

# FAMILY SERVICES of PEEL

## COVID-19 EDITION



*Farewell City Centre Drive; we'll miss you!*

### Effect of COVID-19 on Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

When lockdown and shelter-in-place protocols aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 went into effect early this spring, many Canadians found themselves in circumstances that they previously could only have imagined. For many of us, the situation has meant living in isolation and being subjected to a monotonous way of life, but for **male survivors of childhood sexual abuse**, it has meant a journey down memory lane, evoking the demons of their past. Trapped in their homes, they are forced to spend time with their thoughts and are compelled to come face-to-face with the memories that they have fought for so long to discard.

It is hard to imagine a set of circumstances that would facilitate triggers of difficult memories and experiences.

For one thing, people are stressed, are getting sick, losing loved ones, and/or worrying about these things. They are forced to stay indoors for long periods of time with family members. Pushing each other's buttons, creating conflicts. Some of them have lost their jobs and the lack of income only adds to their stressors. To make matters worse, they have been isolated from much-needed support and resources. This sounds like a perfect recipe for a storm!

Men, in their nature would want to conform to societal expectations of being a man; fearless, strong, having things under control. For many, the fear of whether they have this situation under control is rivaled only by the shame of expressing these fears.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Transforming Lives in Peel

Volume 11 | Issue 2



**FAMILY SERVICES of PEEL**

Since 1971

**Quarterly Newsletter**

**May 2020**

### In This Issue...



#### Effect of COVID-19 on Male Survivors

The difficulty of coping with the COVID-19 situation for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

... Page 1



#### Making Working from Home Work

Tips on how to be efficient and productive while working from home.

... Page 2



#### Anxiety During COVID-19

How to deal with this stressful situation and what to do if you think that you have the virus.

... Page 5

## In our Clients' Words...



“... The Ministry of Education has extended the school closure and my placement has been suspended. I would like to take this time to thank you for giving me an opportunity to work at your organization. I really enjoyed working at Family Services of Peel, and I have come away from the experience, even though it was a short one, with valuable knowledge, which will help me in my future employment.”

## A Message from the Executive Director

The dust has settled on another chapter of Family Services of Peel. Our exit from 151 City Centre Drive is now complete and sometime in the near future, the building will be demolished. However, the fond memories will stay intact, at least for a while.



City Centre Drive was the home for Family Services of Peel's head office for many years, but change is inevitable. The move could not have happened without a collective effort, and I want to personally thank the staff for their contributions, especially to the individuals who came in on weekends, those who ensured things went smoothly (Franca and Rasha), and everyone who pitched in above and beyond.

We had hoped that we could delay the move until our new location on Whittle Road would be ready but who could have predicted that a pandemic would make our normal activities abnormal? Now, there's a new normal introduced into our lives; how we interact with extended family, how we purchase our groceries, and a new monetary base, Toilet Paper is the new king.

Regardless of what we are dealing with, we continue to adapt and change. We make adjustments along the way and realize how truly important our families and friends are. What does the future hold? Only time will tell.

## Making Working from Home Work!



Working from home certainly has its advantages – no commute, easy access to your own kitchen, and some flexibility in your schedule. However, the sudden transition from the office to home has its challenges. With that in mind, the following are some tips on being efficient and productive while working from home.

**Space:** Set-up a dedicated workspace in a spare room, kitchen, or at the dining room table. Arrange the equipment you'll need (i.e., laptop, chargers, phone, headphones, pen, etc.). | **Time:** Continue to get up at your regular time in the morning and follow your usual

routine – take a shower and eat breakfast. Do some exercise, yoga or meditation, if that is part of your routine. |

**Attire:** Avoid wearing pajamas or very casual, around-the-house clothes when you're scheduled to work. What you're wearing influences your mood and attitude, so dress in proper attire. | **Continuum:** Instead of commuting to work, start your day by taking a brisk walk around the neighbourhood to get your mind out of being-at-home mode and into work mode (while maintaining physical distance).

**Social interaction** is an important element of the workplace. Although the ability to interact is suddenly gone, your need for it is not. Make a point of keeping in regular contact with colleagues to remain connected.

**Ask for help:** In a typical workplace setting, when you are stuck on something, you can always consult with your coworkers to brainstorm. Working from home may create the feeling of having to figure everything out on your own. This increases a sense of isolation and decreases efficiency. Continue to reach out to your Manager and teammates. The ability to ask for help is crucial for your mental health, as well as your ability to do your job.

*Continued on Page 4*

## Effect of COVID-19 on Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (Continued from Page 1)

And here the masks come up again with the inscription, “I am okay”, while hiding the insecurities lurking within. These masks, which for some have taken months or even years to shed, for others are still in the process, finding it so hard to peel one layer at a time.

One survivor shares his experience...

“As a survivor of male childhood sexual abuse, I maintained a portfolio of coping strategies to keep myself safe; personal space, people pleasing, emotional numbing and at time, grandiosity. I had built a wall around myself to create a façade to show the world. I lived most of my life wearing masks and gave people what I believed they wanted; all the while muting who I really was. I had a mask for the dutiful employee, the loving husband, the loyal son, and the good friend. For the longest time, I allowed the opinions of others to determine how I felt about myself. I wanted that to change but didn’t know where to start. I believed in myself but rejected the praise from others, I needed to prove what they were saying was true. No, I needed to prove they were wrong, and I was not worthy of their praise.

Since discarding the masks I have released myself from the pain of shame that once paralyzed me. I have told my story hundreds of times and now help other male survivors to tell their own story. My passion is to inspire other men to access their authenticity. My journey has taught me that belief in self is complicated and sometimes being who we are is all that we need.

Everything seemed to be under control, then came COVID-19. I am once again experiencing inescapable stressful events that overwhelm my newly acquired mechanisms for a healthy life. The measures implemented to keep us all safe from the spread of COVID-19 are pushing me forcefully where I don’t want to go. The unease I feel whenever I step outside is real and inescapable. It feels like my previous coping strategies are now being used against me. Is this really happening? Having embraced my authenticity and released myself from wearing masks, I’m now told I must wear a mask. My family and friends don’t understand my use of the word “re-traumatized”.

Maintaining my personal space and guarding against unwanted touching is now challenged every time I leave my home. The introduction of social distancing is affecting me in ways I just don’t understand; I’m more sensitive in public than ever before and it’s terribly distressing. Isolating myself when I felt threatened or whenever my unhealthy boundaries were ignored made me feel safe; I would tell myself, “Everything will be okay now”. With the introduction of shelter-in-place, it feels like the one tool I cherished to keep me safe is now triggering fears of insecurities and low self-esteem.

I pride myself on being self-aware and having accumulated a large portfolio of healthy strategies to feed the good wolf inside me. However, I have real concern for survivors being re-traumatized by COVID-19, but especially troubled for those who have not yet sought help and feel alone more than ever.”

The atmosphere created by the Coronavirus, simply put, poses a major threat to the healing of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. While there is a growing number of survivors reporting mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, there is also evidence indicating that some survivors are returning to the use of maladaptive strategies to help them cope with the current situation.

*Article submitted by Anna, Clinician at Family Services of Peel*

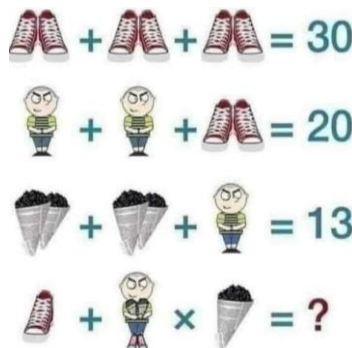
### Quarantine Fun

#### Riddle-me-this...

Many have heard me but nobody has seen me.  
I will not speak until spoken to first. What am I?

(Look for the answer to this riddle in Issue 3)

**Solution to February’s Riddle**  
A computer keyboard





## Marijoy's Food Blog

### **Eating with COVID-19 in the Mix**

Eating out is quite the challenge right now given the COVID-19 restrictions in place to keep everyone safe. However, this does not mean that you have to stick to only home-cooked meals and pizza delivery. With a multitude of food delivery/pick-up apps readily available, eating doesn't have to require too much effort and food doesn't have to be boring and bland.

Following is a list of apps, sites, and restaurants that have been helpful in my quarantine food journey for fun and enjoyable eats.

- **Ritual** is a great app that I was using prior to COVID-19, specifically for picking-up my food to avoid a long wait time. Another great thing is that you can earn Ritual points to redeem discounts or free food at your favourite local spots. I have definitely taken advantage of these perks and got to mouth-fully explore diverse cuisines.



- **Uber Eats** and **Skip The Dishes** are my go-to apps for home delivery. You can find most restaurants via these apps and have them deliver mouth-watering meals to your door. Also, on occasion,

restaurants offer free delivery and there is an option to support local businesses, just like Ritual. As a bubble tea and dessert lover, it's

great that even drinks and tasty sweets are available for delivery.

- **Good Food** is a wonderful site to get full meal kits delivered to you without having to step foot inside a grocery store. You receive all the ingredients you need to prepare a meal, with easy-to-follow recipes, all in the cutest packaging. This site offers quite a few discounts and even a free week trial of meals to try out! If you want to feel like a chef then this is a great option for you. Most of Good Food's dishes are quite enjoyable.

- **Earl's Square One** is one of my fave spots, prior and during this pandemic. Currently they are

offering 20% off your entire purchase when you pick-up your order. If you have read my past food blogs then you'll know that some of my go-to dishes are the **Santa Fe Chicken Salad**, **Warm Spinach + Three Cheese Dip**, and **Dynamite Roll**. Lately, I have also been obsessed with their **BBQ Ribs with warm potato salad**. I just can't get enough!

- **Cactus Club Café Sherway** allows you to order **Bellini** and **Frosé** kits. These refreshing drinks are a dream in a quarantine! I order them with their flavourful **Szechuan Chicken Lettuce Wraps** and their tasty **Tuna Poke Bowl**, to snack on while playing virtual games with family and friends on the weekends.

It is incredible how far we've come with technology and how easily we can get what we want delivered. Hope you all are staying safe and eating plenty. Like always, happy eating!

*Marijoy is a Program Manager at Family Services of Peel and an avid "foodie"*

## Making Working from Home **Work!** (Continued from Page 2)

**Stay Focused:** During this time, it's tempting to keep checking the news for the latest developments, but this is likely to reduce productivity and increase anxiety. So, limit yourself to a 15-minute news check twice a day (in the morning and evening).

**Take Breaks:** Be sure to take your lunch and mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks. Also, use some of this time to move your muscles.

For small movement breaks, drop your hands from your keyboard to your lap and gently move and stretch your upper body. For large movement breaks, stand up and walk away from your work space. Take a brief walk or do full body stretches. This will keep your muscles feeling better and provide you with more energy and an improved ability to focus.

**Set Work Hours:** Once your scheduled shift is over, stop working. The start and end of your work day should be as routine as possible. Enforce a hard stop at the end of your shift and plan for personal errands after that. Setting a target time will dictate expectations and increase productivity.

*Article submitted by Brenda, H/R Manager at Family Services of Peel*

## Anxiety during COVID-19

To help you with anxiety during these trying times, think rationally. If you have an extra bedroom or a barely used area in your home, prepare it for a just-in-case situation.

Clean, fumigate, and disinfect the area and then ensure that contagious individuals live and sleep only in this area while all other family members keep a safe distance.

Understand the **6ft social distancing rule**. The reason is that a sneeze or cough travels 3-5 feet. However, that's when you're facing a person. If you're speaking to someone who is on another floor of a dwelling and you're on the ground floor, the sneeze or cough can travel up to 20-25 feet.

You may visit your family but take folding chairs with you and keep a safe distance. The weather is getting warmer and I've seen my neighbours have visitors, and they are respecting the **5 person rule**. They place their chairs in the driveway and my neighbour sits by the door step.

If you suspect that you or a family member has COVID-19, do NOT go to the hospital, they will refuse a test. First, call **Telehealth** at 1-866-797-0000 or online at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario> for a **free assessment**.

There may be 2-3 assessments before you are referred to a test centre, so be patient. If they feel that you do not need a test then that's a good sign. Seriously; having a common cold is much better than being infected with COVID-19. However, if they refer you to a test centre then follow their instructions.

There are no long line-ups nor does the test hurt. You can't use your own mask or gloves, they will provide these items when you arrive at the test site.

The fever and sore throat are manageable. Just self-isolation (not the same thing as social distancing) is mandated; meaning do not go to an ATM, grocery shopping, etc. Stay isolated until the 14-day quarantine is over. You have a moral obligation to inform your coworkers, public health, and anyone who you have come in contact with for the past 14 days. So, please be responsible.

Symptoms differ from person to person as there are currently 39 different strains of COVID-19. So far the worst has been identified as mucus filling up in the lungs. It causes lack of oxygen in the blood and eventually the lungs stop working. If you have a high fever with chest pain, wheezing, and difficulty breathing, call 911 and go to the hospital immediately.

Also, keep in mind that an ICU emergency ward is the last place that you'll want to be in as you and your loved ones will be surrounded by the virus. So, the only time you want to be admitted is when you require a ventilator to assist you with breathing. Other than that, your immunity will work with help from Tylenol or any generic fever reducing medicines, which are essential to avoid pneumonia.

Stay safe and healthy!

*Article submitted by Shehzad,  
Program Manager at Family Services  
of Peel*

### Concerned you may have COVID-19 symptoms?

- ❌ Do not call 911 unless it's an emergency
- ✅ Use the self-assessment tool at [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://www.ontario.ca/coronavirus)
- ✅ Call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 OR your family doctor and follow their recommendation
- ✅ Contact your local public health unit. Find yours at [Ontario.ca/publichealth](https://www.ontario.ca/publichealth)
- ✅ Only visit an assessment centre if you have been referred by a health care professional



## Monthly Observances

Family Services of Peel celebrates diversity via articles, videos, information sheets, social media, and our glass whiteboard. The following observances will be recognized during the months listed below.

### MAY

Mental Health Awareness Month  
Mental Health Week (4-10)  
Victoria Day (18)  
World Day for Cultural Diversity (18)  
Eid-al-Fitr {Islam} (24)

### JUNE

Seniors Month  
World Environment Day (5)  
World Refugee Day (5)  
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15)  
Canadian Men's Health Week (15-21)  
Indigenous Peoples Day (21)  
Pride Toronto (26-28)

### JULY

Canadian Culture Month  
Canada Day (1)  
Eid-al-Adha {Islam} (31)

# FAMILY SERVICES of PEEL

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**Transforming Lives in Peel**

Volume 11 | Issue 2



## Quarterly Newsletter

**May 2020**

### Mission Statement

Through leadership, collaboration and innovation, we support families and individuals in Peel to transform their lives.

### Vision Statement

Transforming Lives in Peel

### Values

Responsiveness  
Excellence, Leadership, Innovation  
Service Accessibility and Inclusion  
Partnership and Collaboration  
Engaging Community  
Client Driven  
Transparency

What **Diversity and Inclusion** means to Family Services of Peel:

#### Diversity

The mix

#### Inclusion

Making the mix work

*Sandra Rupnarain (Editor)*

*Franca Vettese (Co-Editor/  
Graphics/Layout)*

**COVID-19 EDITION**