



Between Friends
COVID-19 Relaunch Plan: 2021

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Section 1: Our Commitment

1.1 Purpose of Guidelines

Between Friends exists for our members and their families. We believe in connection and friendship - physical distancing does not come easily for us. Our priority during this global pandemic has been and will continue to be the health and safety of all our stakeholders.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your patience, understanding, donations, offers of assistance, and creative brainstorming throughout this most unusual year.

This document is a guide to Between Friends' plan & approach to a phased relaunch of key services. It contains the most current information since the day this guide was initially shared. We use plain language as much as possible to make this document accessible to all.

We have spoken with many other organizations offering services for people with disabilities to understand their relaunch approach, successes, and challenges. We continue to watch COVID-19 developments and to follow recommendations from Alberta Health Services and all levels of government.

Our Relaunch Plan strongly takes into consideration the feedback of our members and families. For those participants who are ready to return to in-person programs, know that Between Friends has been working carefully on this plan to make that happen. For those who remain more comfortable at home, we will continue to support participants through our online programming "WeConnect". Everyone deserves an opportunity to connect, grow, and belong, no matter what individual comfort levels may be.

For a successful relaunch of services to take place, there are a number of factors that will determine our next steps. We will each need to take responsibility and work together to reduce risk and increase the success of our relaunch.

As you know, the situation around COVID-19 continues to change quickly. This document may change as the pandemic continues and more information becomes available. We are committed to remaining transparent and sharing important changes with you when necessary.

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions are used:

Member is defined as anyone who has a membership with Between Friends.

Participant is defined as anyone registered and participating in a Between Friends program or event.

Stakeholder is defined as anyone involved in any capacity with the organization, for example members, volunteers, staff, families, donors, subcontractors, etc.

Caregiver is defined as any primary support worker, caretaker, guardian, or parent of a participant.

Personnel is defined as any volunteer or staff member who has completed the Between Friends orientation and training sessions.

Program is defined as any organized session of activities that is facilitated by Between Friends.

Event is defined as any stand-alone organized activity that is facilitated by Between Friends.

Virtual is defined as our C.O.V.I.D. (Creative Opportunities with Virtual Interaction Delivery) Programs, utilizing online platforms such as Google Hangouts and Zoom, which were implemented in April 2020 to replace cancelled in-person programs.

Online is defined as our current WeConnect Programs and Special Events, utilizing Zoom.

For questions about Between Friends' Program Relaunch Plan, please contact:

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1.2 Importance of Mental Health

At Between Friends, we value the mental health of our staff, volunteers, members, and their families.

“A public health emergency, like the COVID-19 outbreak, can be stressful, especially for people who have a pre-existing medical condition, who are traveling, or are separated from friends and family members at home and abroad.

For individuals and communities who have to self-isolate, are choosing to distance themselves, or who have otherwise been directly impacted by COVID-19, there may be heightened awareness, concern, anxiety, and fear. For many, a sense of loss or feeling like you don’t have control may be common. Try to be patient with yourself and others because people may not cope like they usually do.”¹

We all react to stress differently. During these challenging times, we invite you to use the resources provided to help work through the stresses in your life in a positive way. Please be kind to yourselves and others. For those giving care to others, it’s important to take care of yourself as well.

Between Friends believes in the value of connection and having a sense of belonging. In a time of increased physical distancing, we encourage you to continue connecting with friends and family in safe ways, such as phone or video calls. These actions can help decrease levels of isolation and provide a sense of community.

Social and recreation activities are incredibly important to maintaining positive mental & physical health. We encourage you to continue to access programs that suit your comfort levels and utilize our [At-Home Resources for Families](#) for fun and safe ways to keep busy at home.

Please remember that help is always available. We encourage you to reach out for support when needed.

- Emergency – 911
- [Health Link](#) – 811
- [Addiction Helpline](#) – 1-866-332-2322
- Community Resources – [211 Alberta](#)
- Crisis Text Line – Text CONNECT to 741741
- [Family Violence – Find Supports](#) – 310-1818
- [Income Supports](#) – 1-866-644-5135
- [Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

¹ Alberta Health Services. 2020. COVID-19 And Your Mental Health.

- [Mental Health Helpline](#) – 1-877-303-2642
- [MyHealth.Alberta.ca: List of Important Numbers](#)
- [Physician & Family Support Program](#) – 1-877-767-4637
- [Toll Free Crisis Line / Distress Centres](#)
- [Calgary Food Bank](#) – 403-253-2055

1.3 Our Response Thus Far

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Between Friends made the difficult decision to cancel all in-person programs for the remainder of 2020 to ensure the safety of our members, families, staff & volunteers. Even with the unexpected changes, we continued to offer opportunities for our membership to connect, grow, and belong from a safe distance. Over the past number of months, we have done our best to physically distance while staying socially connected.

Our reopening measures have required careful consideration of the needs of the vulnerable population we serve, many of whom are immunocompromised.

Our immediate response as the pandemic began included:

- Staying in touch with our families through regular email communications, website and social media updates, as well as phone calls to all of our current (500+) members in 2020.
- Creating a list of online resources of leisure, recreation, and educational activities. The list was split first by age group, and then by area of interest to help keep members active at home.
- Launching our Virtual Programming: Creative Opportunities with Virtual Interaction Delivery (C.O.V.I.D. 2020 Program Options). These virtual programs included a range of activities for different ages and interests. C.O.V.I.D. 2020 Program Options later turned into our WeConnect Programs. All virtual and online programming was offered at no cost to members. We felt that families should still foster connection and fun for their members during these difficult times without having to worry about added financial stress caused by the pandemic.
- Supporting our families in accessing resources and being available to provide moral support and human connection. This includes weekly virtual check-ins designed for members who are feeling isolated and want connection.
- Hosting Virtual Special Events to engage members in fun activities such as dances, crafts, and more.

We continued to explore funding opportunities in order to:

- Secure iPads/laptops for members who don't have them, to support online programming/connecting.
- Fund our no-cost online WeConnect programming, and support services as we move forward.
- Subsidize the cost of program staff through accessing the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

Online offerings have proved to be the safest way to provide the social and recreation opportunities our members need while we plan for the relaunch of key in-person programs. These online programs called “WeConnect” have allowed us to continue to provide social & recreation programs so that people with disabilities can connect, grow and belong.

WeConnect programs are offered to various age groups and appeal to a range of interests. The programs currently include: Get Crafty (Teens), Get Crafty (Adults), Social Butterflies, Teen Music, Get Up & Move, Boombbox! (music therapy), Games Night, Film Fans, and rotating specialty programs. We continue to offer online events such as karaoke, dance parties, and more.

Between Friends hired a Program Relaunch Manager in 2020 who has worked collectively with many disability service providers, government initiatives, the Post-COVID Board Committee, and the community to coordinate efforts, share policies and procedures, share survey results and resources, and work together to anticipate and plan. We have also learned from schools, daycares, recreation centres, and day programs who have led the way in returning to in-person programming.

Please know that this plan and all the decisions leading up to it have been made with thorough consideration of our members, relevant research & data, and the highest level of care. We will continue to navigate the COVID-19 situation and plans for programming with equal thoughtfulness.

Section 2: COVID-19

2.1 What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a new virus that can spread from person to person. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.

Current information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus), its symptoms and transmission can be obtained from the Government of Alberta here: [COVID-19 info for Albertans](#).

Click here for the Government of Alberta's Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 for people with disabilities: [FAQ on COVID-19 for people with disabilities](#).

2.2 COVID-19 Symptoms

COVID-19 has a broad range of symptoms that vary from person to person. If you or your family exhibit any of the following symptoms, please monitor your condition and adhere to public health advice.

The information for the table below is from the Alberta Government website at the time of publication. Up to date information on COVID-19 symptoms from the Alberta Government can be found here: [Government of Alberta: Symptoms and Testing](#).

CORE SYMPTOMS	
If you have any of these core symptoms, you need to isolate for at least 10 days from the start of your symptoms or until they are gone, whichever is longer, or until you test negative for COVID-19.	
Adults over 18	Children under 18
Cough Fever Shortness of breath Runny nose Sore throat	Cough Fever Shortness of breath Loss of sense of taste or smell

OTHER SYMPTOMS	
Adults over 18 (Other Symptoms)	Children under 18 (Other Symptoms)
Any symptom: Stay home and limit contact with others until symptoms are gone. Testing is recommended.	1 symptom: Stay home for 24 hours, get tested if symptoms don't improve. 2+ symptoms: Get tested and stay home until well or test is negative.
Stuffy nose Painful swallowing Chills Headache Muscle or joint aches Feeling unwell or fatigue Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained Loss of appetite Loss of sense of smell or taste Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye	Sore throat Runny or stuffy nose Painful swallowing Chills Headache Muscle or joint aches Feeling unwell or fatigue Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye

2.3 How is COVID-19 Spread? ^{2 3}

Coronavirus is spread the same way as other viruses that cause colds and flus. People who are sick can give the virus to other people by doing things like sneezing and coughing. When people cough or sneeze, tiny droplets of liquid go into the air or on surfaces. If a person has coronavirus, the virus can be inside those droplets and make other people sick if it ends up in their nose, mouth or eyes.

To keep each other safe:

1. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
2. Use tissues and throw them away.
3. Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer every time you touch your mouth or nose.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others.

³ Public Health Agency of Canada. 2020. About Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

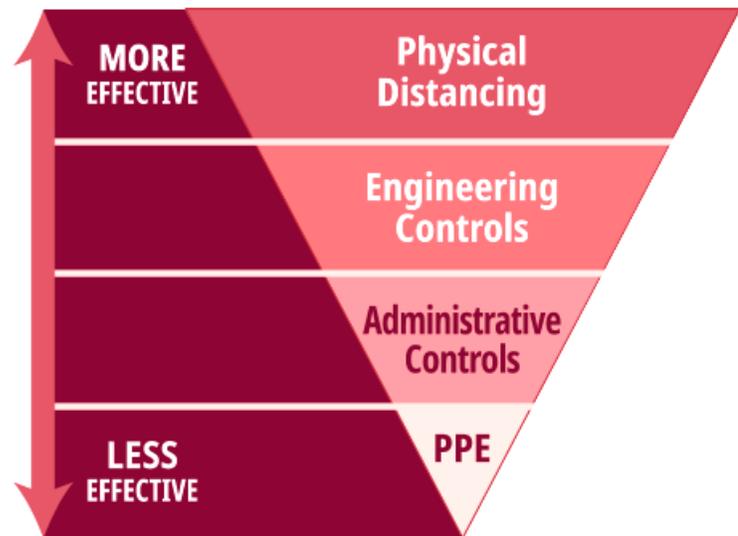
2.4 Risk Management

While the risk of COVID-19 can not be completely eliminated there are various types of controls and precautions that both individuals and organizations can take to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Safety controls like physical distancing and masks are different safety measures that can be taken. Below is a picture showing how effective different safety measures are against COVID-19.

Hierarchy of Controls For COVID-19

The hierarchy of controls is a framework for reducing transmission hazards. The most effective controls are at the top of the pyramid.

Source: Koehler, K, Rule A. Can a mask protect me? Putting homemade masks in the hierarchy of controls. [Internet] 2020 April 2. Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health.



Hierarchy of Controls for COVID-19⁴

1. **Physical distancing:** *Ensure for spaces that allow for activities to happen two meters apart.*
2. **Engineering controls:** *Physical barriers, increased ventilation, traffic flow.*
3. **Administrative controls:** *Rules and guidelines put in place to minimize risk of transmission.*
4. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** *This last form of protection should only be considered after careful review of the previous control measures. The use of gloves and face masks may be considered where none of the above controls are possible or effective. Cloth or disposable non-medical masks play a role to prevent the spread of droplets by the person wearing a mask with the purpose to protect other people. When a cloth mask fits closely to the face and has two or three layers the mask may provide some protection to the person wearing a mask.*

The hierarchy of safety measures and controls greatly influences our relaunch plans and COVID-19 procedures and policies. We will implement safety measures and controls across all the levels indicated above, with the greatest importance being on physical distancing. The hierarchy also reminds us as a community that we can not rely on masks only to protect against COVID-19 and that masks are the last line of protection.

⁴ City of Vancouver. 2020. City of Vancouver COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Section 3: Our Members

3.1 Our Commitment to Being Member Focused

The heart and soul of Between Friends has always been and will continue to be our members. Our members drive our focus, services, and vision.

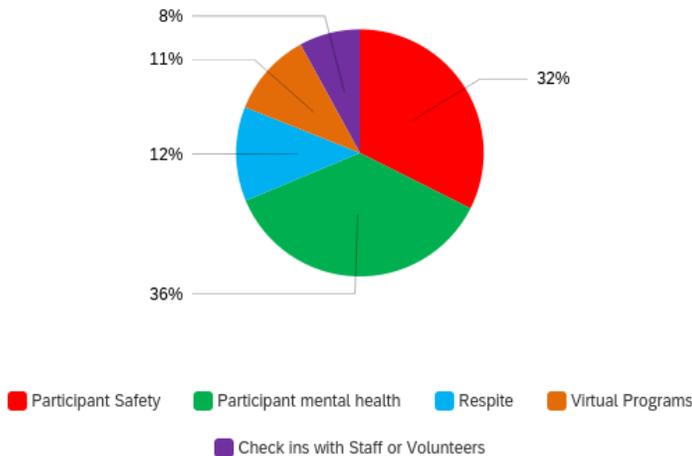
Each family was contacted in March to help us understand their immediate needs and how they were coping with the changes brought on by the pandemic. Families were contacted a second time in November to once again check in on how they were doing, and to gather more recent feedback to inform our relaunch plans.

Our priority while developing these relaunch plans continues to be the health and safety of our members, staff, volunteers, and their families.

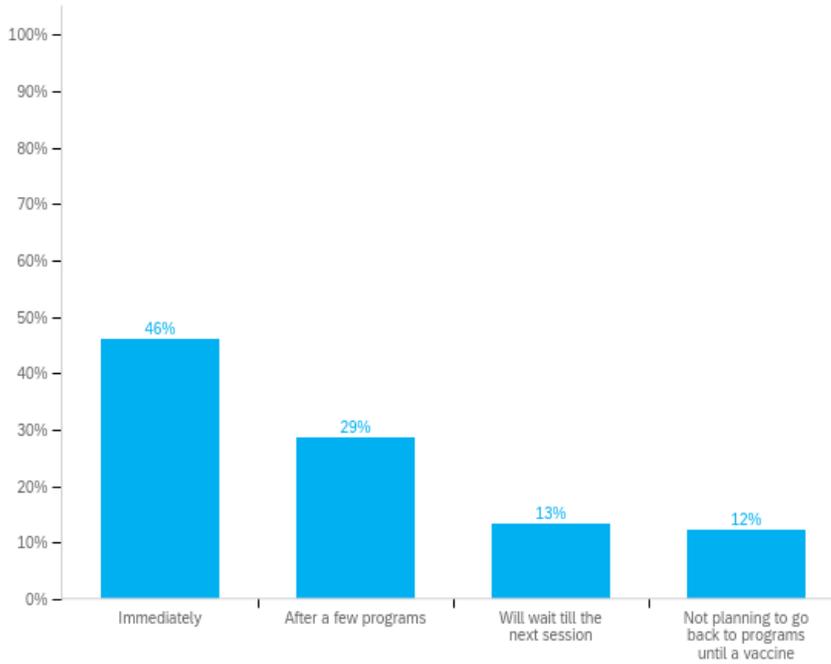
3.2 Member Survey

Our membership team completed a member survey with 222 of our families to receive feedback on key considerations when relaunching back into in-person programs. 36% of families surveyed indicated that mental health is their main concern and 32% indicated that participant safety is their main concern. We are glad to hear from our families that our online programs “have given [our families] the hope and strength to hang on” but understand the feeling of isolation and concern about “missed opportunities during this critical stage of development” is stressful. Our plan to relaunch back into in-person programs is aimed to provide our members with face to face interaction and a respite opportunity for caregivers. Below are visual representations of the data collected from our relaunch survey.

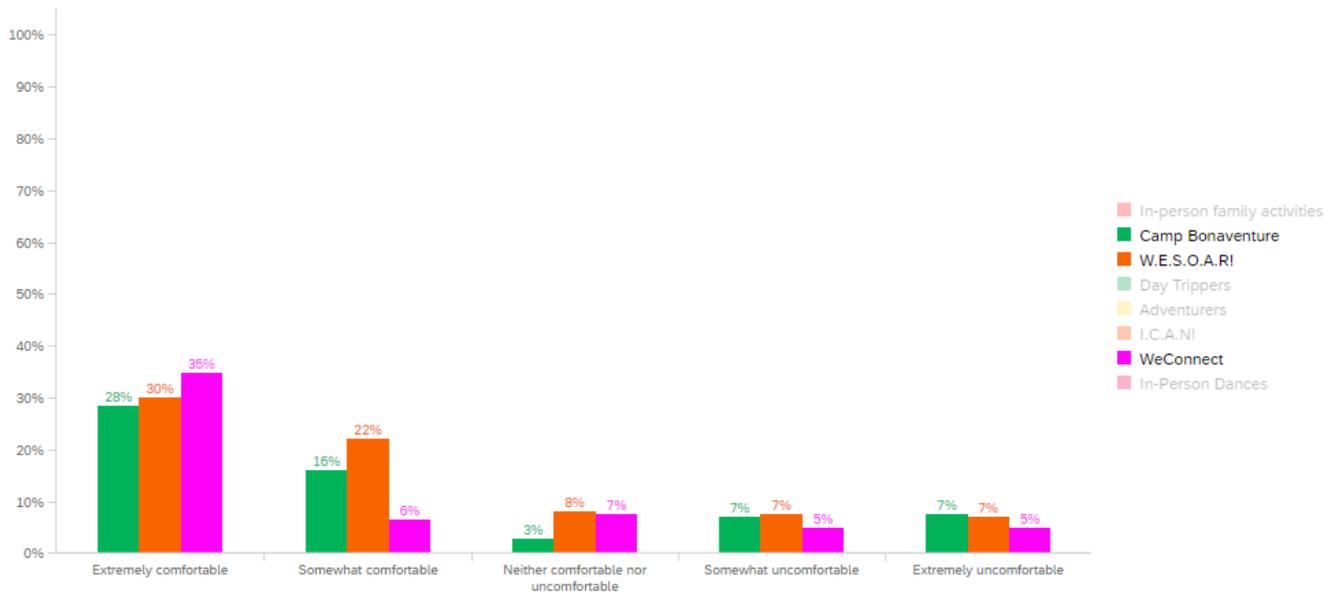
Family Priorities: Families were asked which of the following was most important to them during the pandemic.



Comfortability Returning to Programs: Families were asked how comfortable they would be attending in-person programs starting in January.



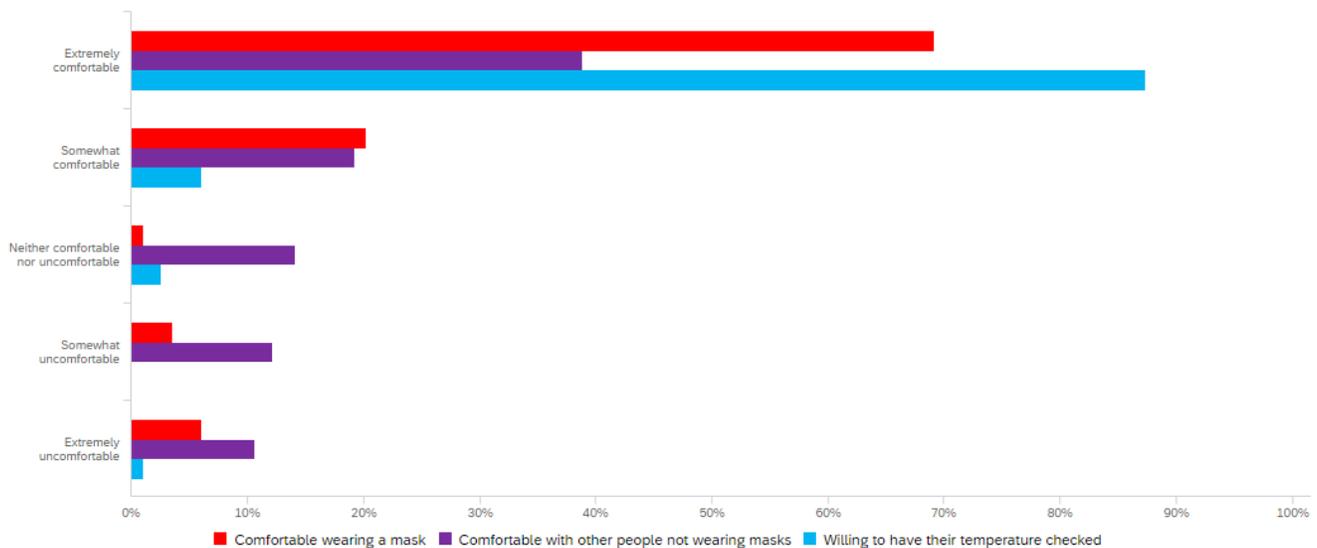
Programs Members are Comfortable Attending: Families were asked to rate their comfort level returning to each aspect of our services in-person. Listed are the three most popular programs.



3.3 High Risk Participants

Between Friends is the only organization in Calgary that does not design our services for a specific disability diagnosis or experience. Everyone, no matter their race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, sexual orientation, education, or health status, is welcome to join as a Between Friends member. The diversity within our membership may mean that some of our members could be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 because of underlying medical and health conditions, and the higher likelihood of close contact with others for assistance with daily living. We are committed to ensuring the physical and mental safety of all our participants and staff which means considering and evaluating all possible risks of our members. Below is a visual representation of our members comfortability level wearing a mask, having their temperature checked, and with other members not wearing a mask given a medical exception.

Participant Comfort Level with PPE: Families were asked how comfortable their participants were engaging in safety measures.



3.4 COVID-19 Impact on Disability Community

COVID-19 disrupted the world and daily life of most people. For people with disabilities, the disruption has affected daily routines, social networks, and increased daily health risks.⁵ We understand that for some people, the disruption came with no explanation and it has been challenging to manage why the world is acting differently. The disability community faces access barriers to income security, appropriate health care, and mental health support, which have all been more difficult to access during the pandemic. Many people have had services they rely on to meet both their physical and mental health, and social and emotional needs, cancelled or changed. Close proximity to caregivers and loved ones is a necessity for some people who may need support with daily living, communication, or behavioural needs. The disability community experiences isolation at a higher rate which has been felt even more this year.

We are dedicated to ensuring our services have no barriers for our members. Our families' feedback and understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on the disability community have influenced our decisions and where we prioritize our resources to meet their needs. We understand that virtual connection does not meet the needs of all our members for different reasons. Though safety remains a top priority, we know that the effect of isolation on the mental health of our members is greatly felt.

To our parents, guardians, and caregivers, we recognize the importance of your daily work and care. The disruption of services has meant you have had to take on more responsibility to ensure your member continues to grow, and stays safe and healthy during this pandemic. We recognize that not having in-person Between Friends programs has been difficult for your member and less of a respite opportunity for yourself. We know you are doing your best. We see and celebrate your hard-work, and appreciate your patience and willingness to collaborate with us to ensure that our return to in-person program is what you and your family needs.

⁵ Redquest, Tint, Ries, & Lunskey. 2020. Exploring the experiences of siblings of adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 4: Our Approach

4.1 Overview

Our relaunch of in-person services and programs will be done through phases, each designed to operate in a different COVID-19 environment. The relaunch plan will allow us to respond to positive and negative changes in the COVID-19 situation in Alberta, such as changes to the number of cases and updates to government guidelines. This ability to adapt is crucial to serve our members throughout the pandemic regardless of external factors.

An overview of our relaunch phases for 2021 can be found below:

Virtual Programs	Relaunch Phase 1	Relaunch Phase 2	Relaunch Phase 3	Future Programs
If in-person programs/events are deemed unsafe	In-person programs with conservative restrictions and guidelines	In-person programs with moderate restrictions and guidelines	In-person programs with loosening restrictions and guidelines	A return to non-restricted programming or to a new adjusted style of programming
Alberta Government Relaunch Step: 1 & 2	Alberta Government Relaunch Step: Early in Step 3	Alberta Government Relaunch Step: Late Step 3/ Step 4	Alberta Government Relaunch Step: Past Step 4	Alberta Government Relaunch Stage: N/A
COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Alberta (approx): Over 450 and/or increasing	COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Alberta (approx): Under 300 and declining	COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Alberta (approx): Under 300 and declining	COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Alberta (approx): Under 150 and declining	
Public health orders and/or restrictions on cohorts and social gatherings	Guidelines allow for additional cohorts outside the household.	Guidelines allow for additional cohorts outside the household.	There are no longer cohort restrictions and/or guidelines	
Mandatory mask bylaw in public indoor spaces	Mandatory mask bylaw in public indoor spaces	Mandatory mask bylaw in public indoor spaces	Mandatory mask bylaw in public indoor spaces	
			NOTE: This stage is likely to occur after the general public has access to a COVID-19 vaccine	

4.2 Key Indicators

Getting to each stage of our relaunch depends on the status of COVID-19 in Alberta, our ability as a province to keep infection rates low, current public health recommendations, and our ability to provide services that are fun and safe.

The Between Friends Leadership Team will, with the support of the Board of Directors, consider a number of **key indicators** when determining which stage a service should be operating under and when to either advance or decline stages throughout our relaunch. These key indicators include:

- Number of new COVID-19 cases per day in Calgary and Alberta
- Total number of cases in Calgary and Alberta
- Hospitalization benchmarks
- Calgary and Alberta's rate of transmission of COVID-19
- Alberta Government guidelines on: cohorts, social gatherings, sports and recreation activities, etc.
- Mandatory public health orders and bylaws
- Advice of the Alberta Government and public health officials in Alberta

4.3 Alberta Government Guidelines & Public Health Orders

Our relaunch will be informed and aligned with the Alberta Government COVID-19 guidelines, restrictions, and public health orders. We are committed to following and exceeding public health guidance and restrictions. Guidelines and restrictions change with the COVID-19 situation and we will constantly monitor applicable guidelines and restrictions. Below you will find some of the guidelines and restrictions that apply directly to recreational disability service providers:

Alberta Government COVID-19 Guidelines & Restrictions⁶

Alberta Government Restriction/Guideline	Description / Application
Oversight	The activity must be overseen by a responsible person over the age of 18 who must ensure public health guidelines are adhered to. Individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must be sent home immediately as per CMOH Order 05-2020 Resource: CMOH Order 05-2020
Physical Distancing	Programs & services must comply with current Physical Distancing restrictions provided by the Government of Alberta. Resource: Practice Physical Distancing

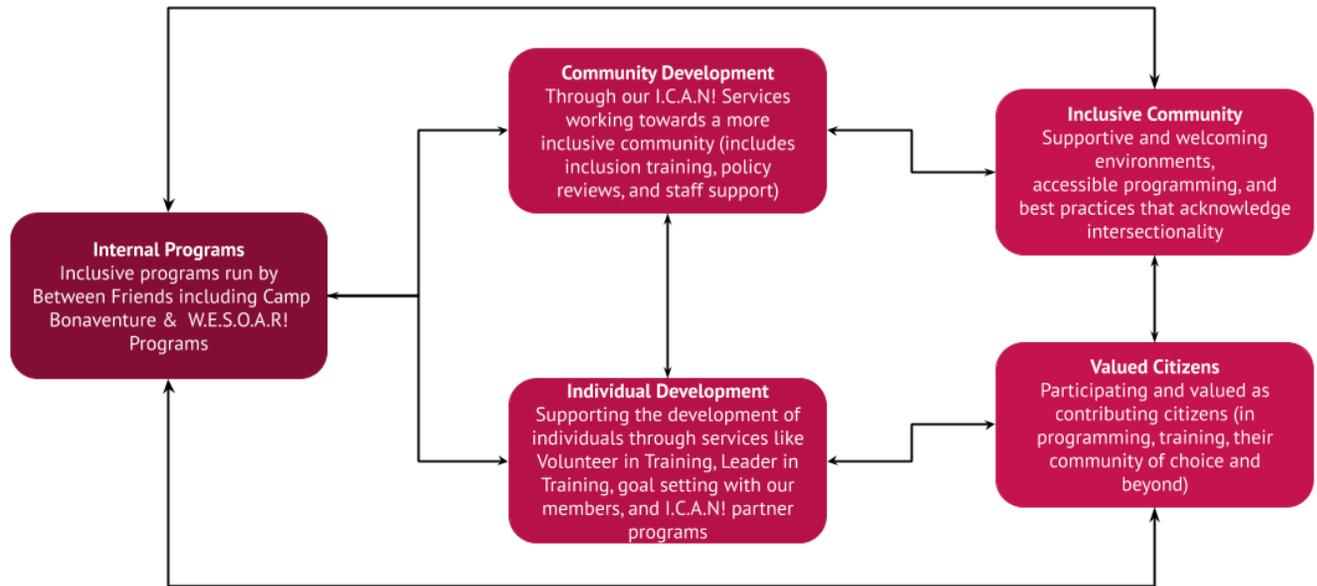
⁶ Special Olympics Alberta. 2020. Adapted from Special Olympics Alberta - Return to Sport Plan.

<p>Gatherings</p>	<p>Programs & services must comply with current gathering restrictions provided by AHS. Resource: Restrictions on Gatherings</p>
<p>Cohorts</p>	<p>Cohorts must comply with the standards provided by AHS. Resource: Guidance for Cohorts</p>
<p>Health Screening</p>	<p>Participants & personnel must complete COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist. In addition, the following questions must be asked before daily participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you have COVID-19? b. Are you experiencing any known symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath or feeling unwell? c. Have you travelled internationally during the past 14 days? d. In the past 14 days, have you come into contact with someone who has COVID-19? e. Have you been following government recommended guidelines for COVID-19 including practicing physical distancing?
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Programs & services must follow Government regulations on Organized Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation. Resources: Guidance for Organized Outdoor Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation; Guidance for Outdoor Recreation; Guidance for Day Camps</p>
<p>Hygiene</p>	<p>Activity organizers must communicate appropriate hygiene measures for the activity in advance to all participants. Activity organizers must ensure participants follow all hygiene measures. Resource: Infection Prevention and Control</p>
<p>Contact Tracing</p>	<p>Contact tracing logs for all participants and staff must be completed for every activity and those logs should be easily accessible to ensure efficient contact tracing.</p>
<p>First Aid</p>	<p>Activity organizers must ensure personal protective equipment is immediately available if first aid treatment is required. Resource: Donning PPE Poster, Doffing PPE Poster</p>

Section 5: Our Services

5.1 Overview of Our Services

Between Friends offers a pathway of services including programs, events, development and training opportunities, community engagement and education. Our services and our members that access them are the heart of who we are as an organization and how we serve our community.



During our relaunch we have remained committed to our service priorities and standards of programming. We will be implementing new safety measures and protocols but our programs will continue to be fun and provide opportunities for meaningful connection. Our focus for this relaunch was guided by the following service priorities and standards of programming:

Service Priorities

All programs will have at least one of these components included:

- social interaction;
- skill development; or
- recreational activity.

Parents, guardians and participants will be provided with a variety of choices in relation to program selection. Stakeholder input will be utilized to determine types of programs to be offered and specific program activities.

Standards of Programming:

Quality programs will be planned, implemented, and evaluated on an ongoing basis. All programs will:

- Incorporate some combination of skill development, social opportunities and recreation;
- Be provided in a safe and accepting environment;
- Provide variety and choice of activities;
- Be participant-driven and participant-focused; and
- Provide activities that are age and socially appropriate.

5.2 Relaunch of Services

During our relaunch of services we are making modifications to minimize risk to all of our stakeholders including:

- Focusing our programming on some of our most popular services.
- Offering smaller group sizes.
- Higher staffing ratios.
- New Policies and Procedures in place to address COVID-19 safety.
- Supplying Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all staff and volunteers.
- Asking participants to wear PPE and ensuring we have additional supplies available.
- Training all staff and volunteers on COVID-19 safety protocols, Policies and Procedures, and the proper use of PPE, in addition to our usual comprehensive training.

We have chosen to focus our relaunch efforts on our most popular and highest attended programs, Camp Bonaventure and Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs.

W.E.S.O.A.R! programs serve the highest percent of our adult participants (58% in 2019) and Camp Bonaventure serves the highest percent of our youth participants (67% attended Camp Bonaventure in 2019). Our members have also indicated that Camp Bonaventure and Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs have the highest percentage of comfortability in returning to in-person programs among our members. 73% of participants in our membership survey are comfortable attending Camp Bonaventure and 72% are comfortable attending W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs in 2021.

We will slowly begin to relaunch our other services including Adventurers and our Volunteer in Training program (V.I.T) as it is found safe to relaunch. We will also continue to offer our online WeConnect program in 2021 as an alternative option to in-person program for those who either are unable to attend in-person or choose to rejoin us at a later date.

5.3 Service Status for 2021

Below is a table including the status of all our services at Between Friends:

PROGRAM	AGE GROUP	STATUS
WeConnect Online Programming	Children, Teens & Adults	Ongoing in 2021 Break during July & August
WeConnect Online Special Events	Children, Teens & Adults	Ongoing in 2021 Break during July & August
W.E.S.O.A.R!	Adults	Planning for Summer 2021
W.E.S.O.A.R!	Children & Teens	Postponed for 2021
In-Person Activities and Special Events	Children, Teens & Adults	Coming in 2021 Starting with special events where we can physical distance
Camp Bonaventure	Children & Teens	Planning for Summer 2021
Camp Funz'Amust	Children, Teens & Adults	Postponed for 2021
Adventurers (Daytrippers and Vacationers)	Adults	Postponed for 2021
I.C.A.N! Programming	Children, Teens & Adults	Dependent on our program partners' plans for 2021
Volunteer in Training (VIT) Program	Teens & Adults	Aiming for Late 2021
Leader in Training (LIT) Program	Teens & Adults	Aiming for Camp Bonaventure

The following sections include more information on the primary services we plan to offer in 2021.

5.4 Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs Relaunch

Overview: W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs (Weekend and Evening Social Opportunities, Activities, and Recreation) are offered in three 10 week sessions throughout the year (Winter, Summer, and Fall). There is one Program Leader, 2 to 4 Volunteers, and up to 10 participants in each W.E.S.O.A.R! Program. There are two main types of programs offered: programs that go to the same location each week of the session and programs that go to a different location each week. Members can access programs either by using Access Calgary, parent/guardian/family member drop off, public transportation, etc. Members can sign up for a maximum of 2 programs per session.

Relaunch: In 2021, there are 3 possible relaunch stages under which Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! will operate. The relaunch phases in Section 4.1 will guide at which stage Between Friends will operate this program. The stage will determine group sizes, staffing number, spots available, participant to staff ratios, sanitation requirements and procedures, etc.

W.E.S.O.A.R! Relaunch Phases				
	Group Size	Multiple Locations	Face Coverings Required* <small>*unless exempt</small>	Important Details
Phase 1	5 participants & 2 program leaders	✗	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 program limit per participant Access Calgary pick up/drop off not permitted 8 in-person programs including: bowling, Get Crafty!, yoga & wellness & more
Phase 2	8 participants, 2 program leaders, & 1 volunteer	✓ 1-2 per session	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 program limit per participant 12 in-person programs including: bowling, Get Crafty!, swimming, gardening & more
Phase 3	8 participants, 2 program leaders, & 1 volunteer	✓ 1-4 per session	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 program limit per participant 15 in-person programs including: bowling, Get Crafty!, swimming & more
Pre COVID-19 Programs	8-10 participants, 1 program leader, & 2-4 volunteers	✓ 8+ per session	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 program limit per participant 18 in-person programs for adults

Key Changes:

- We will only be offering Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs during the 2021 relaunch.
- Programs will have a maximum of 5 to 8 members, depending on what phase of relaunch we are in.
- Programs will run for 8 weeks. During the 1st and 2nd phase, members will only be allowed to participate in one program. Once we enter the 3rd phase, members will be allowed to access 2 programs.
- Each W.E.S.O.A.R! Program will have 2 Program Leaders for all phases of relaunch. During phase 2 and 3, there will be an introduction of Volunteers.
- During the first phase of relaunch, Members who require personal care support, are welcome to participate with the assistance of their Personal Aide. We typically have more volunteers at each program to support in the washroom, but our first relaunch stage has less volunteers to reduce contact with stakeholders.
- During the first phase of relaunch, members will not be allowed to use Access Calgary and must have a parent/guardian/friend drop them off and be able to pick them up in the event they begin to feel ill at their program. This decision has been made due to various factors including: ensuring participants can attend their program on time, reducing the demand placed on Access Calgary during COVID-19, and ensuring that someone is available to pick up a participant in case of illness or emergency.

Registration: The registration dates for Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs will be approximately one month prior to the program start date. Registration details and dates will be released when W.E.S.O.A.R! Program dates are released. We are aiming for a summer session of Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! starting end of May/early June. Program information and guides will go out approximately one week prior to registration, as normal. x

5.5 Camp Bonaventure Relaunch

Overview: Camp Bonaventure is a fun, challenge-oriented outdoor summer day camp for children and youth with and without disabilities. Camp Bonaventure operates daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday in July and August. Campers aged 4-17 years old can register for one-week camps for a maximum of 2-3 weeks.

Relaunch: There are 3 possible relaunch stages for Camp Bonaventure to operate in 2021. The relaunch phases on page in Section 4.1 will guide at which stage Between Friends will operate this program. The stage Between Friends determines is safest to operate Camp Bonaventure in 2021 will determine group sizes, staffing number, spots available, participant to staff ratios, sanitation requirements and procedures, etc.

Camp Bonaventure Relaunch Phases				
	Group Size	Before & After Care	Face Coverings Required* <small>*unless exempt</small>	Important Details
Phase 1	5-8 participants & 2-3 program leaders	X	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week camps • Limited offsite travel (0.5-1 day per week) • Access Calgary pick up/drop off not permitted • No overnight stays
Phase 2	8-10 participants & 4 program leaders	TBD	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week camps • Decreased offsite travel (1-1.5 day per week) • No overnight stays
Phase 3	12-14 participants & 4 program leaders	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week camps • Decreased offsite travel (1.5-2 days per week) • No overnight stays
Pre COVID-19 Programs	14-20 participants & 5-6 program leaders	✓	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 week camps • 50% of time was offsite (2.5 days per week) • 1 overnight stay every 2 weeks

Key Changes:

- In 2021, Camp Bonaventure registration will change to one-week sessions. In previous years, Camp operated in two-week sessions. The one-week sessions will allow for more spots to be available to families given the reduced capacity per age group.
- Camp Bonaventure will not be operating overnights given the difficulty of ensuring physical distancing in a camping environment.

Registration: We are aiming for a spring registration of Camp Bonaventure in April. We are currently looking into coordinating our camp registration with other local summer camps to help families plan their summers easier.

5.6 WeConnect (Online Programs)

Overview: C.O.V.I.D. (Creative Opportunities with Virtual Interaction Delivery) Programs were created as a response to COVID-19 suspending all in person programs. C.O.V.I.D. Programs were one week programs and had registrations each week. We ran 12-15 programs weekly, primarily using volunteers and office staff to plan and implement this programming.

We then decided to expand our online offerings and create our online program “WeConnect”. WeConnect online programs run for 4 week sessions (in 2020) and 6 week sessions (in 2021). We have 6 main types of programming - social, movement, music, crafting, movie, and specialty. Each session we also offer a new specialty program which gives members an opportunity to try something new. In December 2020 we also began to introduce recorded WeConnect programs for families to access at any time including a holiday program, a wellness program, and an inclusive storytime program. WeConnect Programs are available to our whole membership and approximately 31% of our 2020 members access these programs (172 members).

Section 6: Our Staff & Volunteers

6.1 Our Commitment to Our People

Our personnel are very dedicated to our members. When we moved from in-person to virtual programs due to the COVID-19 outbreak, our volunteers and staff were eager to know how they could help and stay involved. We hire personnel who are highly committed and it shows during programs, special events, and even during a pandemic.

6.2 What You Can Expect from Our Staff & Volunteers

Our staff and volunteers will be properly trained on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), new sanitization procedures, and how to best support our members during programs. Our staff and volunteers will be careful in ensuring the risk of transmission is minimized through physical distancing, use of PPE, sanitization efforts, and by following our policies and procedures.

6.3 Staff Protocols & Procedures

If a personnel (staff or volunteer) have any known COVID-19 symptoms (2.2 COVID-19 Symptoms)

A. Outside of program times, they will:

- Inform their direct supervisor: Program Coordinator, W.E.S.O.A.R! & Special Events (Nikki Stevens) or Program Coordinator, WeConnect & Camp Bonaventure (Emily Furber).
- The personnel will follow Alberta Government guidelines for self-isolation and remain self isolated until a doctor or health authority advises that it is safe to return to normal activities.

B. During program times, they will:

- Inform their direct supervisor: Program Coordinator, W.E.S.O.A.R! & Special Events (Nikki Stevens) or Program Coordinator, WeConnect & Camp Bonaventure (Emily Furber).
- Go home immediately (avoiding the use of public transportation). There will always be two personnel at each program during all relaunch phases in case one personnel needs to leave urgently due to symptoms.
- The personnel will follow Alberta Government guidelines for self-isolation and remain self isolated until a doctor or health authority advises that it is safe to return to normal activities.

If a personnel tests positive for COVID-19

When a personnel is notified that they have tested positive for COVID-19, they must:

- Immediately inform the Membership Services Manager
- The Membership Services Manager will then abide by AHS recommendations and support with contact tracing
- Ensure all participants and personnel have been notified there has been a positive test and advise them to watch for signs of illness. They are to be informed that they can access further information on the Alberta Government website
- The participants and all stakeholders in direct contact with the personnel must abide by Alberta Government guidelines for self-isolation and remain self isolated until a doctor or health authority advises that it is safe to return to normal activities
- The affected program(s) will be suspended for up to 14 days, until it is deemed safe to run the affected program(s) again
- Advise Between Friends' Board of Directors of the case and the action taken

If a personnel is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

A close contact of a person infected with COVID-19 is someone who:

- provides care, lives with, or has close physical contact without appropriate use of personal protective equipment, or
- comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids
- comes within 2 metres of them for more than 15 minutes (a total of 15 minutes of contact with an infectious person over the course of a 24-hour period)

You are legally required to **quarantine for 14 days** from the time you were in contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19. You must also monitor your health after being in contact with that person. If you become sick with a [known COVID-19 symptom](#) during your quarantine, you must **isolate for an additional 10 days** from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

Therefore a personnel is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will not be allowed to participate in programs for at least 14 days (longer if they develop COVID-19 symptoms, see above).

If a personnel has travelled internationally during the past 14 days:

Between Friends will abide by the current travel restrictions and guidance set forth by the federal and provincial government. Currently all non-exempt travellers returning to or entering Alberta from outside Canada are legally required to follow provincial and federal travel restrictions upon arrival.

Individuals are legally required to quarantine for 14 days when entering or returning to Alberta from outside Canada unless exempted by the Alberta COVID-19 Border Testing Pilot Program. Therefore, unless exempted by the Alberta COVID-19 Border Testing Pilot Program, personnel can not attend programs or services if they have travelled internationally in the last 14 days.

We encourage our members and staff to check travel restrictions and procedures related to COVID-19 as they frequently change: [Travel restrictions in Canada – Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca)

Section 7: Our Response

7.1 Emergency Action Plans

Early detection of symptoms will help Between Friends implement our control measures if faced with a case of COVID-19. A “case” is a single case of COVID-19, and an “outbreak” is two or more cases.

To reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus, Between Friends will put an immediate pause on any program or activity where a participant has tested positive for COVID-19. Each program will keep attendance records and up to date contact information should a participant, staff member, or volunteer test positive.

Emergency action plans and response plans will be developed to fit the specific services we will offer in 2021. Families and participants can expect to receive detailed information regarding each service they sign up for during COVID-19. In 2021, specific emergency response plans will be included in registration and parent information for Camp Bonaventure and Adult W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs.

7.2 PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

All individuals including participants, staff, and volunteers will be required to wear a face covering at our services at all times unless they have an exception. As our services are offered within Calgary we will be following the City of Calgary bylaw below:

“For the safety and protection of our community, the City of Calgary requires people to wear face coverings or masks in indoor public areas and public vehicles, with few exceptions.”⁷

There are a few exceptions to the bylaw:

- Children under 2 years of age.
- People with underlying medical conditions or disabilities inhibiting their ability to wear a face covering.
- People who are unable to place, use or remove a face covering safely without assistance.
- People who are eating or drinking at a public premises that offers food or beverage services.
- People engaging in an athletic or fitness activity.
- People who are caregiving for or accompanying a person with a disability where wearing a face covering would hinder the accommodation of the person’s disability (for example, the ability to lip read).

⁷ City of Calgary. 2020. Face Coverings By-Law.

- People who have temporarily removed their face covering where doing so is necessary to provide or receive a service (for example, a visit to the dentist).

Please note: proof is not required if someone has an exception. Businesses are also not expected to deny services as not everyone is required to wear a face covering.

For more information on the City of Calgary Face Covering Bylaw you can visit the [City of Calgary website](#).

We recognize that some of our participants, staff, or volunteers might fall under the above exceptions. We are committed to including everyone who would like to participate in our services. We also recognize the important role we have in communicating and educating our stakeholders on why individuals might not be wearing a mask and creating a welcoming and understanding environment at our programs.

We will provide our staff and volunteers with face coverings and any additional PPE needed to perform their tasks safely. Participants will be required to bring their own masks or face coverings. Additional PPE will be onsite for participant use in the case of emergencies.

7.3 First Aid

Between Friends office and program staff are First-Aid & CPR trained. The following **Red Cross first aid protocols during COVID-19** will be factored into training for in-person programs:⁸

“Providing first aid during the COVID-19 pandemic can raise questions around safety and transmission. Outlined below are the first aid protocols that should be followed when attending to an unresponsive person.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and an individual’s risk is variable depending on location. If someone’s heart stops, and the First Aider is concerned they may have had respiratory symptoms, it is at the individual’s discretion to perform or not perform mouth-to-mouth breaths based on personal preference. It’s still important to call emergency medical services and find an AED. If the individual chooses to perform breaths, they can also use a barrier device, such as a pocket mask, to help protect themselves.

⁸ Canadian Red Cross. 2020. First aid protocols and considerations for an ill or injured person during COVID-19.

CPR with breaths is recommended for people who have been trained in CPR, but as an alternative, hands-only CPR can be performed until help arrives if the First Aider is unsure about putting their mouth on a stranger's mouth, or has concerns the person may have COVID-19. If the individual chooses to perform hands-only CPR, they should first call 9-1-1, lay a cloth, a towel, or clothing over the person's mouth and nose to prevent any potential spread of the virus through contaminated air or saliva, and then push hard and fast in the centre of the person's chest until advanced help arrives. If the First Aider believes the person may have COVID-19, they should state their concerns to the emergency response telecommunicator so everyone who responds can be aware of the potential for COVID-19 transmission."

[Click here for more information from Red Cross](#)

7.4 Response Plan

If a positive case of COVID-19 occurs, Between Friends will work together to notify the impacted facility and all participants, volunteers, and Program Leaders who attended the program. When notifying individuals, Between Friends will obey privacy laws and not use the individuals name and only indicate that someone at the program tested positive.

If a participant has any known COVID-19 symptoms ([2.2 COVID-19 Symptoms](#))

- The participant will follow Alberta Government guidelines for self-isolation and remain self isolated until a doctor or health authority advises that it is safe to return to normal activities.

If a participant tests positive for COVID-19:

When a participant is notified of a positive COVID-19 case, they or their guardian/caregiver must:

- Immediately inform their Program Leader.
- Respect privacy laws and reveal the name of the individual testing positive only to the Program Leader.
- Follow Alberta Government guidelines for self-isolation and remain self isolated until a doctor or health authority advises that it is safe to return to normal activities.

When the Program Leader is notified they will notify **Cienna Lavery**, Membership Services Manager at

CLavery@betweenfriends.ab.ca

When notified of a positive COVID-19 case, Between Friends will:

- Respect privacy laws and notify relevant individuals without releasing personal information.
- Ensure all impacted participants and personnel have been notified there has been a positive test and advise them to watch for signs of illness. They are to be informed that they can access further information on the Alberta Government website.
- The affected program(s) will be suspended for up to 14 days, until it is deemed safe to run the affected program(s) again.
- Advise the Between Friends' Board Post-COVID Committee of the case and the action taken.

If a participant exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 at a Between Friends program or service:

If a participant develops symptoms of COVID-19 at a Between Friends program or event, Between Friends will take immediate precautionary measures. The individual will be brought to a temporary room for safe isolation.

Between Friends staff will immediately notify the participants parents/caregivers via phone. Parents/guardians will be required to pick up their member within a specific window of time. This timeframe will depend on the program and will be clearly marked in the program relaunch guides sent to families upon registration.

If a participant is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19:

A close contact of a person infected with COVID-19 is someone who:

- provides care, lives with, or has close physical contact without appropriate use of personal protective equipment, or
- comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids
- comes within 2 metres of them for more than 15 minutes (a total of 15 minutes of contact with an infectious person over the course of a 24-hour period)

You are legally required to **quarantine for 14 days** from the time you were in contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19. You must also monitor your health after being in contact with that person. If you become sick with a [known COVID-19 symptom](#) during your quarantine, you must **isolate for an additional 10 days** from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

Therefore a participant is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will not be allowed to participate in programs for at least 14 days (longer if they develop COVID-19 symptoms, see above).

If a participant has travelled internationally during the past 14 days:

Between Friends will abide by the current travel restrictions and guidance set forth by the federal and provincial government. Currently all non-exempt travellers returning to or entering Alberta from outside Canada are legally required to follow provincial and federal travel restrictions upon arrival.

Individuals are legally required to quarantine for 14 days when entering or returning to Alberta from outside Canada unless exempted by the Alberta COVID-19 Border Testing Pilot Program. Therefore, unless exempted by the Alberta COVID-19 Border Testing Pilot Program, participants can not attend programs or services if they have travelled internationally in the last 14 days.

We encourage our members and staff to check travel restrictions and procedures related to COVID-19 as they frequently change: [Travel restrictions in Canada – Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-alerts/notices/20200814-01)

Throughout 14 day quarantine periods (including positive COVID-19 cases and close contacts of positive cases), Between Friends will:

- Check in with the individual who tested positive (or is a close contact of a positive case), the impacted program participants, volunteers, and staff to ensure they have the support they require.

Our Footnotes

- 1 [COVID-19 And Your Mental Health](#)
- 2 [What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others](#)
- 3 [About Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- 4 [City of Vancouver COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)
- 5 [Exploring the experiences of siblings of adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- 6 [Special Olympics Alberta - Return to Sport Plan](#)
- 7 [City of Calgary COVID-19 Face Covering By-Law](#)
- 8 [First aid protocols and considerations for an ill or injured person during COVID-19](#)

Our Resources

Government of Alberta

- [FAQ on COVID-19 for people with disabilities](#)

Alberta Health Services

- [Help in Tough Times](#)
- [COVID-19 and Your Mental Health](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [What you should know about COVID-19 \(Plain Language Resource\)](#)
- [Coping with Stress in a Pandemic](#)

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

- [Bounce Back Alberta - Skill-building program for stress, depression, and anxiety](#)

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- [COVID-19 FAQ and Additional Resources](#) - The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Mental Health Commission of Canada

- [Caregiving in the era of COVID-19: What to expect, and how to cope](#)

Other

- [ASL Guided Meditation](#)
- [Spotify: Guided Meditations](#)
- [Headspace App - Approaching meditation as a blind person](#)

Our Contact List

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