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NEWSLETTER

RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION in the Time of COVID-19

We are living in an unprecedented time in our lives. COVID-19 is affecting each one of us in a myriad of ways.

I have been reflecting this past week about what RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION looks like amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) that declared the pandemic also developed the eight domains or focus areas of global Age-Friendly communities.

The fifth domain is RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION. How do public and commercial services, organizations, and the media show respect for diversity of needs among all citizens including older adults? Are services of all kinds available to people with limited financial resources who may be isolated? (adapted from *Age-Friendly Saskatchewan: Becoming an Age-Friendly Community*).

In last week's newsletter, I shared *10 Ways We Can Be Age-Friendly in the Time of COVID-19*. Click [here](#), and invited you to email me with your ideas as well. Thank you! Here are those ideas in the context of RESPECT and SOCIAL INCLUSION.

Age-friendly RESPECT includes acknowledging that we are each personally responding to this health crisis in ways that cross the spectrum. Some folks feel immobilized and need quiet time to sit and observe what is going on. Others are busily making soup and muffins, 'social distance' shopping for family and neighbours, and calling everyone they know. And many more people are somewhere in between.

Age-friendly RESPECT includes finding ways to remind people without shaming that unless they provide an essential service, they must stay at home. How do we gently and firmly help them explore options to acquire necessities rather than going out to shop several times a week? In other scenarios, more than one 'snowbird' has crossed the border, obeyed the Quarantine Act, and gone directly home for two weeks only to be interrogated and chastised by neighbours. These neighbours may be fear-filled about their well-being and their loved ones. As we check in with returning travellers, let us remember that they could be feeling bewilderment, trauma, anger, disorientation, relief, and much more.

Perhaps, we, and many of our neighbours are as well.

Age-friendly SOCIAL INCLUSION means creatively looking for ways to not let ourselves and others become isolated. Daily or twice-daily phone calls to a vulnerable person who lives alone or is a care-giver can be a life-saver these days.

Age-friendly SOCIAL INCLUSION means something like taping a large heart on our front window to remind people that we are not alone. We are all working in community in this effort to “plank the curve”.

SOCIAL INCLUSION means care homes doing their best to keep their residents connected with community by printing emails and setting up phone and ZOOM calls as they are able in the midst of huge staff stress. Check out how they are creating “face time windows” with phones so that family outside can talk with those inside. Click [here](#).

Age friendly SOCIAL INCLUSION means embracing “care-mongering”, widely attributed to Canada and now an international movement, focused on supporting our most vulnerable persons in the midst of a pandemic. Click [here](#) for more info.

We have all learned new phrases or heard heart-filled quotations in the last two weeks. Here are a few that you have shared with me. Let me know others, and I will include them in next week’s newsletter:

- We need to look for ways to PHYSICALLY DISTANCE and be SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE.
- We are “aging in place” and “sheltering in place”.
- Remember when you asked that small business to support your fundraiser? It’s time to support them. They are the heart of your town!
- Introverts, put down your books, and call your extroverted friends. They need you!
- And finally from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses:

“[Staying home] is imperative to give registered nurses and doctors a fighting chance to bend the curve on COVID. We need the full cooperation of the public. We need people to stay home. If you don’t need to go out, don’t. Social distance when you are out and if you’re not feeling well you must self-isolate. Please. Our lives depend on it.”

Click on the two sites below for up-to-date Canadian information.

[GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN](#)

[GOVERNMENT OF CANADA](#)

Thank you for reading and forwarding to your Age-Friendly Committees,

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