

Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau **WEEKLY SANE-ITIZER**

Helpful information for Not-for-Profits, Individuals and Businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Hi and welcome to the Sane-itizer.

Our goal is to bring you interesting facts, supportive ideas, hints and tips and a little bit of tongue-in-cheek humour to help you get through the Coronavirus Pandemic. This is the first edition and since we are a bit rushed and not sure exactly what should go into a first edition for this kind of situation, be prepared for sudden changes to the next one...maybe.

We strongly encourage those of you who want to contribute to this enterprise to do so. Contributions need to be into our communication department by 10:00am every Tuesday (for the duration of the crisis). Please note we do reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

Please credit sources. And no! No! No! There is absolutely **No** remuneration for submissions.

For this maiden launch I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of the GPVSB for their enthusiasm, support and contributions to do this project with a very special thank you to our Communications Specialist, Brian, for his editing, technical and making this -work-skills. (Brian would be the Super-Hero Editor in another dimension or universe).

Happy Reading, stay strong, take courage, wash your hands and remember we are all in this together.

Cheers, *Carol-Anne*

Top Tips for Working from Home (adapted from online research from cbc.ca)

Create a workspace

Don't work from the couch or bed, a workspace helps to set boundaries when others are at home. When you are in your workspace if it's the kitchen table, office or space in the basement, you are working.

Don't work in your PJ's

It sounds like the ultimate perk but staying in those pj's confuses our minds. Starting the day by changing our clothes sets the tone for a workday as opposed to a lazy Sunday afternoon.

Always take a lunch break

Try not to eat at your computer, remember to get up and take a break. Making a snack or lunch allows you to walk away from the work and ensures you are nourishing yourself.

Try working in segments of time

With many of us working from home with others (kids, family, pets, phone calls) the distractions can be daunting. Try breaking your workload down into 30-40-minute intervals or whatever works best for you.

Manage your inbox

The emails are endless and if we don't manage our inbox this can become overwhelming fast. Try to auto-schedule emails to go out at the start of the day and try using the email management tool settings.

Adapt to flexible work hours

When working from home our workday may not be as it was before. Each day may be a management of the workload and distractions. If the work gets done, it doesn't matter how your day is structured.

Stay connected

As we work on staying connected remotely don't forget to connect with friends and family emotionally. We all need to remind ourselves of what is important at the end of the day.

Compiled by Samina Malik Smith, Capacity Development Manager - Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau



The Employer's Kitchen – *creating ideas just for you!*

We all understand that life is change, we change as we age, we change as people come and go, we change with circumstance, we grieve, we celebrate, we vegetate, we grow, its all change. The Coronavirus – Covid-19, call it what you will, is forcing a monumental change on a global scale, one which we really were not prepared for and certainly would never chose.

Nevertheless it is here and the 'traditional' working model is in a state of flux. As a result a number of our sector organizations are providing their regular services in new and often unfathomable ways. Management and Boards are all having to make adjustments to get the job done and that can be challenging. We're learning that part of meeting that challenge is to adjust the work environment: working remotely: changing hours and schedules.

If you have staff working from home or having to make other scheduling changes the following may be of some help:



A. Define which part of your operations can be supported by employees working at home:

1. Are you able to provide online or non-contact services?
2. Do you need to put some services/programs on hold?
3. Which employees will be required to work from home?
4. How will you divide responsibilities and monitor deliverables to meet organizational goals?

B. Define the physical and communication infrastructure required:

1. What software/hardware do you need to maximize productivity?
2. Do staff need training to effectively operate the equipment?
3. Is security maintained for organizational communications?
4. Do your employees need to take chairs or other equipment home?
5. Have you recorded what has been sent to/loaned to each employee?
6. Do your employees have a stable internet connection?

C. Define your Corporate Strategy:

1. Do you have a policy for employees working from home? Do you need one?
2. Does your insurance cover remote/off-site work? Did you check?
3. Do your employee contracts/offers of hire restrict working from home? Did you review these?
4. Who's going to pay for employees out of pocket expenses? Have you set limits?

D. Define your Human Resource Strategy:

1. How will you evaluate individual performance of your employees during this time?
2. How will you maintain salary payments to employees working from home?
3. How will you record/collect time-sheets?
4. How will you monitor accountability for time worked?
5. How will you manage excessive hours, overtime and time off in lieu?
6. How will you support inclusion and cooperation between employees?
7. How will you maintain employee morale and keep the team engaged and motivated?

E. Define your Occupational Health & Safety Strategy:

1. How will you recognize and support employees who are overstressed, or burning out? Do you have an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)?
2. Who will ensure employees workspace in their home is safe?
3. Have you inspected the employee's workspace – photos, video hook-up and approved it for work purposes? (Ergonomics, OH&S risks) Look for hazards! Hint: Do not comment on housekeeping or lack of – just saying 😊
4. Have you documented all the steps taken to ensure your employee's safety while they are working from home?
5. Have you checked with your insurance coverage and WCB to cover all aspects of the work your employees may be undertaking?

F. Define your Communication Strategy:

1. Are you going to use regular phone check-ins, email, video-conferencing, group chats texts or my personal favorite 'telepathy' also known as "I thought you knew" 🤖?
2. How will you maintain regular contact with each individual staff member?
3. How will you maintain regular contact as a group?
4. How will staff communicate with each other?
5. How will you ensure confidentiality of client files?

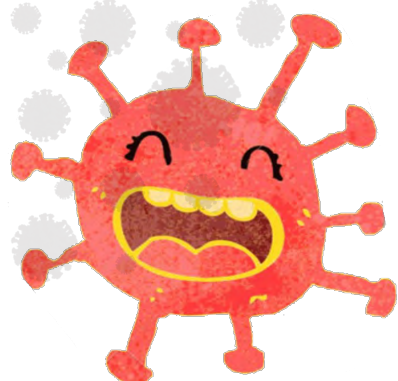
6. How will you share files?
7. How will you protect Intellectual Property?
8. Have you reviewed your confidentiality policy – has your staff reviewed your confidentiality policy?

G. Define how much flexibility you can provide based on your employee’s personal circumstances:

If working away from the usual worksite is not an option, you may have to stagger shifts or reduce hours to protect both your staff and your clients. As well, some or all of your staff may be in a position of having to juggle their responsibilities as a parent (think no school/no daycare here) or perhaps they are caring for another family member etc. Flexible working arrangements are changes to the standard hours, patterns and locations of work. These can take a variety of approaches and combinations.

Type	Description
Flexible hours of work	Start and finish times are varied.
Compressed working weeks	The same amount of time is worked over a shorter period of time. For example, a seventy hour pay period may be worked over nine days rather than ten. Changes to salary are not required.
Time-in-lieu	Approved overtime is compensated by time-in-lieu. It can include ‘flexitime’ arrangements where an employee can work extra time over several days or weeks and then reclaim those hours as time off.
Telecommuting	Work is performed at a location other than the official place of work. A wide range of terms refer to working at different locations, including ‘mobile working’, ‘distributed work’, ‘virtual teams’ and ‘telework’. These are referred to collectively as ‘telecommuting’. <i>*Note that telecommuting is generally most effective when there is a relatively even split between time spent in the office and working elsewhere. This lessens the sense of isolation that can come from working away from the office.</i>
Part-time work	A regular work pattern less than full-time, remuneration is pro-rated. Not all part-time work is necessarily flexible in nature, but it offers flexibility to workers who have other commitments or lifestyle choices that are not compatible with full-time work.
Job sharing	A full-time job role is divided into multiple job roles to be undertaken by two or more employees who are paid on a pro-rata basis for the part of the job each completes.
Purchased leave	A period of leave without pay, usually available after annual leave allocation is finished. Employers typically deduct the amount of unpaid leave from the worker’s salary, and this can be done as a lump sum or averaged over the year.
Unplanned leave	Informal access to leave for unanticipated or unplanned events.
Flexible careers	The worker is able to enter, exit and re-enter employment with the same organization, or to increase or decrease their workload or career pace to suit different life stages. This may be particularly relevant for employees transitioning to retirement. It can also include employees who are able to take a ‘gap year’ early in their careers and return to work for the same employer afterwards.
Other choices about hours, patterns and locations of work	Other options about when, where and how work is done, e.g. overtime and having autonomy to decide when to take breaks during the working day

Adapted from Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia



HELPFUL BOOK TO DISCUSS COVID-19 WITH CHILDREN UNDER 7

#COVIBOOK by Manuela Molina - <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables> -

This short book is available in many languages and has been made to support and reassure children, under the age of 7, regarding the COVID-19. This printable book is an invitation for families to discuss the full range of emotions arising from the current situation. It is important to point out that this resource does not seek to be a source of scientific information, but rather a tool based on fantasy. Share COVIBOOK and help ease child anxiety all over the world.

Tools to stay connected and productive when working from home:

Google G Suite - <https://gsuite.google.com>

G Suite comprises Gmail, Hangouts, Calendar, and Currents for communication; Drive for storage; Docs, Sheets, Slides, Keep, Forms, and Sites for productivity and collaboration.

Microsoft Teams - <https://products.office.com/en-ca/microsoft-teams>

Available with Office 365, Microsoft Teams is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration.

Workplace by Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/workplace>

Workplace is a dedicated and secure working space for organizations to connect, communicate and collaborate.

Slack - <https://www.slack.com>

Slack is a chat room for your whole company. Its workspaces allow you to organize communications by channels for group discussions and allows for private messages to share information, files, and more all in one place.

Trello - <https://trello.com/home>

Trello is the easy, free, flexible, and visual way to manage your projects and organize anything.

AnyDesk - <https://anydesk.com>

Connect to a computer remotely, be it from the other end of the office or halfway around the world. AnyDesk ensures secure and reliable remote desktop connections for IT professionals and on-the-go individuals alike.

Zoom - <https://zoom.us/>

Zoom is a remote conferencing service that combines video conferencing, online meetings, chat, and mobile collaboration

Skype - <https://www.skype.com/en/free-conference-call>

Skype is a telecommunications application that specializes in providing video chat and voice calls between computers, tablets, mobile devices, the Xbox One console, and smartwatches over the Internet.

GPREP COVID-19 Community Care Program: Food and Pharmacy

- This program helps ensure residents of the GPREP service area have continued access to essential items, like food and medication, in light of COVID-19 pandemic. The program is dedicated to vulnerable individuals and families & those at heightened risk who have no other supports available, and are in urgent need of food, medication and essential goods. More information available at <https://www.gprep.ca/covid19/communitycare/>



ATB Financial will match any donations made to an Alberta non-religious based Registered Charity by 15% (up to \$20,000 per month and \$240,000 per fiscal year. Each eligible charity may receive up to \$5,000 of

matching during ATB's fiscal year (April 1 to March 31). This is an automatic program, charities do not need to sign up, all donors have to do is search for their charity of choice and make their donation through the ATB Cares website and ATB will match the donation. For more information visit <https://www.atbcares.com/donate>.

COVID-19 RUMOURS & MYTHS

Can hair dryers kill coronavirus? **NO**

"People are thinking hot air kills this virus and are using blow dryers or somehow increasing the room temperature to help prevent the spread, but that will not happen," Dr. Esper says. "That type of heat is not necessarily going to cause a change in the infectiousness of this particular virus."

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-common-covid-19-myths-busted/>

Did COVID-19 cause the death rate to drop in Chicago? **NO**

A March 22, 2020, Facebook post that accumulated more than 2,200 shares stated that "In Chicago, Covid-19 actually LOWERED the death rate," This post was flagged as part of Facebook's efforts to combat false news and misinformation on its News Feed. While murders in Chicago decreased in March 2020 compared to years prior, comparison of available data shows that the medical examiner actually saw an increase of deaths in March 2020 over the previous three years.

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/apr/03/facebook-posts/no-coronavirus-did-not-cause-death-rate-drop-chica/>

Are thieves handing out masks with chemicals that make you pass out? **NO**

In late March and early April 2020, a hoax circulated on Facebook "warning" people that criminals were handing out face masks "door-to-door" amid the ongoing COVID-19 coronavirus disease pandemic. The masks purportedly contained a chemical that caused the wearer to fall unconscious and allowed the criminal to then rob them. This has since been debunked and videos allegedly showing instances of this were found to be social media stunts. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/thieves-masks-hoax/?collection-id=244110>

How do you know when you are going to drown in milk?

When its past your eyes!

HaHaHa

Health Resources

Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>

Online self-assessment tool to determine whether your symptoms require testing or medical advice.

Silvercloud Stress Management Program provided by Shoppers Drug Mart

shoppers.silvercloudhealth.com/onboard/ Use Code: SHOPPERS

This is a pro-active and practical program built in conjunction with leading clinical and subject matter experts that provides users with the tools and techniques to manage stress and bring balance into their lives.

PurposeMed

<https://purposemed.com/>

A FREE online service provided by Alberta Medical Association licensed physicians that allows you to talk to a doctor without leaving your home

Babylon by Telus Health

<https://www.telus.com/en/ab/health/personal/babylon>

A FREE healthcare mobile app that allows you to check symptoms, consult with doctors and access to your health records

Action for Happiness Active Coping Calendar & App

Calendar: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>

This Active Coping Calendar has daily actions for each month to help us look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Download as an image for sharing or a PDF for printing.

App: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/smartphone-app>

The app is like having a little personal action coach in your pocket who:

- Gives you friendly 'nudges' with an action idea each day
- Sends you inspiring messages to give you a boost
- Helps you connect & share ideas with like-minded people

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25 National Volunteer Week is April 19th to 25th, and as everyone knows the Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau will not be hosting our Annual Volunteer Celebration at this time due to COVID-19. But it is NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK and more than ever we need to celebrate & recognize the importance of volunteers and all the good they do for our community.

Very soon GPVSB will be launching a Grande Prairie National Volunteer Week Celebration Website and we ask Organizations who utilize volunteers to send us a thank you message to their amazing volunteer groups, so we may share them with the community. We encourage all non-profits and charities to send a Thank You Letter or a short 30 second Thank You Video and help us not only recognize National Volunteer Week but share something positive in this trying time.

Please, send your Volunteer Thank You Messages to communications@volunteergp.com.

I VOLUNTEER AT _____

GPVSB Members be part of the GPVSB'S NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK VOLUNTEER HUNT!

Contact us for your "I VOLUNTEER AT _____" decals to give to your volunteers to place in their windows during National Volunteer Week! In recognition of NVW, Community members will be encouraged to take their children out (in vehicles) to see who can find the most volunteers. (a take off from the Teddy Bear Hunt theme).

At the end of the week Numbers will be submitted to us, the closest to the number of decals we handed out will win a prize. Contest is limited to kindergarten to grade 7 and no teachers cannot enter!

To arrange a pickup for your decals call 780-538-2727 or email admin@volunteergp.com.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK