

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

## UPDATE #35 / May 5, 2020

Good Afternoon,

It's common in Canada to ask people how they are. Unfortunately, it's also common not to provide—or expect—a truthful answer. How often do we say we're fine, even when we don't really mean it? Every time we just go through the motions, we miss a chance to connect with others in a meaningful way. Further to yesterday's update about Mental Health Week, we wanted to highlight that the focus this year is **social connection**, a key protective factor for mental health. This is a timely theme, given the critical importance of maintaining relationships and connections in this time of physical distancing. Feeling socially connected means you *feel* close and connected to others which nurtures a sense of closeness and connection.

### UPDATE

Technology is a big part of maintaining social connections during these challenging times. We, like many of you, have turned to video platforms to communicate with our employees and our partners. From Microsoft Teams and Facebook, to YouTube and Twitter we've noticed and appreciated the way you are sharing advice and best practices.

We've also been pleased to be part of several **webinars offered by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat on Zoom**.

For those of you still waiting wondering about how to host a virtual gathering, here are some resources:

- **Getting started with Zoom**
- **Fun Tools and Tips to Stay Social While You're Stuck at Home**

Virtual gatherings can help members connect with family while keeping everyone safe. (That's an important consideration with Mother's Day coming up this weekend, and so many of us thinking of getting home even while physical distancing is still the number one way to reduce the spread of COVID-19.)

It's not just our family that we miss, without physical meetings, we have much fewer opportunities to participate in cultural ceremonies like smudging or hear teachings from Elders.

The First Nations Health Authority has shared how the **Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society is helping people connect with their culture by putting a virtual smudging and Elder teachings online**.

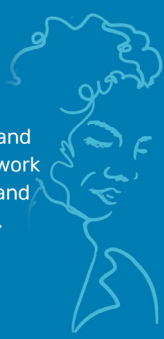
To support these technological connections, the Government of Canada is accelerating its strategy to increase high-speed broadband coverage in rural Canada. The government is consulting with telecommunication providers, rural municipalities and others about how best to move up plans to improve access to high-speed Internet in rural and remote communities. More details are coming soon.

**I'm fine, thanks.**



I'm not feeling like myself right now and I'm worried about my family's health and what's going on with my work and I'm really not coping and I need someone to talk to.

**#GetReal**  
mentalhealthweek.ca



## Food Security

In uncertain times, it is more critical than ever for Canadians to have access to good, high quality, and nutritious food. That is why the Government of Canada is taking steps to support the farmers and businesses who provide Canadians with the food they need to keep themselves and their families healthy.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced important measures within agriculture programs and an investment of more than **\$252 million to support farmers, food businesses, and food processors who provide essential services to Canadians every day by ensuring a safe and reliable food supply**. He also announced that the government intends to propose an additional \$200 million in borrowing capacity for the sector. The measures will help ensure the integrity of the food supply chain, which in turn means that community food supplies are secure, available and accessible.

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SURVEY

### Share your ideas and input!

B.C. is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with a co-ordinated province-wide approach. Our priority is to protect British Columbians and ensure we can effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 questionnaire topics include:

- Responses to government measures, actions, and decisions
- Current levels of concern
- Personal and job impacts
- Use and need of information sources

**Share your feedback by completing the online questionnaire.**

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Province Launches digital Emergency Support Services

With annual flood and wildfire seasons approaching in British Columbia and physical distancing restrictions in place due to COVID-19, **the Province is launching a digital registration system for Emergency Support Services (ESS)**.

The new platform will be available for communities to provide evacuee self-registration, digital registration and referrals, and basic reporting, while enabling safe physical distancing measures to protect both volunteers and evacuees.

The digital system was successfully piloted in four communities during the spring and summer of 2019: Prince George, Kamloops, Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

### Government creates COVID-19 temporary layoff period

To ease financial hardship on businesses and to keep employees connected with their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the **BC Government has extended the temporary layoff period to 16 weeks for COVID-19 related reasons**. Previously under the *Employment Standards Act*, a temporary layoff longer than 13 weeks in any 20-week period (or about three months in a five-month period) was considered a permanent layoff.

### SPARC BC Project to Provide Phones that Remove Barriers to Accessing Phone-Based and Online Supports

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) is a non-partisan, registered non-profit society working with various communities in the province.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SPARC BC has purchased 3500 cell phones to be distributed in BC to First Nations, provincial organizations and in some cases individuals in need. The initiative is meant to remove barriers for those trying to access e-health services or other supports that are available online or by telephone.

The package includes a phone and a sim card, which has \$10 of pre-paid minutes. The phones work well on Wi-Fi so can be used sustainably at low/no cost. The package will also include a wallet card about how to access FNHA's **Virtual Doctor of the Day** program, where the phones are provided to individuals who self identify as Indigenous, or where bundles are sent to Indigenous organizations or Nations for distribution.

If you would like to know more or are interested in receiving the phone package, please contact Kristine Chew at SPARC BC by email at: [kchew@sparc.bc.ca](mailto:kchew@sparc.bc.ca) or visit [their website](#).

## NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Practical advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and business are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at: [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) and [Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#).
- For a great description of what flattening the curve means, consider watching [Prime Minister Trudeau's video tweet](#)
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to share resources and updates being offered by communities:

- **Okanagan Indian Band** posted cleaning and disinfecting tips for your items in your home.
- **Shackan Indian Band** posted safety precautions for distributing traditional foods during a pandemic.

## USEFUL LINKS

- **Kids Help Phone**
- Economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. As information is rapidly changing we strongly encourage you to visit the **federal** and **provincial financial supports** websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – **Information for community leaders**
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**  
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a **COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals**.

## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: [aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca).

