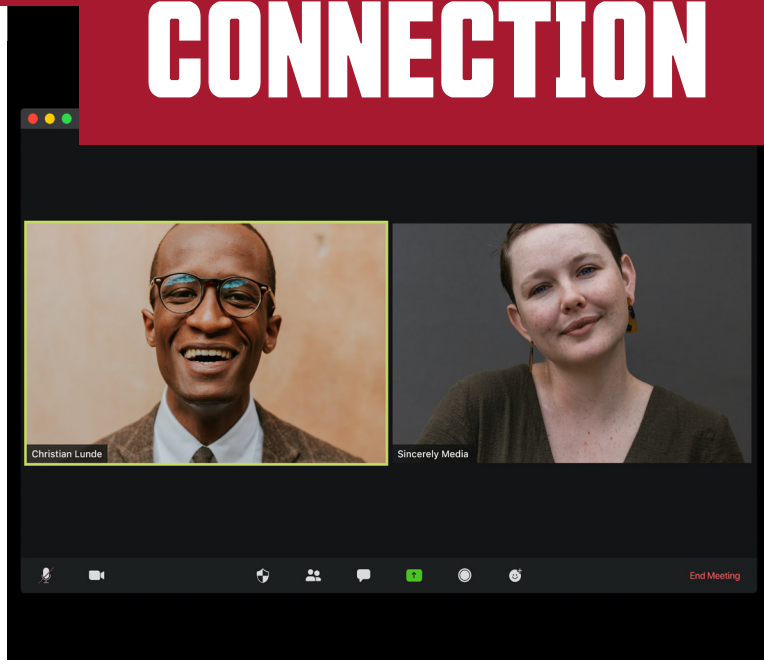
1. BE FLEXIBLE

Offer flexible deadlines for assignments as a way to offer compassion and to empower students, particularly at a time when so much is out of their control. Explore the Centre for Accessible Learning's Top Ten Tips to Making Online Learning Accessible. Use this accessibility guide for more ideas to enhance accessibility in your learning environment. Consult the Centre for Accessible Learning's FAQ page for information regarding student accessibility needs.

2. ENCOURAGE SOCIAL CONNECTION

Facilitate a Class Check In Activity to foster social connection despite physical distancing.

Encourage students to study with classmates virtually, check-in when someone misses a planned studying session, and stay in touch with friends and family.



3. FOSTER A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Connecting with your students and showing empathy and kindness can profoundly impact their sense of belonging. This can be done in an email, an announcement on Canvas, or by including it in the Get to Know Your Prof slides. View this one-minute video on connecting with students.

Work with the class to Create Class Guidelines for Working Together that address the specific needs and structure of the class.

4. BE SUPPORTIVE

To enhance positive growth and sense of belonging, it is important that instructors consider equity and students' psychological experiences. Explore five ways to support students during difficult times.

Consult a guide for responding to students in distress.

5. PROMOTE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Download and use these PowerPoint slides to promote well-being. Share an overview of Health & Counselling Services' resources, events and workshops. Add the following text as an announcement, discussion prompt, or as a page under Canvas Modules: "Stress can be a normal part of your student experience. Sometimes the challenges will be manageable and other times they may seem overwhelming.

Please connect with me or use the resources available to you when you need them at SFU - both academically and to help you take care of your mental health and well-being. To learn about the mental health supports available at SFU (including the My SSP 24/7 support) visit: www.sfu.ca/mental-health."

6. SUPPORT INCLUSIVITY

Provide additional time for students to access and understand technology they may not be familiar with. Create flexible deadlines and provide clear instructions on how to access the course and material, submit assignments, and do quizzes.

Accommodate different learning styles by providing a variety of ways students can engage and participate in the lecture and learning, such as discussion boards, written reflections, oral presentations, among others.

Model place-based approach and include a traditional territorial acknowledgement in your course on Canvas.

7. PROVIDE OPTIMAL CHALLENGE

Given the quick transition to remote instruction, it is important to ask students for feedback on their overall learning experience to foster a mutual collaboration environment. Create an announcement with a link to an anonymous WebSurvey or SurveyMonkey using the following Comment Card prompts.

8. OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

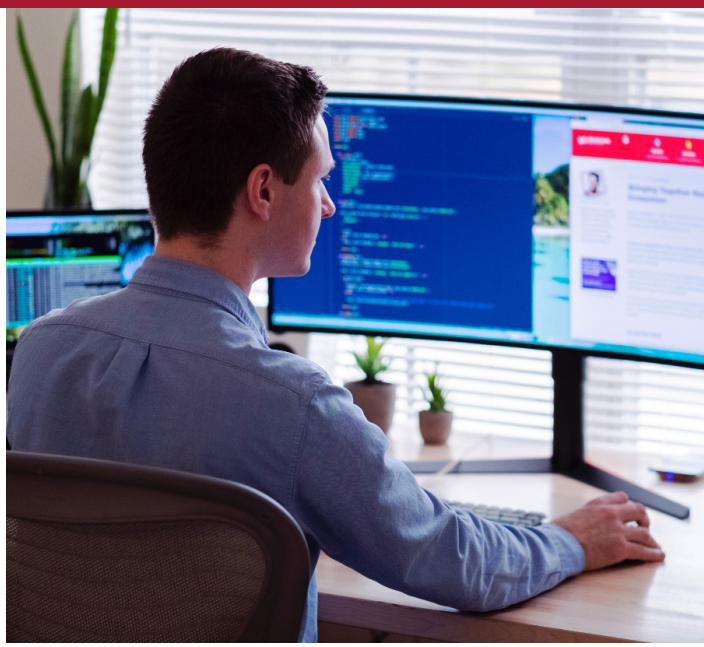
Offer this Reality Check Reflection Tool to invite students to determine the best course of action on how they envision spending their time in the upcoming weeks.

Encourage a Group-generated Study Guide for students to work effectively in teams and build professional skills, while remaining socially connected.

9. FOCUS ON REAL LIFE LEARNING

Use the In the News Activity to encourage students to keep up-to-date with current issues related to the course.

Explore online experiential learning opportunities connected to your learning outcomes whenever possible.

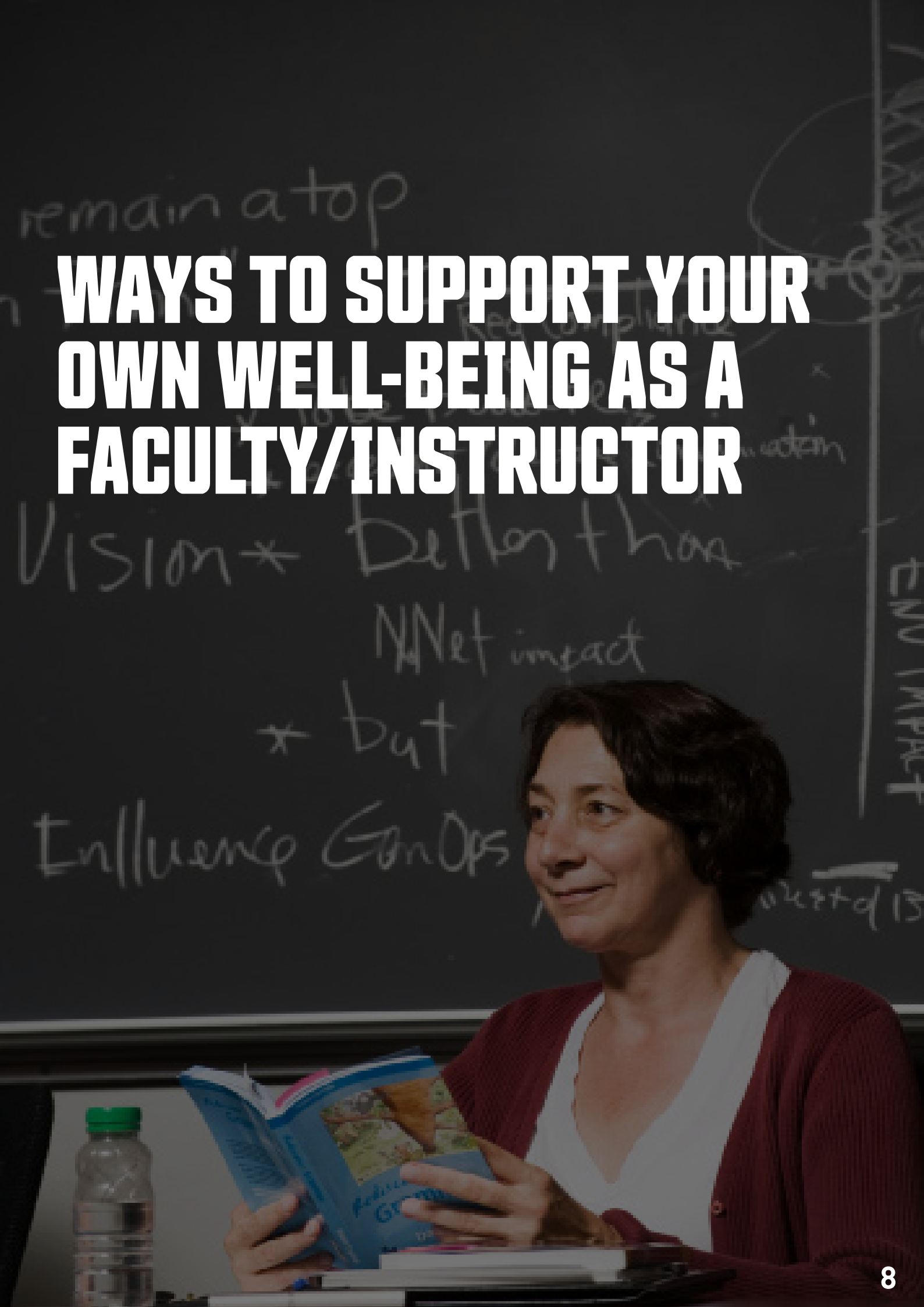


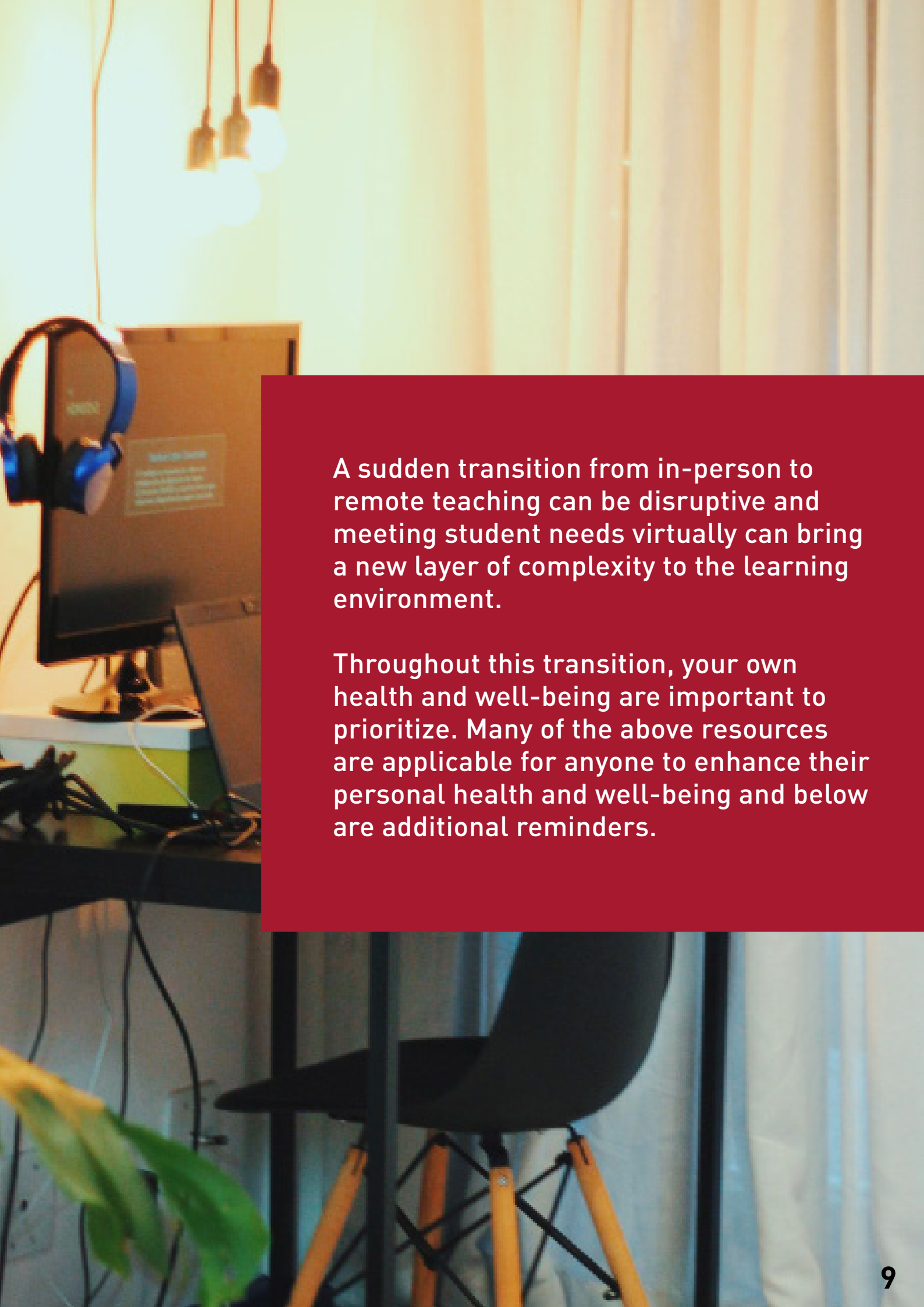
10. EXPLORE VALUED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Have guest lectures and other opportunities for students to learn about the field and see how the coursework is used in practice.

Share reminders that small acts of kindness can go a long way. Invite students to share a virtual message of gratitude with someone or create a class assignment/ project on kindness and contribution during this time.

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR OWN WELL-BEING AS A FACULTY/INSTRUCTOR





A sudden transition from in-person to remote teaching can be disruptive and meeting student needs virtually can bring a new layer of complexity to the learning environment.

Throughout this transition, your own health and well-being are important to prioritize. Many of the above resources are applicable for anyone to enhance their personal health and well-being and below are additional reminders.

Identify one small thing you can do each day that supports your well-being and brings you joy.

The Employee and Family Assistance Plan provides confidential and professional counselling assistance for employees, spouses and dependents. Available to all SFU employees including temporary and contract.

Learn how taking care of your own well-being helps others.

TAKE TIME TO REST AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Be kind to yourself, family, friends, and students. We're all trying the best we can together.

Let go of expectations around perfection, and embrace what's important to you and the class to get through.

Answer six daily reflection questions.

Stay in contact with other colleagues, faculty members and instructors, and other SFU communities for support.

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

SFU Health Promotion is here to help you support student health and well-being and build a Healthy Campus Community. Contact the Health Promotion team to explore ways in which we can collaborate and support you.

The Centre for Educational Excellence (CEE) is available to support faculty members, instructors, staff and academic units with their teaching roles and responsibilities. Consult with the experienced CEE teams, sign-up for workshops, seek one-on-one consultations, and read their tools and strategies for remote teaching.

If you're doing something to enhance well-being in learning environments that would be valuable and beneficial for other faculty members and instructors, please share so we can mobilize knowledge!

Connect with Health Promotion

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