

Subject: COVID-19 Updates - May 28 2020 - Getting Ready - Transit Update
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Getting Ready

Susan Wilson, Spectrum Coordinator and our in-house certified Mandt trainer, wrote the following update, with her observations and insights on how people have been coping with the added stressors of the past few months. Thank you Susan for your reflections, and for reminding us that there is some great learning to be gleaned from this whole experience.

In this increased time of challenge and with people spending quite a bit of time at home and out of their usual routines, you would expect to see many more incidents of increased stress and people escalating in extreme ways as a reaction. However, that is not what we are seeing. Overall as an agency we have been seeing less critical incidents and extreme escalations, especially in home/life sharing situations. This doesn't mean that people are without their stressors but it might mean several different things that we want to pay attention to. For me it tells me that the people I support who are very sensitive to their environment and to activity level have had a few things that have made this stressful time more bearable for them. So I thought I would try to learn from that and look at what could contribute to making a transition into a more engaging and active life easier or better for them.

What are some of those things that might have helped people over the last few months?

- A lot of reassurance and a feeling like we are all in this together.
- Fewer transitions. Fewer times a person needs to leave a situation and go to another.
- Fewer people coming in and out of their lives. Fewer people with their own interpretations, "rules", smells and sounds. etc.
- Things are, although less predictable for us as a society, more predictable day to day.
- Time: time to process in ways that are unique to each person. Less immediacy where this 'action' needs to happen now.
- More pointed focus on relationships. Organized and purposeful...and more scheduled.
- Less things happening all at once for the person and others they observe.

I'm sure there are many more....

Well, nobody wants things to stay this way; more isolated and with less connection. We don't want that for ourselves or the people we support. We all deserve the risk of a full and meaningful life. So sooner or later we all will emerge and get back to a sense of regular involvement in the world of sights and sounds and we want this for the people we support on a daily basis.

How can we use the observations of the things that have helped over the last few months to support and assist the highly sensitive people in our lives? Specifically as they are coming from a time where the senses have been more relaxed?

We want to support people to be successful (always our goal)... so what can we do?

1. Understand that we are all unique and as such each of us will need an individual focus and plan.
 2. Make sure we keep it at the individual's pace and that they have the ability to make the call of how/when/why the next step happens. We are with them - not they are with us. We are all in this together.
 3. For some people we can perhaps help them identify their pace and find out what next steps are most important to them.
 4. If someone says going out for a daily coffee, or going out to the bank is the most important thing to them right now...start there. If someone says that they just want to check in with a certain activity or place and not stay... start there.
 5. If possible break it down into pieces and be prepared to leave or create space and time if the person is struggling. We are all in this together, I am on your side.
 6. Try out safe spaces where you can help the person learn the practical aspects of social distancing and sanitizing their hands...or if it works for that person and the situation needs it to learn to wear a mask.
 7. For some people if it works best, create a "social story" where you can tell or show a story of how it might go ahead of time. For some people it works to speak the story, for some for us to write it down, and for some people it works to use pictures.
 - Pay attention to if it works better for them if the story is about them, or some people might prefer a story told in a less personalized way. If that's the case you can tell a story about someone else: "when Sam did this..." or "when I tried that." Or if it works better to connect with memories talk about "remember when..."
 8. Don't overwhelm. Help them organize the process by using space and time. If possible try to keep the number of people involved down.
 9. Be prepared to try something and have it not work out perfectly, that's what we are here for. You will help them try again...tomorrow's another day.
 10. For those of you who have taken the Mandt System (Spectrum's chosen non-violent crisis response training) you might remember something called S.O.D.A.S., a problem-solving tool that stands for Situation – Options – Disadvantages – Advantages – Solution. It's the perfect time to dust that off and see how it can help you and the person you support. It's not the only answer but it is a process that honours all involved.
 - If enough people want to do a refresher of this method we could hold a zoom where we go over the S.O.D.A.S. problem solving process.
- For more on S.O.D.A.S, here is a graphic: <https://suebadeau.webs.com/SODAS.pdf>

Valued Social Roles

With everything else that's happening right now, it's easy to lose sight of the vision of full, inclusive lives - we've had to be careful ourselves a few times from defaulting to medical models of support beyond what's absolutely necessary. As Susan Wilson was talking about above, there is learning we can glean from the experience of the past few months, positive lessons about resilience and interdependence that we can take forward. I thought it was a great observation, and ties in with the focus on valued roles. Even in a pandemic, there are opportunities for people to make valued contributions and take up roles that are image enhancing. Some of the people we thought would have the hardest time with all the new restrictions are actually coping really well and helping the rest of us to get through this. So unexpected, and so powerful.

Valued Roles in the Community for People with an Intellectual Disability

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Transit Update

Below is an update from Translink on their Safe Operating Action Plan (SOAP? 😊)
 There are a few key points in the update:

- Service is being restored to pre-pandemic levels
- Travel outside the biggest rush hour times
- Cleaning has been enhanced
- Wear a mask if you are able

Transit is an essential service for many people to get to work. Grace and Sterling both took transit this morning and said many people are wearing masks, and if you can travel after 9am it is much less crowded than traveling at 8am.



An Open Letter to Our Customers

Last week marked a new chapter in British Columbia’s response to COVID-19.

As we turn the page, TransLink is stepping up to support Phase 2 of British Columbia’s Restart Plan.

Throughout the pandemic, thousands of essential workers have relied on our services every day. Over the coming weeks and months, we expect that many of our customers will be returning to the transit system as they go back to work, to school, and to get to the people and places that matter to them.

That's why we are announcing new and enhanced measures to improve safety and meet the needs of you, our customers.

In the weeks ahead, you will start to notice changes at transit stations and on vehicles designed to improve sanitization, create physical space where possible, and enhance your safety.

These initiatives, many of which have been taken since the beginning of the pandemic, are now part of the Safe Operating Action Plan. This plan will be implemented in phases to meet the needs of our customers as B.C.'s economy restarts.

One of the key things you will see is an increase in our cleaning and sanitization efforts. We have already implemented regular spray disinfection on our vehicles as well as daily cleaning on SkyTrain. Now, we will deploy cleaning "pit crews" to disinfect SkyTrain cars at high-traffic stations and we are doubling the spray disinfection of buses and SeaBuses to twice a week.

To help reduce the number of people on any given SkyTrain, we are going to limit the flow through fare gates at busy SkyTrain stations. This might mean you can't make the train just entering a station, but please remember that the next train is only minutes away.

We will also be adding service to create more opportunities for space. This includes restoring service to nearly the same levels as before the COVID-19 pandemic on many routes. And please take transit off-peak if you can.

Safety on transit will take all of us working together.

To help keep yourself and your fellow passengers safe, please wear a non-medical mask or face covering while waiting or travelling on transit. And please stay home if you are sick.

It's no secret that, like everyone else, the past few months have been a challenge for our organization. We have had to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances due to the pandemic.

As our customers gradually return to their daily routines over the coming weeks and months, we want you to know that we are here for you and are ready to welcome you back.

At TransLink, we have adopted a saying: Together all the way. It means that we are here to help our customers reach their destinations and get home again – safely, reliably and affordably. Today, it also means we are working together – all of us – to get us all the way through this pandemic period and ensure our transit service is here for you as we restart the economy and bring some normalcy back to our lives.

Thank you again for your trust and support.



Kevin Desmond
CEO, TransLink

Plain Language and Sign Language Information on COVID-19

CLBC has a great page of resources in plain language and some videos with sign language translation of information on COVID-19.

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/resources/information-about-the-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/plain-language-resources/>

Sign Language information about B.C.'s Restart Plan

The Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility is a B.C.-based organization that helps reduce communications barriers for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Wavefront has been creating American Sign Language (ASL) videos of B.C. government announcements, and [sharing them on their Youtube page here](#). This includes ASL versions of the [different parts of BC's Restart Plan](#), which you can find by clicking the links below:

- [Overview](#)
- [Protective measures we've taken in B.C. have made a difference](#)
- [The next stage of our challenge](#)
- [How we'll keep transmission low](#)
- [How we'll start getting people back to work](#)
- [Some next steps to make life a little easier](#)
- [How we'll keep taking care of each other](#)
- [The little things make a big difference](#)

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