

**Subject:** COVID-19 Updates - June 08 2020  
**Date:** Monday, June 8, 2020 at 5:56:55 PM Pacific Daylight Time  
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**Attachments:** image001.png

## Staffing Considerations for Our Teams

A big part of our Phase Two planning will focus on staffing: staff returning to work who have been off due to family pressures or their own health issues, staff who have been working extra shifts and need a break, staff taking planned vacation time over the summer and needing someone to cover for them.

Because there are significant differences between healthcare settings where staff are working with 20 or 30 individuals, and our social services settings where they are only working with one or two individuals, staff working in community living were not mandated to work for just one employer or at just one site. Nonetheless, we made the decision early on to reduce the number of staff on many of our teams to a smaller core group, and to have staff working no more than one or two places, so as to keep contacts to a minimum.

Throughout the pandemic, our HR department has continued to hire and train new employees so we can maintain a full staff complement and a solid relief pool. The health authorities have said repeatedly for staff to stay home if they are sick, even if they have very mild symptoms, and we have reinforced this message with our teams and will continue to do so. What this means, however, is that the need for additional staff is ongoing. Staff do get sick, or they need to take time off to care for a sick family member.

It's not a question of whether we will add staff to a team, but rather how many new staff, and how soon. There are many things to consider, including:

***Vacant positions*** needing to be filled are always a priority. Gaps in the schedule put strain on the rest of the team and this, in turn, limits the capacity of the team and its leader to focus on other priorities. Bringing in a new staff member to fill a vacant position is essential to ensuring the team's stability.

***Preventing burnout*** is another key consideration. We need to be providing breaks to staff before they start to feel overwhelmed or exhausted. Many of our staff have scheduled time off over the summer and we want to support them to take time off.

***Trained relief staff*** to cover for regular staff when they are ill or on vacation is critical. It takes time to train new employees. The time to do this is when things are stable, before the need for additional relief becomes urgent.

When thinking about adding another staff member to a team, we will be guided by these considerations and by the needs and unique vulnerabilities of the individuals being supported. Some people are at higher risk of serious illness if they contract Covid-19, or in some cases a family member or staff member is at higher risk due to their own health conditions. Each situation is different.

Our HR team is working closely with all staff who have been off work to facilitate their return when they are ready to come back. Prior to returning, staff are fully trained on safety and hygiene protocols, including the use of protective equipment if necessary. Anyone who is returning from international travel must verify that they have self-isolated for 14 days before returning to work.

There is no question that we will need to add staff to our teams. We are regularly checking in with our front line supervisors about this and will ensure that any decisions to add staff to a team are reviewed with the individual and family so they feel confident and comfortable with the decision. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

## New Payment for People with Disabilities from Government of Canada – More Information

The Government of Canada is providing a special one-time-tax payment to individuals who are certificate holders of the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) as of June 1, 2020, as follows:

- \$600 for Canadians with a valid DTC certificate.
- \$300 for Canadians with a valid DTC certificate and who are eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension.
- \$100 for Canadians with a valid DTC certificate and who are eligible for the OAS pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).

People who are eligible for this special payment will receive it automatically.

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I had a number of people ask about their eligibility for this support from the Government of Canada and there has been some discussion and criticism of the government for their choice of distribution method. It is the easiest method for the federal government to distribute funding to people with disabilities directly as the Disability Tax Credit is a federal process and the CRA has a list of people who are qualified. Unfortunately, many people have not completed their application for a disability tax credit. It is required if you are opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), so more people have completed their application than in the past. But for many, it does not provide a benefit as its initial purpose was to reduce the income tax paid each year, and many people with disabilities do not pay much income tax.

For more information on the Disability Tax Credit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/segments/tax-credits-deductions-persons-disabilities/disability-tax-credit.html>

And for a discussion on why so many people are not registered for the DTC:

**POLICY BRIEF – WHY IS UPTAKE OF THE DISABILITY TAX CREDIT LOW IN CANADA? EXPLORING POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ACCESS**

Disability supports should be designed to provide benefit and not burdens to eligible recipients. Unfortunately, this is not a reality when it comes to one of the main benefits open to Canadians with disability: the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC). Designed to recognize some of the higher costs faced by people with severe disabilities and their caregivers, the DTC appears to be more of a burden for many, with estimated utilisation unacceptably low at around 40 per cent of working-aged adults with qualifying disabilities. [READ MORE HERE...](#)

For more information on the RDSP:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/registered-disability-savings-plan-rdsp.html>

## Staying Socially Connected During the COVID-19 Pandemic



### 5-PART WEBINAR SERIES



### #3 – THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY HELPS

TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH, AT 1PM PDT

#### 3. The Latest Technology Helps – June 9, 1:00PM – 2:00PM (PT)

So does old technology like knocking on the door or picking up the phone. WhatsApp, Slack, NextDoor, FaceTime, private Facebook groups, email and telephone trees are simple ways to stay in touch and keep everyone up to date. In this webinar, we will discuss the different platforms available and how technology can facilitate greater connections.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

### A Reminder and Summary of COVID-19 Safety Measures

1. Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of a cold or flu.

2. Wash your hands regularly. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
3. Keep your physical distance – six feet or two metres – to avoid spreading the infection.
4. Increase cleaning of high touch surfaces.

## **Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe**

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