



**M E M O R A N D U M**

To: All Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST  
From: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler, Executive Director  
Date: May 15, 2020  
Re: Ontario starts to Open up.....  
**PLEASE PUT THIS COMMUNICATION IN THE COVID-19 BINDER; THANK YOU**

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Happy Long Weekend to the amazing Employees of OPTIONS NORTHWEST.

Just want to message to all that I hope this long weekend brings some sunshine and warmer weather to our lovely city to make us feel like spring has arrived for good. The warmer weather as well as the recent announcements of the Government to start to re-open Ontario gives us some hope that we are coming out of the other side of this pandemic tunnel. And while there is much to be grateful and hopeful for, OPTIONS like many other agencies in our sector are really looking at what that means for us.

Your approach to keeping yourselves well and cautious during this time coupled with all of the directions we have provided in working with Public health etc. have kept you and the individuals we support safe. We recognize that an enormous effort has been put in by the whole team of OPTIONS employees to keep the agency functioning during this time of pandemic. The creativity in the artwork, painted windows, pizza parties, social distancing walks, creative visits with family, etc. demonstrate the exceptional commitment of the employees of this organization. And for this.....we are truly thankful.

We are messaging that although the province is opening up some of its retail businesses and recreational sites, **we are still requesting that the individuals supported remain home as much as possible.** We are not discouraging walks, but we do not want individuals to be going for groceries or attending at retail outlets to shop until we can put some education measures in place for the individuals we support. There is no reason why patios at the homes cannot be used this weekend if the weather is nice or going for a ride. Social distancing rules still prevail when going for walks and/or van rides.

There are recommendations out by Ministry of Health that when going out in public, individuals should be wearing masks. For some of the individuals we support, this may frighten them or not be possible due to medical conditions with breathing. We need some time to plan for re-entry into the general public and to plan for education measures for the individuals we support.

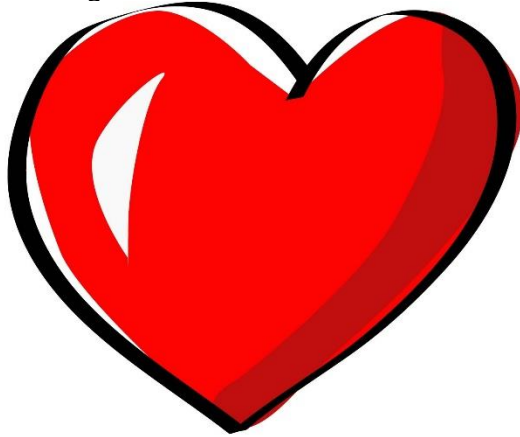
So, while the community starts to re-open, we ask for your patience a little longer in staying home with the individuals we support. We have an important mandate in that we care for individuals who are very vulnerable. We have done such an amazing job to date.....we would hate to rush into anything without some proper planning to take place first.

We will continue to work towards this and will continue to message in the upcoming weeks. Keep up the amazing work you have done for this organization.

Have a great long weekend everyone.



Anna-Marie Eckensweiler  
On behalf of the Management and Pandemic teams



*Thank You !!*

