

## COVID-19

June 4, 2020

My parents were both born in Alberta prior to another pandemic, the Spanish Flu, and were raised in farming families. They lived through the Great Depression and both served in WWII. Their generation is called the 'greatest generation' because of this and while I would never dispute that, yet I am left wondering after we get through our own World-wide pandemic how our generation will be described.

COVID-19 is OUR test. I do believe we will be defined by how we respond to the challenge of defeating the virus and caring for others. Our ability to display the courage, determination and stamina of the greatest generation is important to not only survive the pandemic, but to do our part in eradicating it while safeguarding the individuals that we support, our colleagues and our love ones.

We have been very successful in applying our precautions and safeguards and as of today, there are no individuals that we support that have tested positive. This is incredible news and speaks to the diligence and vigilance that our front line workers and our managers have consistently and constantly applied the necessary safeguards. There is also a generous sprinkling of luck.

I am concerned that as our Province 'opens up' that we will drop our guard and make mistakes that could have serious consequences. I caution you all to continue to be vigilant in our efforts to keep everyone safe. Let's not undo everything that we have achieved. The four foundational safeguards, slightly amended are:

1. Keeping your distance. Always leave 2 meters between yourself and others and **if you cannot, it is recommended to wear a mask;**
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. Continuing our intensive cleaning regime.

My communications have been drafted each week since the pandemic started and I've tried to provide the necessary information for you to be informed of how we are addressing the pandemic, the steps that need to be taken to ensure the safety of all members of our TCS community and to encourage open communication within and across all of our programming. In each letter, I also attempt to genuinely convey just how proud and thankful I am of all of you for the hard work and commitment you have demonstrated at this most challenging time. We have done this together!

## **WHAT TO EXPECT**

A state of emergency still exists in our province until June 9<sup>th</sup> and I confess to being very curious as to what will happen next: Extensions of the state of emergency or an easing of restrictions. The TCS approach is to religiously follow the directions and recommendations of Dr. Henry and the Province of BC and to emphasize extreme caution in moving forward.

We are developing program specific plans. Prior to reopening, we will assess the risk in each program, then develop written plans that will that addresses the following:

- Workplace / facility considerations;
- Service considerations;
- Staff considerations;
- Individual considerations; and,
- Communication with supported individuals, families and staff members.

The plans for each program have not all been completed, but are in progress. Once approved, they will be posted in each program and will be available to families.

You should expect programs to look different based upon the above factors. Residential programs will likely slowly adapt or re-open in a reverse manner to how they closed down.

Community and day programs will be more complex due to the numbers of participants and the limitations of space. The type of service and the level of service, including the hours of operation that were provided prior to the pandemic will very likely change.

## **QUESTIONS**

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

## **RECOGNITION**

This world is full of risks. Whether we are crossing the street or driving to the grocery store we put ourselves at risk. We try to mitigate these risks by not speeding or by looking both ways before we step into the street. With the Coronavirus, we reduce the risk of transmission through our consistent adherence to the safeguards and precautions that are in place. I thank you for your steadfastness and for caring enough to protect those we support, those we work with and those that we love.

Thank you for all that you do.

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

Bob Cornish, CEO