

Subject: COVID-19 Updates - September 24, 2020 - Back to Basics 4 - Staying Connected
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 12:56:42 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Ernie Baatz
To: Ernie Baatz
Attachments: image001.jpg

Back to Basics Part 4 – Staying Connected

Part 4 of our “Back to Basics” update focuses on maintaining social connections. Staying connected to family, friends and community is essential for our mental health and wellbeing. Below is an infographic we shared a while back from the Government of Canada that highlights some of the ways that people with disabilities are more vulnerable during this COVID-19 pandemic. We can see from this graphic that many people with disabilities experience social isolation due to living alone, having limited social connections outside the home, or relying on services and supports to meet their daily needs. COVID-19 has compounded the problem. The effects of social isolation can be far reaching; it can lead to loss of friendships, loss of social skills, depression, and it can increase the risk of abuse and neglect.

Family and Friends

It’s been great to see people finding creative ways to stay connected to their family and friends, including gathering outdoors for picnics, talking on the phone more often, and learning to use other technology solutions like zoom and facetime. With the cooler weather people will be focusing more on indoor gatherings which of course need to remain small. Social isolation is a major concern for many of the people we support, particularly those who live alone. Spectrum will continue to encourage and support people to stay connected to their family and friends as we recognize how very important this is to individuals and their networks.

[Stay Home and Stay Safe](#) – Ideas collected by Spectrum folks

[PLAN](#) – 5 ideas for staying connected during the Covid-19 pandemic

[Safe Seniors, Strong Communities](#) – links to resources that help seniors to stay safe and connected

Community Connections

Another way to ensure that people stay connected to others is by continuing with as many of their regular community activities as possible. While some activities like community centre classes are still not available, people are finding alternative activities and ways to stay engaged in their neighbourhoods and communities. Connecting with the cashier or barista who knows the individual as a regular customer, being greeted by a familiar bus driver or bank teller, catching up with the next door neighbour – these are all meaningful social interactions that help to keep people feeling engaged. Spectrum’s community inclusion services have continued throughout the past six months, with some reductions or modifications depending on individual circumstances. We plan to maintain as much of this support as possible through the fall and winter.

Persons with disabilities and COVID-19

What makes them vulnerable?

Using data from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability¹, this infographic provides a snapshot of **potential areas of impact** and **unique challenges** persons with disabilities may face during the pandemic.



Among the **6.2 million** Canadians aged **15 and older** with a disability, **21%** (or 1.3 million) were living alone.

778,000 of those with a disability considered themselves housebound due to their condition.

Of those:

- **38%** considered themselves housebound due to limited social connections outside the home.
- **74%** received help with daily activities because of their condition.

Almost **half (49%)** of those with a disability received help with daily activities because of their condition.



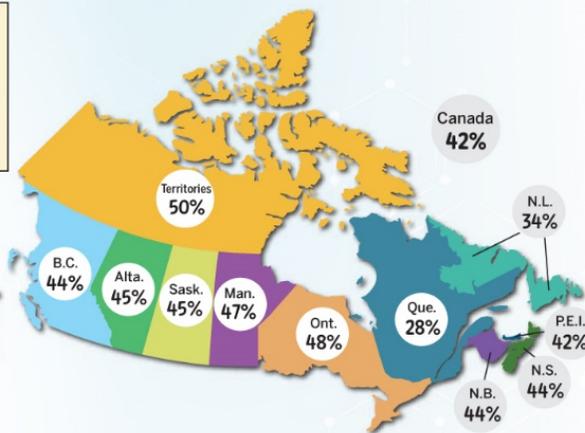
36% relied only on help from outside their household.²

Among those with a disability, almost **one in five (19%)** reported that they do not use the Internet.



In 2017, almost **1.4 million (42%)** Canadians aged **70 and older** living in a **private dwelling** had a **disability**.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has identified **older adults** as a vulnerable population, with **increased risk** of severe outcomes from COVID-19.



Footnotes:
1. The Canadian Survey on Disability covers Canadians aged 15 years and older, living in private dwellings, whose everyday activities are limited because of a long-term condition or health-related problem.
2. This includes help from family members not living with them, friends or neighbours, or both paid and unpaid organizations or individuals.

Source: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Industry, 2020

Vote By Mail Information

During a pandemic, vote by mail is a good option for voters with underlying health conditions and for voters who do not wish to vote in person at a voting place.

You can request a "Vote By Mail" package now, so you are ready for the Fall provincial election on October 24th, 2020. On the [Elections BC website](#), the following information is required to request your package:

You will need to provide your name, date of birth, address, and one of the following identification numbers:

your B.C. driver's licence number,

your B.C. Identification Card number,

the last six digits of your Social Insurance Number, **or**

the last six digits of your Personal Health Number.

To request a vote-by-mail package, you will also be asked to provide an email address or telephone number where you can be reached.

Let us know if you have any questions or need any assistance.

Ernie Baatz

Executive Director

Spectrum Society for Community Living

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

www.spectrumsociety.org

cell: 604-644-1474

Be Calm, Be Kind, Be Safe