

School of Social Work Weekly Update

May 7, 2020

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In our efforts to support the School's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this email provides a weekly update of the activities undertaken by members of the School of Social Work and summarizes any new relevant developments at the level of the University. Our efforts are all aimed at the same goal – to support the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff, and to ensure that our students are successful in meeting academic degree requirements.

Please consult the [University's Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up to date information. Members of the McGill community who have flu-like symptoms should **call 1-877-644-4545**.

Content of this week's update:

- 1. New: McGill Social Work community continues to engage in responses to COVID-19**
- 2. New: Summer Session**
- 3. New: School Community Well-Being Supports**
- 4. New: Field Update**
- 5. Reminder: BSW Graduates Please Send In Pictures & Videos For Grad Montage**
- 6. Reminder: Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship Opportunities**
- 7. Reminder: Critical Job Opportunities in Support of COVID-19 Health Efforts**
- 8. Reminder: Online Training Programs for Social Workers and Essential Workers Broadly**

Moving forward with the weekly updates, we'll use a small table of contents that indicates what is a new announcement, and what is an important reminder of something that appeared in a prior update, but is still something that is ongoing. Hopefully this will be helpful.

We want to acknowledge the many mothers in our community with Mother's Day approaching this Sunday. This is a meaningful day to many, but we also know that it can be a tough one for others in our community, whether with distance from the mothers in their lives, or those who have experienced loss. So, we honour all those who are mothers in all the many ways people come to fill that roles for others, and send our warmest wishes to those for whom the day is difficult.

1. Summer Session

The summer session is underway, and will be a fully remote session. Welcome! We are all learning as we make the transition to this new mode of teaching and learning. Resources for students are available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/students/remote-learning-resources>. Constructive feedback, and patience, are much appreciated as we adapt to remote classes.

Resources for instructors are available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/tools>. Instructors may also contact the Schools' remote teaching group: michael.j.mackenzie@mcgill.ca; heather.macintosh@mcgill.ca; or zack.marshall@mcgill.ca. We will also be holding an instructors session on remote learning on Wednesday May 13th from 1:00 pm to

4:00 pm; all instructors are welcome to join us (please contact nico.trocme@mcgill.ca for a Zoom invitation).

2. McGill Social Work community continues to engage in responses to COVID-19

One of the most heartening aspects amidst the challenges facing our community is seeing so many in the McGill school of social work community leading in efforts to address COVID-19. This includes students and faculty who have stepped forward to work in long term care homes, and those continuing their work in other critical health and social service settings.

This week has also seen our Phd Candidate Susan Mintzberg continue to be a leading voice in Quebec, and across Canada, on the role of family caregivers and appropriate policy responses in long term care homes. Her pieces in La Presse and in the Toronto Star are helping to shape efforts to better balance care responses and health protection.

Dr. Delphine Collin-Vézina partnered with her UQTR colleague Tristan Milot to write an important piece on Strategies to support vulnerable students when schools re-open. The children of Quebec are fortunate to have Delphine continue to be able to lend her voice to policy discussions around child-serving systems from child welfare to education. Her earlier efforts were critical in pushing schools to have teachers start to do check-in calls with families, and the steps in this piece will be important for schools to consider as they plan for phased reopening over the next two weeks.

3. School Community Well-Being Supports

Health Canada has recently made free single-session counselling available to all Canadians as many times as they need in response to COVID-19: wellnesstogether.ca or 1-866-585-0445.

Please feel free to join a Virtual Lunch with the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Fridays at Noon: https://www.mcgill.ca/mypath/rsvp-gps-discussion-group-lunch-dean?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=May-4%2C-2020&utm_source=Envoke-All-contacts&utm_term=Help-students-feel-connected

Graduate Student Emergency Contact List: For graduate students in Social Work, as the School and University is concerned to meet the needs of students who may become ill, are in quarantine, and may not have an available support network to provide much needed food, receive health care, and psycho-social support. We are hoping to get a more systematic understanding of vulnerable graduate students in our community, so that we can be helpful if they fall ill. In response, I am compiling a list of all graduate students currently living alone in Montreal, and/or those students in need of a support network.

Should you wish to be part of an emergency contact list, and receive support, please email [Lillian lannone](mailto:Lillian.lannone@mcgill.ca): your name, address, cell phone number, and health insurance status (if any). The goal is to provide support should there be a need. If you are already on this list and have any changes to report, please let us know.

4. Field Education Update:

3a. The Field Education team continues to monitor the public health issues as we plan for the fall semester. The University guidelines, the Public Health directives and the realities of the front-line social work context will guide us as we make decisions for fall field placements. At this time, we cannot assure anyone how the fall semester will play out, but please rest assured that we continue to work behind the scenes to explore all field placement options. We are available to answer any questions or concerns by email @ pam.orzeck@mcgill.ca, francine.granner@mcgill.ca, nicole.mitchell2@mcgill.ca.

3b. The Field Education team is virtually attending weekly CASWE Field Education meetings where discussions take place about field education across Canada. We will keep you informed of any guidelines or decisions.

5. REMINDER: BSW GRADUATES PLEASE SEND IN PICTURES & VIDEOS FOR GRAD MONTAGE (bonus points for grad themed TikToks)

Every spring, the School of Social Work celebrates the achievements of our graduating BSW students with a reception to welcome and honour our new graduates alongside their families and friends. While our current circumstances prevent a formal reception, we are delighted to highlight the achievements of our graduates virtually.

We are asking all BSW graduates to please:

- 1) send us a recent picture of yourself
- 2) send us video and audio recorded responses (up to 10 seconds) to one of the following questions (please choose the one that speaks to you):

- My vision of my future career in Social Work is...
- To me, social work means...
- From my BSW, what I am taking with me is...
- As a social worker, I will...
- Or... the message of your choice

We will be compiling a video montage for your graduating class. We will post the images on our School's Instagram and Facebook pages, allowing family and friends to virtually celebrate their loved ones and this wonderful achievement.

Please send your photo, audio and video clip of 10 seconds each to alicia.kyte@mcgill.ca by May 15th 2020, so that we have sufficient time to upload by [the virtual convocation](#)

6. Reminder: Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship Opportunities

Teaching Assistantship positions in the School of Social Work for the Fall 2020 term will be available for application from April 30th to May 30th on the [McGill Career and Planning Services \(CaPS\)](#) website for the following courses:

SWRK 220 – *History & Philosophy of Social Work*

SWRK 221 – *Public Social Services in Canada*

SWRK 424 – *Mental Health & Illness*

SWRK 428 – Social Policy & Administration

SWRK 653 – Research Methods I (Qualitative)

Should you wish to submit an application, please complete the Graduate Student Application for Teaching Assistantship Form found [HERE](#) and submit it electronically through the [CaPS](#) portal or email it directly to alana.bonner@mcgill.ca no later than May 30th. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications on July 5th.

7. Reminder: Critical Job Opportunities in Support of COVID-19 Health Efforts

Our partners in the CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest de l'Île-de-Montréal and the CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal have urgent need for temporary paid employees on contract to aid in the relief in the CHSLD network. Attached to this update is the contact and application information. Those who join this effort would have access to personal protective equipment, accelerated infection control and PPE training, and access to childcare services where available.

This [link is to a master list of jobs](#) for social workers.

The government is also seeking social work students and will grant special exercise permits to those with less than one session left to complete, to lend a hand to the health and social services network. They have temporary and permanent positions to offer: <http://passezalest.org>

8. Reminder: Online Training Programs for Social Workers and Essential Workers Broadly

The Mental Health Commission of Canada has developed three crisis response training programs for essential workers: Caring for yourself; Caring for your team; and caring for others. Registration is first-come, first-serve, but will be available at no-cost for essential workers:

Crisis Response training - Caring for Yourself (2 hours) - Participants will be introduced to the Mental Health Continuum and the Big 4 Coping Strategies, to help learn how to better understand their own mental wellness, notice if they might be moving into unwell areas, use practical actions to help with stress, and know when to reach out to get professional help.

Crisis Response training - Caring for your Team (3 hours) - Participants will be introduced to the Mental Health Continuum, the Big 4 Coping Strategies, and Ad Hoc Incident Review to help learn how to better understand their own and their team's mental wellness, notice if they might be moving into unwell areas, use practical actions to help with stress, know when to reach out to get professional help and learn tips to support team members.

Crisis Response Training - Caring for Others (2 hours) - will focus on how to create a safe space to have conversations about mental health and/or substance use problems. This training will prepare participants to have conversations confidently about mental health during a crisis, with their family, friends, communities, and workplaces. Participants will also be taught the skills required to respond to a mental health crisis until professional help arrives.

- Looking for mental health and wellness resources during the COVID-19 pandemic? Visit the MHCC's [COVID-19 Resource Hub](#).

The Donald Berman Yaldei Centre is offering a free webinar on helping families and children cope with COVID-19 reality

“During this first webinar in a series on helping families in this crisis, Dr. Donais and panelists will discuss positive ways of going through this difficult period of life.”

[Click Here to Register to the FREE WEBINAR](#)

Stay in touch,

Michael & Nico

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