

NOTICE TO COMMUNITY (March 10, 2020)

Dear friends,

At this point, we already have a few conversations individually and in groups about COVID-19 (previously known as the novel coronavirus) and how to prepare if this reaches our part of the world. As of today, there are no cases of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia, and Public Health authorities continue to advise that the risk in Canada and in Nova Scotia remains low.

What have we done so far to prepare?

Since mid-February, we already have the following items in place:

- 1) We have created inclusive educational posters and materials to help **avoid getting and spreading viruses**. The World Health Organization and NS Department of Health recommend the following:
 - Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (wet hands, wash for 20 seconds, rinse, and dry)
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or flexed elbow
 - Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly
 - Limit contact with other people when you're sick
 - If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, see your doctor
- 2) We have also talked about this in groups such as Community Night. We are planning to do parallel sessions at Working Group, and we encourage all houses and programs to keep talking about this in their meetings.
- 3) Each building (houses, programs, offices) received **hand sanitizers in wooden holders**. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizers are a good alternative. Refills are available in the office. (See posters created!)
- 4) Houses reviewed their **EMO Plans** and updated their **72-Hour Emergency Kits**.
- 5) We have circulated **Pandemic Household Planning**. In the event of a pandemic, houses will be more prepared, as they would already have essential supplies good for two or more weeks. The list includes food items, dry goods, medications, and personal care products. We will also have specific items stored in The Gathering Place.

What other things are we working on to prepare?

- 1) Provide information on how **COVID-19 is transmitted?**
 - Respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
 - Close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
 - Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes
- 2) **Boost your immune system!** The following are recommended:
 - Vitamin C—houses already have this in place at the beginning of the flu season.
 - Get enough sleep.
 - Eat healthy—vegetables, fruits, nuts, etc.
 - Exercise every day

3) **Cleaning Schedule**

- Create a schedule of cleaning and disinfecting a few times daily
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched areas such as toilets, bedside tables, light switches, door handles (use household cleaning products or a diluted bleach solution)
- If they can withstand the use of liquids for disinfection, frequently touched electronics such as phones, computers, and other devices may be disinfected with 70% alcohol (e.g. wipes)

4) Promote a **“no handshake”** practice. We encourage using the **“Gordon Mills wave!”** (See posters!)

5) **Community Gatherings**

- We will deal with community gatherings on a case-by-case basis. Per recommendation, Leadership Team will be constantly working on risk assessments (transmission dynamics, nature of event activities, crowd density, nature of contact between members, etc.) that will determine postponement or cancellation.
- Participation of members that are immunocompromised, with high-risk medical conditions, or aged 65 and above will be advised accordingly.
- If food is involved, we will eliminate self-serve buffet style eating.

6) **Travel Advice:** Recommendation to avoid spread of germs is the same as above. Travelers returning would need to be mindful of additional preventive measures, as recommended:

- Wear masks for 14 days (mandatory).
- Use gloves in supporting people with personal care (mandatory).
- Be mindful of close contact.
- Avoid visits with people that are immunocompromised, with high-risk medical conditions, or members aged 65 and above.

7) For Assistants who have symptoms of **fever, cough, and difficulty breathing:**

- See a doctor
- Follow #6 (the same recommendation as for travelers returning)
- Take a Personal Day/s

8) Plan for Individuals that are **immunocompromised, with high-risk medical conditions, or members aged 65 and above:**

- Quarantine in Shalom
- We will limit the people that will be going in and out of the building.
- Contact will be following specific preventative measures.

9) Plan for Individuals **with COVID-19:**

- Hospitalization
- Quarantine/Isolation Plan
 - We have a plan in place should hospitals be unable to keep up with a number of patients with COVID-19.
 - Our first quarantine/isolation location is **Caper Club**. The building will be equipped with two separate rooms to be converted into bedrooms, a living room space, a kitchen and two bathrooms. There is also an on-site washer and dryer. There will be specific measures in place, and resources will be made available. Specific Assistants will be assigned to provide support.

Caper Club Program Assistants will be scheduled to support in houses or other programs OR Caper Club participants will be based at the Vineyard House.

- Our second quarantine/isolation location (once Caper Club is full) is **The Angel's Loft**. The building will be equipped with partitions to create bedrooms, a living room space, a kitchen and bathrooms. There is also an on-site washer and dryer. There will be specific measures in place, and resources will be made available. Specific Assistants will be assigned to provide support. The Angel's Loft Program Assistants will be scheduled to support in houses or other programs.

- Families and Community Services will be informed.

10) Create more inclusive posters—changing images often.

11) House Leaders will contact family to inform them of the plan in place.

Team Leaders will be gathering on Monday, March 16th, to review the plan.

If you have any questions or other suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mukthar