

COVID-19

April 30, 2020

CARRY ON

I have a coffee mug given to me by my grand-daughter Alana, with “Keep Calm and Carry On” stenciled onto it. This is an inside joke between her and my wife but it captures exactly how I feel these days. We have come a long way in our preparations to meet COVID-19 and perhaps even to get a little bit ahead. The frantic pace has lessened and now we just have to stay the course. We keep calm; we sanitize everything and everybody; we stay a good distance apart and minimize contact with others; we watch vigilantly for signs of illness; we respond accordingly and we carry on. This can become tedious but it is how we will eventually beat the virus.

UPDATE

I confess to holding my breath every Monday when the count comes in. The great news is that after all of these weeks we still have no known cases of the virus with the individuals whom we support. Clearly, what we have done is working, we have kept calm and are carrying on with the precautions and safeguards that are keeping everyone safe.

PPE's

We continue to await the arrival of some PPE's including cloth masks and no-touch thermometers, but we are well equipped for the medium term.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Recently I have heard experts in the media talk about a reoccurrence of COVID-19 in the fall during our annual influenza season and the confusion that may result because so many will be displaying symptoms. I have heard that if we think we have beat this and move too quickly then we will undo what we have accomplished in flattening the curve. I have also heard a number of conversations about ‘opening up’ and what this may look like.

I believe that it is wise to consider what a lessening of restrictions will look like and what our programs will look like down the road.

Please be certain that we will follow the advice and recommendations of the Province and Dr. Henry. When the time is right, our restrictions will begin to ease very gradually. The safety of staff members and individuals will be paramount.

I firmly believe that we will beat the virus but we still have some distance to go. That is why I urge us all to be diligent in our application of precautions and safeguards. The simple fact is that safeguards work and the four most important ones are (I may be a little repetitive here, but I know it is important):

1. Keeping your distance. Always leave 2 meters between yourself and others;
2. Washing your hands with soap frequently for at least 20 seconds. Hot water is not required;
3. Coughing or sneezing into the crook of your arms or into a tissue and then safely discarding it; and,
4. Increasing our cleaning regime.

You have been and I ask that you please remain vigilant to protect those we support, our families, our colleagues and ourselves. We can beat the COVID-19 but we cannot let down our guard and we must stay the course together.

WELLNESS

We are beginning week 7 since a pandemic was declared in BC and many of you are fatigued and perhaps distressed. Pandemics are very stressful events and it is normal to feel some stress and anxiety. While we all have learned the safeguards to avoid COVID-19, we need to take steps to also safeguard our mental wellness so that we do not have an echo pandemic of mental illness.

Remember to reach out to friends, family and colleagues. This is absolutely the time to lean on each other, to be emotionally close even as we physically distance.

If you are in distress, reach out now to someone that you trust at TCS or reach out to the Crisis Centre of BC. This is their website: <https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/>

QUESTIONS

If you have questions for Kristine or me, please send them to COVIDQuestions@tcsinfo.ca and we will do our best to answer them.

RECOGNITION

I would like to recognize the great work of Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer and Health Minister Adrian Dix who, in my opinion, have done a magnificent job of steering our province during the pandemic.

Again, I thank all of you who are doing your part to keep people safe and protected. I know that it is not easy and I know that it comes at a cost, but you are making a difference in the lives of those we support and in the lives of those we love. For all that you do, I thank you.

Remember to reach out and connect with others, to stay strong and to please stay safe.

And in the wise words on my coffee mug from my wise grand-daughter Alana, "Keep and Carry On" TCS colleagues.

Bob Cornish, CEO