
Subject: COVID-19 Update - April 1, 2020

Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 5:08:18 PM Pacific Daylight Time

Personal support networks – Stay Connected!

If you've been around Spectrum for a while, you'll know that we talk a lot about personal support networks – the people we care about, our family, friends, neighbours – and how important these networks are to our well-being. Several years ago, we did a series of projects on building personal support networks that some of you participated in. The reports from these projects are posted on our website. Aaron and Susan travelled around the province doing workshops with community groups and service providers to highlight the importance of relationships in people's lives, and how services should be organized in a way that supports and enhances these relationships, rather than supplanting them. "In times of crisis," we would say, "people will be more safe and secure if they have strong support networks."

Well, here we are, in the midst of a crisis that a few months ago would have been unimaginable. There is no shortage of information about the crisis, constant news feeds, government updates, debates about when to use a mask or the best ways to clean our kitchens. Having access to accurate information is critical so we stay up to date and can make informed choices about how we go about our daily routines. But equally if not more important is having access to each other, for the mutual support and comfort that come from caring relationships. In the end, it's our relationships with each other, the trust and compassion we show each other during times of crisis, that will see us through.

So while we keep checking the latest news updates and refining our knowledge about PPE, let's also take time out each day to connect with the people we care about. If you know someone who is alone or doesn't have a strong network of their own, check in on them. We've heard some wonderful stories of people meeting neighbours they wouldn't otherwise have met, or finding new ways of connecting virtually. How we treat one another now will have a lasting impact long after this crisis passes. And it will pass. We will get through it, together.

If you have a story you'd like to share about how you're staying connected to the people you care about, please send it in!

A big "THANK YOU" from Spectrum's Board

Spectrum's board of directors met last night for their regularly scheduled meeting. It was our first ever virtual meeting and it was great to have so many of the board members take the time to tune in and provide their support and reassurance. Spectrum's board is comprised of family members and friends of people with disabilities, and three self advocates. They are a terrific group of people! We so appreciate their wisdom, encouragement and constant support.

We provided the board with an update on Spectrum's efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19 and keep everyone safe during this critical time. At one point we thought we'd lost the connection as everyone was silent. They were all still there, hanging on our every word. Recapping everything that's happened in the last three weeks we were all struck by how fast things are moving and how much we've accomplished in such a short time. Most of all, the board was struck by the commitment of our teams, the staff and caregivers who

have stepped up during this unprecedented crisis to offer their support.

The board wanted us to express on their behalf how very grateful they are to each and every one of you. On their behalf, THANK YOU for all that you are doing to keep people safe and supported.

Safe food handling

One of our caregivers, Val, brought up the topic of safe food handling. She had some tips for bringing groceries into the home safely – like designating one counter to place the grocery bags on, wiping down hard containers and packaging, and placing fruits and vegetables into a clean bowl to wash rather than placing them in the sink. Thanks for the tips, Val!

We also liked this short video posted by the CBC on safe handling and preparation of food:

<https://twitter.com/cbcnewsbc/status/1244021446180876289>

Self Care Daily Tips

Last week I posted a link to service that will send you daily self care tips. Here is today's first tip, and then I have repeated the link to the sign up for future tips:

To-Do: We're starting with the basics! Place a water bottle next to your workspace and commit to drinking at least 4-6 large water servings today. And, try to keep this up for the next 21 days!

Why? Hydration can improve our attention, focus & clarity and enhance productivity—and this helps us feel psychologically healthy and well! Also, staying hydrated is great for our immune function. (Pssst: Go grab your first one right now!)

Self-Reflection Tip: Many (if not most) people don't drink nearly as much water as they should. Consider what barriers get in the way of your daily water intake. Share your thoughts on social using the hashtag #DrSamraSelfCareChallenge.

=== === === === ===

Starting on April 1st, 2020, we are challenging you to do one thing every day for yourself that aligns with social distancing guidelines. These actions are intended to take no more than a few minutes but will allow you to develop a practice that protects your energy and builds resilience.

You can sign up for the daily tips here:

<https://mailchi.mp/myworkplacehealth/kvovojdncb>

Guidance for Using Video Conferencing Applications

CLBC has provided some guidance on using popular video conferencing apps and protecting privacy:

These video calling platforms can be used to support individuals who are self-isolating during this time as long as there is mindfulness about protecting people's privacy and personal information. Agencies can use Zoom, Skype and FaceTime to connect with individuals as long as the following conditions are met:

- There is agreement that both the provider and the individual would like to connect using video calling. If the individual does not want to connect this way, the service provider must try other options such as a phone call, texting or email.
- There is no discussion about people's identifying information while video calling (e.g. SIN, birth date, first and last name used together - use of first name alone is fine). If you need to discuss identifying information, please use a phone call.
- There should never be any recordings of video calls with individuals and / or their families.

Read more here: <https://mailchi.mp/258ca4d8ddod/guidance-for-use-of-video-conferencing-services-during-covid-3238888?e=d4i7Xzf4Pw>

The Basics

Remember, the most important ways to keep yourself and others safe from this virus are:

1. Wash your hands. The virus will most likely infect you when you touch something, and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.
2. Physical distance: keep 2 metres (6feet) from other people in public.
3. Sneeze into a kleenex or your elbow. Then dispose of Kleenex and wash your hands.
4. Stay home if you feel sick.

Ernie Baatz

Executive Director

Spectrum Society for Community Living

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

www.spectrumsociety.org

cell: 604-644-1474