



## MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST

From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director on behalf of the Pandemic Team

Date: December 10, 2020

Re: **Face Shields vs. Goggles concerns; WE HEAR YOU~!!!!**

**Please place in COVID-19 binders**

---

Good day

Since the messaging went out on the new Ministry directives with respect to wearing a face shield at all times, we have heard your concerns and feedback. We are also aware that some would prefer to wear goggles or purchase their own face shields. On behalf of the Pandemic Team, I want you to know **we have heard your concerns**. The decision on face shields vs goggles is at a higher level of the Ministry and we are hopeful for some clarification on this matter shortly.

All of the Ministry messaging (except in one area of their guidelines) references wearing face shields. The Ministry provides PPE to us and they have not sent us any goggles, only face shields. However, in the interim and with so much concern right now over this protection, **the bottom line is that we want you to be protected**. We ordered goggles and a different more comfortable face shield to address the concerns of the foam on the head and the fogging up of the shields.

While we are allowing for the use of goggles at this time, Ministry clarification in the messaging may change the direction of this but in the interim, we are doing our best to address your concerns. If you need to wear goggles instead of a face shield, please speak to your supervisor for direction. We have goggles from a medical supplier that we are able to provide to you.

We also have heard that employees are wearing face shields from the Dollar store. This concerns us. While these may be more comfortable, they are not Health Canada approved. We want you to wear equipment that is comfortable for you as we know you are using it for long hours, but **your safety is our priority**. Please consider your choices as we are accountable for what you are using. We are hoping to provide you with better options over the next week or so when new face shields arrive.

We are not the only agency in developmental services dealing with these issues. We work together and this has been a huge challenge for not only our organization. Driving with shields has also posed a health and safety concern. Please use common sense when addressing these issues. If you cannot see to drive in a shield if having to transport someone we support, then re-evaluate the options of how to travel with that person. Can they be re-positioned differently in the vehicle to allow for social distancing; can public transportation be used instead. We learned today of some barrier options for vehicles which we are looking into. **Do not** drive a vehicle with a shield on if you are unable to safely navigate the road.

We know these are difficult times and the directives for working in congregate living settings continue to change frequently. Those making the decisions that impact all of us are doing so out of a concern for people's safety; please try to remember this. We are not trying to make your job more difficult to navigate; the intentions of the Ministry and ourselves is to keep the people we support, and our employees protected from the virus.

As always, if you have concerns or questions, please reach out to your supervisor, a member of the Pandemic team or any member of the management team. ***Thank you for your continued efforts.***

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Andrew S.", written in a cursive style.