Sarah Fletcher

“The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted.”

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 19 March – 2 June 2020



“The value of Space” photo taken by the author on March 20, 2020.

Local Context/ Stats Update: *I am in Victoria, BC Canada. As we live on a (large) Island, for a long time it felt like we might remain untouched. Last week this changed;*

the first case of COVID-19 was identified in the region on 11 March. As of yesterday there are now 12 confirmed cases. In our province the majority of the identified cases are right next door, in Vancouver and across the lower mainland. As of yesterday, there are 231 cases in BC (yesterday saw a huge jump in cases- with an increase of 45), giving us the dubious honour of being the province with the most cases in Canada currently (although I expect Ontario will surpass us today). As of yesterday, there were 737 Cases in Canada; it seems as though health regions are finally sorting out the ramping up of testing, with drive-through testing sites (accessed by referral and through appointments, with priority given to health professionals), so I expect our numbers will jump rapidly in the coming days.

Every day at 8:30 am I tune into CBC for an update from the Prime Minister. Every day at 3:00 we get an update from Bonnie Henry (our provincial health officer- who is developing a huge fan club as a result of her approach to the pandemic thus far).

From the first case on 11 March to now, everything has been rapidly changing. Monday was the start of spring break in the province, Tuesday, BC announced the indefinite closure of Schools. Yesterday BC declared a public health emergency.

Work: I manage a small research unit (the innovation support unit or ISU) in the department of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia (Currently 3 people – we just secured funding and are looking to expand to 5-6 people- although these expansion plans may be put on hold as it's a tricky time to hire). The majority of the department is in Vancouver, however, we are a distributed team, with the majority of our team based in Victoria. Our goal at the ISU is to support innovation in primary care and we are specifically focused on team based care in primary care. From an abundance of caution, we moved to complete virtual operations on 7 March, so it already feels like we have been practicing social distancing for a while (although I know this is only the beginning!!). We are also trying to find the next key point

where we will be able to add value in what is a rapidly changing landscape… My director is a primary care physician who works with a community health centre that serves the most marginalized in our community. He developed cold symptoms last week, and was tested 2 days ago, he hasn't heard back so the assumption is the test was negative. I am 'working from home' in my small office space in the attic floor of our house.

Life at 3147: Our household includes myself (39) my husband (43) our dog Janie and my two kids (Ellie, 3 and Xander, 6). We have 2 tenants in two separate basement units who are both women in their mid- late 20s. One is a nanny (off work due to Covid concerns in the families she works for) and one is a social worker for the Aboriginal Friendship Centre (still going to working outreach at this point). On 17 March for St. Paddys day the kids and I watched the livestream of the Dropkick Murphy's (4pm perfect dance party time) – Amazing how rapidly culture is being forced to adapt. Yesterday my 3 yo had a conversation with another 3yo on facetime. It went like this.

E: Oh so we have to plan our sleepover. (side note- my daughter has never been on a sleepover, there are none planned). Well we can't.

O: Why?

E: oh cause Condoravirus , its just everywhere right now…. Want to see my Frozen dress?

19 March

3PM update from Bonnie Henry (Public Health Officer for BC) :

• Clarification of STAY HOME instructions (the biggest challenge seems to be

playgrounds, and millennials who are taking the 'this won't affect me' attitude- this is more coming from the public reactions to the media coverage of US spring breakers than anything I have observed among millennials lately. On my social media feeds, it seems as though everyone is trying to create social distance.

• 40 new cases, 1 new death (same seniors' home as outbreak cluster in North Vancouver)

Luckily my partner is off work (he was looking for work before the epidemic started and heard back from potential employers that although his CV is great – which was nice for him to hear – all hiring is currently frozen. He is a great household manager and will now be adding teacher to the mix).

We are practicing fairly strict social distancing. We are lucky, we have a big yard. We have been going for dog walks, sometimes with one other family, and then sending one person out for groceries etc. It doesn't feel like others are doing a good job of this. The parks are full of kids (an early public health announcement said 'go to the parks' now they are saying 'stay home' and it's as if people aren't hearing that. I also know it's a privilege to have a yard with small kids and I understand how hard it is, but right now, it feels like this is going to fail because people just aren't taking it seriously. My husbands' parents are also in Victoria – they are in their 70s and live in a condo. Ed's mom has early onset dementia and just recovered from a broken ankle. She is frail. Ed's dad is healthy but is in full time caregiver mode. The hardest thing for me is trying to figure out if we should/can include my parents in our 'social distancing circle' (both in their 70s, healthy, and living about 40 minutes away in a rural farming suburb of Victoria). My dad is very good at worst case scenarios, and is immunocompromised. My mom wants our social circle to include them, and wants to continue taking the kids regularly. The idea of not seeing them makes me cry. We have decided that we will meet my mom for a walk tomorrow in Metchosin. I went for a run tonight by myself, while listening to Lizzo very loud. (I can't listen to that at home with the kids) and felt SO much better after getting outside.

Sarah Fletcher

Yesterday the kids built a fort on the deck out of a large fridge box. The have moved out of the house, (practicing extreme social distancing) and ate lunch in the box. I did have a moment of panic this morning when I thought my husband was going to recycle the box. He didn't, so life continues.



Social Distancing Box, photo by the author.

20 March

• Public Health Officer Update: 77 new cases in BC today, with 1 additional death.

Keeping up with working from home (even though I worked from home often before this) is challenging. I can't help thinking about how families with two parents who are working from home can possibly be coping. I also find myself harbouring strong feelings of jealousy towards many of my otherwise lovely friends without children as they share photos on social media of quiet reading, marie kondo inspired cleaning, and quiet meditative walks in nature. My house is a disaster AND we have a large yard.

My 3-year-old attends a private Montessori pre K and elementary school. I can't help but think about how different the experiences of her friends will be from the experiences of my son's friends right now. My son attends French immersion at the public school down the street from us. The student body there is diverse, full of newer Canadians and young families, the majority of whom live in condos or townhouses. The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted.

Tonight, the US Canada border closes to non-essential travellers at midnight and this morning the PM announced that asylum seekers trying to cross into Canada will be turned back at the border. BC is under a provincial state of emergency . Both UVIC (where my office is) and St Michaels University School (a private k-12 school with a large international student body) have confirmed students have tested positive. My husband's best friend is the head of the middle school at SMUS. Our children went on a hike together 3 days ago. This now all feels very close to home. As I write this a new alert popped up on my phone- Vancouver has now shut down all dine-in operations. (Funny how my CBC news app now gets more use than Twitter

on my phone – despite my removing the Facebook app from my phone I still find myself on Facebook for hours at a time. I am also on Whatsapp, with a group of my fellow-years from Pearson College (a United World College that hosts students from around the world. For the past 2 weeks our group chat has been filled with real time updates from around the world.)

It is interesting to reflect on how pandemics can very quickly underscore the interconnected nature of global markets, supply chain, travel and families. This afternoon I took the kids to visit my parents (both just over 70, and both healthy.) My dad (immunocompromise) stayed on his tractor. We went for a walk down to the beach with my mom. We talked about no hugging and no touching and the kids were very good about it. I can tell that it was hard on my mom. I am so grateful that we have space here that makes social distancing possible.

21/22 March, Weekend

I was not sure if we would continue to get updates from our public health officer over the weekend, but we did (and it seems her fan club continues to grow.) I think she is doing an excellent job with clear and consistent messaging but I worry that until an official lockdown is declared, there won't be massive change.

Health Data from over the weekend:

• 20 March: 76 new cases in BC, 1 new Death (also in the Lynn Valley care home where the outbreak is concentrated)

• Updated Stats: 424 confirmed cases, 27 hospitalized, 12 ICU, 10 deaths, 6 recovered. (37 in the Island Health Region- covering the whole of Vancouver Island)

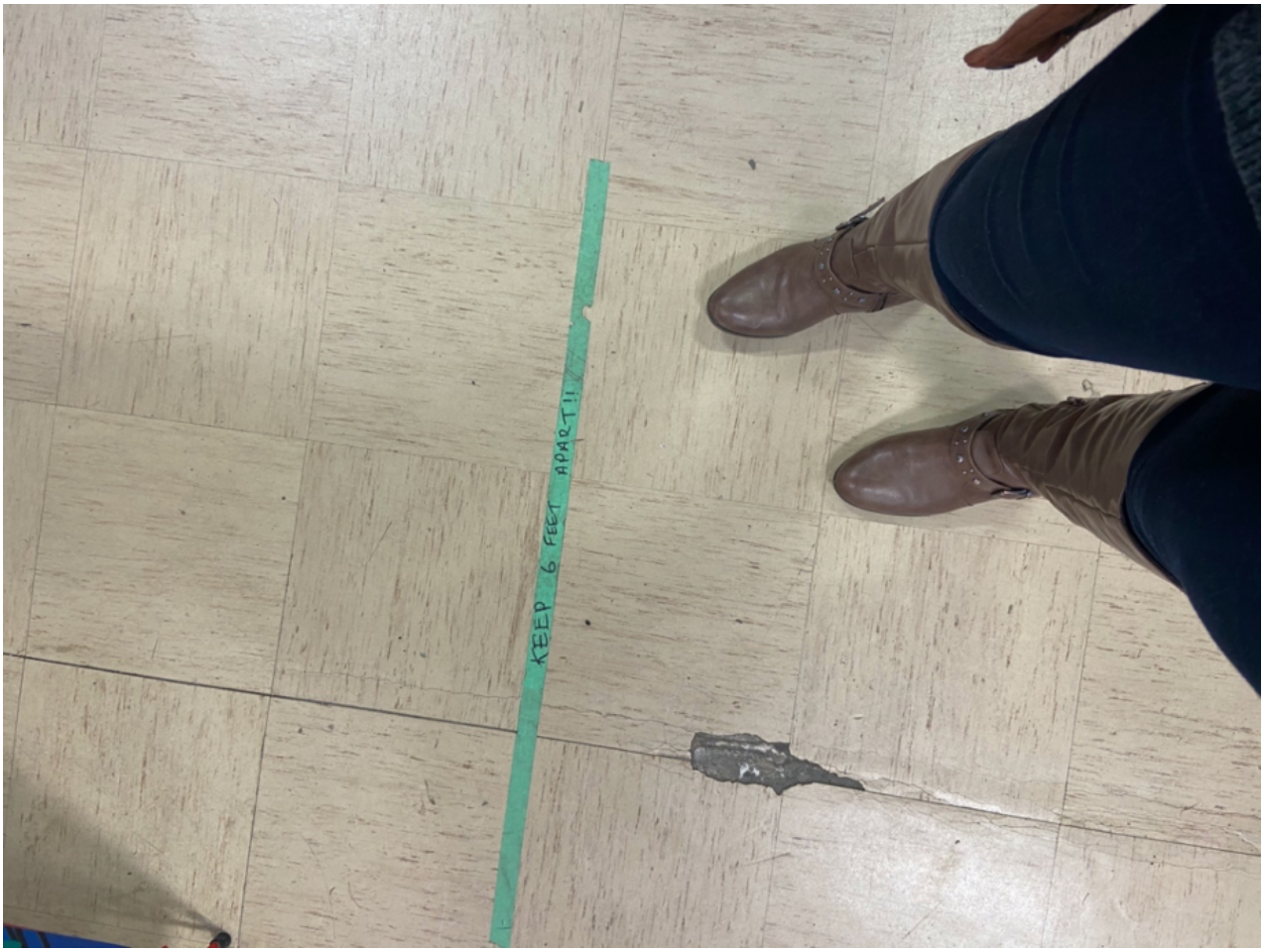
• As of 20 March, 17,912 individuals tested. The messaging is that testing is available

for everyone who needs it, but that not everyone requires a test. (In practice testing seems to be limited to direct contact/travel and front line providers only)

It was nice to feel like I was 'off' with the kids. We spent lots of time in the backyard. It was a beautiful sunny weekend, one of the first westcoast sunny weekends since the winter. Pictures abounded on social media of people in groups on the beaches, sitting on benches in the sun, and basically totally destroying the purpose of social distancing. I am surprised at how angry this makes me. I went grocery shopping for the first time since measures have been put in place to encourage social distancing. In our grocery stores (or at least in the large local chain I visited, security guards at the door limit the number of patrons in the store, shelves are labeled with ration limits for staples and there are large x's on the floor, 6 feet apart to guide waiting in lines. I hosted a birthday party on Zoom for a classmate of my son's. We had over 15 kids under the age of 7 on the call. It was chaos, and easily the most challenging 'chairing of a meeting' I have ever tried to do! But they 'saw' each other, had fun and told a bunch of jokes.

On Friday night several of my friends and I met for virtual drinks. Intentionally building these opportunities for virtual connection are going to become more and more important. I worry about the impacts of social isolation on those who have less access to technology- not so much an issue here in Victoria, but definitely among our more marginalized communities.

On Sunday I spoke with my close friend who had been on the call with us on Friday night (we grew up next door to each other and our families are very close). She is in her mid 30s with 2 small children and thinks she has COVID-19. Her symptoms (primarily shortness of breath and a heavy feeling on her chest) seem in line. She has been unable to get through to the 811 number (the provincial nurse line that has now become a COVID-19 triage line of sorts) but has spoken to a family member who is a nurse and is distancing herself from the kids.



22 March: On your Mark- Social Distancing in the stores. Photo by author.

23 March

The update from the public health office switched to an earlier 10 am time as opposed to the previous 3pm announcements. (Not sure why, but this change seems to be particularly disconcerting- from a process standpoint I think it makes sense as it allows her to re-iterate the messaging coming from the Prime Minister that is delivered at 8am every morning).

• 472 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in B.C.

• Thirteen deaths.

• **Officials are now including recovery stats for the first time- 100 people in B.C. have recovered** and have been cleared to stop isolating.

• Premier John Horgan announced a $5-billion relief plan he and the finance minister said would support citizens and businesses.

• Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told Canadians to stay home to slow the spread of COVID-19, using some of his strongest messaging since the outbreak began and clearly emphasizing STAY HOME messaging but NOT declaring a clear lockdown.

• Municipalities across the Lower Mainland closed parks, trails and public outdoor facilities over the weekend after crowds did not listen to social distancing orders.

• The City of Vancouver said it will fine businesses up to $50,000 if customers aren't kept at least two metres apart. Individuals could be fined up to $1,000.

• Several small communities across B.C. have asked visitors to stay away.

• C. health-care workers say they're grappling with conflicting messages amid the pandemic.

• C. remains under a provincial state of emergency.

The streets seem eerily quiet for a Monday but there is still regular traffic. My kids are having a rough day, my 3-year-old is hysterical about almost everything so that's certainly influencing the way I am feeling today. We also couldn't get sand for the sandbox in our backyard (a completely first-world problem that sent her into a total fit and resulted in her lying on the floor in a full melt down). My friend who suspected she had COVID-19 woke up unable to breathe last night and had to call 911.

She could still speak and they coached her through it – no ambulances for people that can still walk and speak apparently. She was connected to a COVID 19 specialist over the phone who told her how to work on clearing her lungs and what to do. She was instructed to put herself in isolation from her family. She has a 15 month old and a 3 year old. She pretty much knows she has coronavirus but unless she ends up in hospital she will not get tested. I understand, due to the shortage of tests, why this is the policy, and that BC has taken a slow and contain approach rather than in depth tracking of the virus. I do wonder how we will ever get a handle on transmission, and accurate data without more extensive testing. Hopefully this will come later.

With my work in the department of family practice, our unit is beginning to identify places where we can add value. One thing we are very good at is supporting virtual collaboration so we are sharing some of our experiences in a VC tomorrow with key department members. I think it will be important for people to recognize that working virtually is different from face to face and requires the integration of processes and platforms that support real time collaboration of teams in different ways.



23 March: Virtual as the new normal. Photo by the author.

24 March

145 New cases in BC (provincial total 617).

• 44 in the Island Health region

• Majority in Vancouver Coastal (330) and 194 in Fraser Health

• 44 cases in interior (big jump) and 9 now in Northern health

• 173 Recovered

Today Cananda reported a 'fundamental shift' in the reported COVID cases nationally, with over half now being from community spread.

From a systems perspective the jump in the North is particularly concerning as the North is very under-resourced, with additional challenges of travel to hospital and large distances from urban centres. I can't even imagine what will happen if COVID 19 reaches the far north- fly in fly out communities. I'm also thinking about the supply chains to the more remote communities. With increased travel restrictions now in place it feels like some of the more rural and remote communities may, at this point, still be able to get ahead of this- that said I thought the same about Vancouver Island at the start of March.

It's the extended timeframe of this that I can't get my head around. For social distancing to be effective this needs to continue for another 12 weeks minimum, and there is no way that the US, with Trump at the helm is going to do that. So what does that mean for Canada? Trump announced today that he hopes to have everything back to normal by EASTER. That is 3 weeks from now, and from all the other examples around the world we know that is likely to be the peak of the rolling pandemic in the States.

My 3-year-old was playing what I think was 'coronavirus social distancing' with her stuffed animals today. They couldn't go to school and were all lined up and she was asking each of them how they felt and if one said they had a fever they got moved (or rather thrown) out of the line up to the 'hospital couch'.



24 March: Pandemic Play and the 'Hospital couch'. Photo by the author.

25 March

• Today the federal government passed a 107 billion dollar COVID-19 aid package through the house of commons.

• Care home workers in BC now limited to only working at 1 facility (challenge with LTC outbreaks)

• BC government has announced a moratorium on evictions while the province is in a state of emergency and is offering funding of 500$ to help with rent. (average rent for a 1 bedroom in BC is

• 617 confirmed cased in BC, 13 deaths, 173 declared recovered

• 3866 beds have been freed up in hospitals

• BC remains under orders to stay home.

Today we initiated a COVID 19 Rapid learning cycle with my research team. We will be surveying Primary care providers, health authorities and patients across the province to help determine priorities in the COVID response in terms of research and the development of supports and tools in the context of primary care. On a personal level this shift feels very grounding/ relevant. I'm excited to get this started.

Today I ventured out for the first time since Saturday. I went to the hardware store to get sandbox sand (the one thing my 3 year-old said we needed for the backyard). Once I was already there, I realized the hardware store is across the street from the health unit that has been converted to a drive through COVID-19 Testing site in Victoria. The hardware store is also on the same street as the safe injection site in Victoria and a number of shelters. I am very aware of the additional challenges the insecurely/ un-housed community is currently experiencing in the context of the pandemic. For the first time today, a picture in the window of the bagel shop (kitty-corner to the hardware centre and in this same neighbourhood) made me think about the impacts of the sudden change to 'no cash/ debit only' for those who may be used to functioning with cash/change only. (Mostly I was surprised that I hadn't thought about this at all prior to my venture out today).

Sarah Fletcher



25 March: “We accept Cash”. Photo by the author.

26 March

• Canada launches a mandatory 14-day quarantine order for all travellers returning home.

• The US now has the most reported COVID-19 cases in the world, with a death toll that has now topped 1000.

• Yesterday Trump made the ridiculous statement that he expects the US to be 'back to normal' by Easter. Today Trudeau is pushing back as Trump announced plans to position soldiers along the Canada/US border to intercept illegal migrants.

• The US jobless claims have soared in the us to more than 3.2 million.

• In BC- the City of Vancouver is planning around providing a safe drug supply, public transit is limiting seating,

• Violating PH orders is now punishable by fines

• BC has 659 cases confirmed, including 14 deaths, 183 patients recovered.

Today the weather turned rainy. And social distancing in the rain somehow feels so much lonelier. Birthday parties and social gatherings are moving to virtual.

27 March

• 67 new cases in BC , 2 new deaths

• In a talk on BCs modelling this morning the PO mentioned being 'cautiously optimistic' for the first time re. BC's ability to flatten the curve. Of 792 who have tested positive, 275 are now recovered.

• There are now 11 long term care homes with outbreaks in metro Vancouver

• There are 70 in IH and 57 in Island Health and 12 in NH

• BC does seem to for now be managing better than other areas.

Sarah Fletcher

Spring Break ends this coming Monday. Our children's schools sent out the plans for their respective educations today and the difference between the private school (a pre-K-8 montessori) – daily circle time/ blend of real time and you tube content (for my 3-year-old) and the note from my 6 year old son's public school "We'll figure something out in the NEXT TWO WEEKS" is disappointing. I know this is what I was expecting but it's still jarring.

I realize that with my partner doing almost 100% of the child care and house management there were a couple days this week where I didn't even get outside. That's clearly not good for me. So I started a 15 min a day workout plan and in the evenings the kids and I have been scootering around the block. Yesterday for the first time we heard the banging of the pots and pans at 7pm to thank healthcare workers. Tomorrow we will join in.

Sarah Fletcher



27 March: “Get social where you can- Communities thanking healthcare workers 7pm sharp”. Photo by the author.

28/29 March, Weekend

• March 28: Vancouver Coastal (444) Fraser Health (291) Island Health (60) Island Health (77) Northern Health (12)

Sarah Fletcher

• 17 deaths, 81 in hospital (52 in ICU) 396 recovered

• As of March 27, 36,643 individuals have been tested in B.C.

• Testing capacity in British Columbia has increased to approximately 3,500 tests per day.

The weekends are marked by me not going upstairs to work, and I get to join the kids and Ed on their daily hikes. We are so lucky to live where we live. We found a "Local hikes" book on our shelf (https://theodombrowski.net/books/walking-guides/) that the kids now help us go through to find new adventures. On Saturday we found an almost empty hike up a series of hills I didn't know existed less than 20 minutes from our house. I actually think that although this home schooling plus working is going to be hard, the kids are loving it. Well parts of it. The social distancing from grandparents and friends, not so much, but the always having us around, most definitely. For our sanity I'm so glad the kids have each other and (mostly) get along.

Shopping socially distant this weekend felt more calm. People are getting accustomed to giving each other space, the grocery stores are very orderly with arrows on the floor that direct people to go only one way down the isles (this was new to me, I went the wrong way!) and with green footprints marking out the 6 feet spacing between bodies. I did find myself more aware of my own body and managing space, also of course the 'don't touch your face' mantra that ran through my head the whole time I was out. There was still no sugar, no pasta, and no cleaning products, but otherwise everything seemed calmer.

Sarah Fletcher



28/ 29 March: Family time and lots of it! Photo by the author.

March 30

• Huge announcement re. Emergency Wage Subsidy in Canada to encourage re-hiring of workers who were laid off in the last 3 weeks.

• Observed changes – bodily awareness/ proprioception; hearing more sirens? Or just more aware? Quieter streets/ better sleep; social distancing seems less stifling than it did last week;

Questions re. future trajectories:

• Will teachers, nurses, 'essential service workers' get paid more after all this is over?

• How is the pandemic going to change primary care?

• Everything is moving quickly to virtual- is this going to stay?

• Also how much is this going to change the way people work? (Think of the cost savings for small businesses who may realize they don't need as much office space).

• For government will they finally realize virtual meetings work well? (with the provincial government in BC- much of government is in Victoria and Vancouver and the flight traffic between the two is incredible/huge carbon footprint – is this going to be the catalysing event that is needed to curb climate change?

• Mental health – is this going to increase agoraphobia? Social Isolation?

• How is this going to change dating? The birth rate etc.

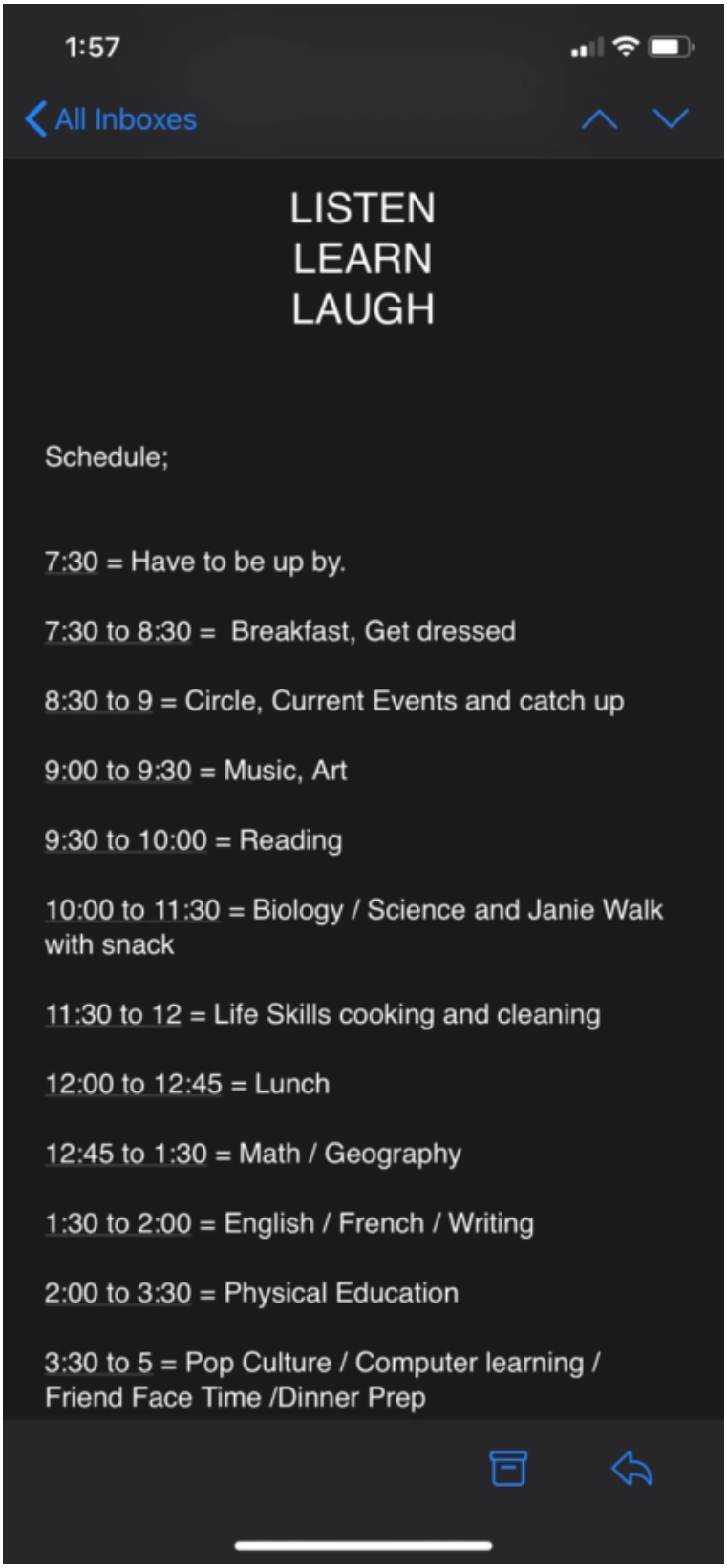
I watch a friend of mine who is single and lives alone – she is currently considering if the guy she's been seeing should be 'in her household' or not re. social distancing – she was defining him as within her circle/ the only person for her that she has been seeing in person; but he continued to help an acquaintance move, see his family and see a few friends so now she has said that they can't see each other for two weeks. He has agreed that he wants to 'take things up a notch' and create their social circle.

I'm thinking about how tricky the navigation of relationships is at this time. Also cognisant of increased potential for domestic abuse in the context of increase stress,

increased financial pressure, the requirement to ‘stay home’. With all the privilege we have in Canada, this is hugely challenging. India is now on lockdown – how do you lockdown a country with millions below the poverty line, insecurely housed etc. How do you promote vigourous hand washing in countries without running water? This is a virus whose initial spread is the result of privilege/ spread by international travel; and will undoubtedly have the largest impact on the most marginalized parts of the population. Reports of the humanitarian crisis that is growing India are now reaching us.

Daddy School Starts Today! The Kids are incredibly excited. We will see how it goes. My partner has put together a very ambitious schedule…

Sarah Fletcher



"The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted."
https://boasblogs.org/curarecoronadiaries/the-privilege-of-a-yard/

30 March: Daddy School Schedule- So lucky that we have one of us that can focus on the kids right now! (Also I doubt this will last). Photo by the author.

31 March

Headline "Deadliest Day in BC" – 5 new COVID deaths,

Headline "BC Recovery rate surpasses new infections for the first time"

• PHO announces BC will remain in virtual lockdown until at least the summer. 5 new deaths and 43 new cases, 1013 people infected with 50% recovered (507).

• 128 in hospital and 61 in ICU

• Interior Health has first large community outbreak involving foreign workers in agriculture

• (Island Health 67)

I have been saying since the start that this is likely to last until summer. Hearing that officially from the PHO today still felt like a blow. I am tired of staying at home, tired of not seeing my parents, tired of no break from my children (even though getting to go upstairs to work really is a break). I'm tired.

1 April

• PM has announced Parliament is being recalled to pass the full covid-19 relief package that includes a 75% wage subsidy for employees to encourage employers to keep people on payroll/

• 53 new cases in BC (not in the official newscast but I have also been reading anecdotal accounts/ blog posts that COVID 19 has now arrived in the DTES- home to the most marginalized/ lowest income/ most at risk populations in BC.

• 72 on Vancouver Island

• For now it seems like the 'peak' that is meant to be coming in the next week to 2 weeks is being well managed. Currently facilities are operating at 61%.

• I also read that additional testing facilities are currently being built in local rec centres that have otherwise been closed to support social distancing.

• Ethics framework for covid response has now been developed and is posted on GOV of bc website (gov.bc.ca) – includes duty of care and allocation of PPE framework as well as allocation of scarce resources (e.g. ventilators) so that no clinician will have to make those decisions on their own- the last one is still under development.

This morning I let my kids have popsicles for breakfast (that had, unknow to them, been dipped in salt.) I love April fools day, although everything seems a bit dampened in the current climate. It was SO FUNNY though. Also we had a very unseasonal hail storm this morning, but now sunny skies.

With my work in the ISU we are launching a 'primary care in a pandemic' podcast, with the target audience of people who work in primary care. The first focus is going to be on staying connected in the context of COVID and the transition to virtual care . On Monday my son had a specialist appt that was run completely virtually, on DOXY; this seem to be the platform of choice for most primary care providers so far. (Zoom was a choice but is currently dealing with privacy concerns so I anticipate Doxy will be what the majority turn to). We are also connecting in with the ministry of health, Providers from the DFP, and others to rapidly assess current needs and to identify where research and the ISU can add value.

Sarah Fletcher

My partner is on a sous-vide culinary adventure. If nothing else our gourmet dinners are amazing!



April 1. Photo by the author.

Sarah Fletcher

3 April

• 4 more deaths announced today in BC but the number hospitalized has dropped for the first time in weeks.

• PHO says that if this trend continues we have capacity to manage within the system

• Yesterday there were 2 deaths on Vancouver Island, where I live. These were the first deaths on the island (one 80 year old and one patient in their 90s)

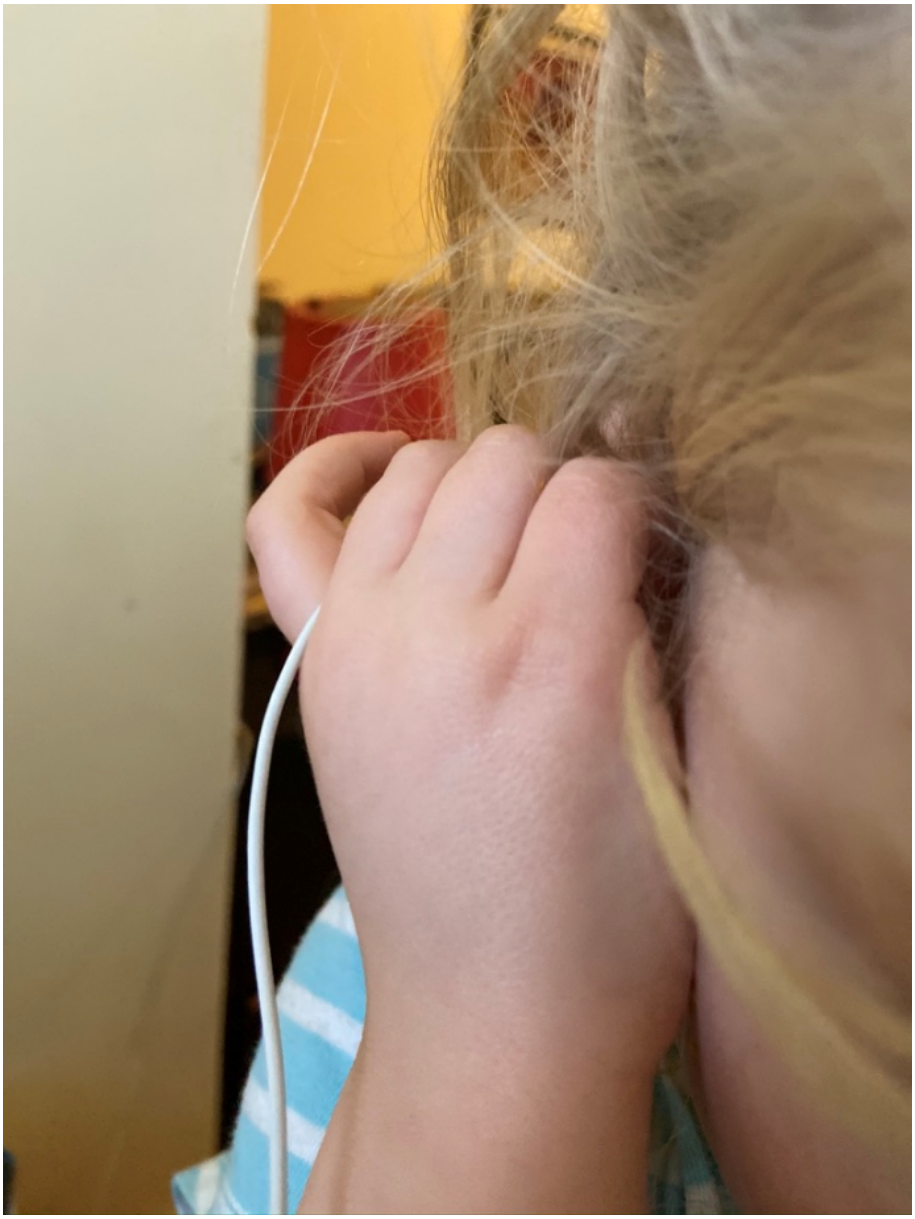
• Messaging continues to emphasize mandatory isolation after travel, although enforcement is still not clear

• Donald Trump is as usual being a dick and has now demanded that 3M cease exporting respirators and other medical supplies to Canada.

Across Canada it feels like all the PHOs are doing an excellent job, all are garnering almost 'fan clubs' (also I think all are women which is great to see). Today at the ISU we recorded the first episode of our 'Primary Care in a Pandemic' podcast.

Interesting to think about what this lockdown like situation means for our children's relationship to technology – schools are connecting virtually, my kids, who had fairly limited screen time before, are now very connected. They each have kids facebook messenger accounts (which they never would have had before).

Sarah Fletcher



April 3: Changing Relationships to technology and screen time. My 3 Year old participates in daily zoom calls with her class and my 6 year old knows how to work messenger kids and all the snapchat filters way better than I do. Photo by the author.

4/5 April

It was my husband's birthday yesterday and I fell behind with my field notes! Rather than catch up I am going to restart here. On Friday night (4 April) had another larger zoom call with friends. Played Drawful this time (jackbox games) and it was pretty fun. Over the weekend I had a migraine which made everything seem worse than it is. Grocery shopping was ok, there seemed to be more in stock than last week. We went on some nice family walks, and on 6 April (Monday) had a zoom birthday party crab dinner for Ed – I picked up crab and dropped it off at his parents and our friends and then we had a remote celebratory dinner over zoom. (and Ed's brother joined from Singapore as well.) Crab is at a premumium though! 28$ per crab! Normally about 18$... good thing his birthday only comes once a year.

Financially it feels like we are in the lucky few- Ed was unemployed before this and everything felt like a bit of a struggle, despite the fact that I have a job I love that is secure and allows us to be comfortable. Now I have a job and we are spending significantly less- we also have the money from the sale of our revenue property (happened in November and was meant to be put against our current mortgage in June when it comes up for renewal, but as a result we aren't really feeling the financial pressures – if this had happened without the sale of that house I don't know how we would be managing. The sale allowed us to get rid of all our debt before this started.

7 April

The PHO updates now feel almost common place, non-medical grade masks have been recommended nationally for going out, and BCs situation still feels relatively under control.

Health Data update :

Sarah Fletcher

• Boris Jonhson was admitted to ICU yesterday with COVID

• The Canadian COVID benefits program went live yesterday, almost 1 M people applied

• Over 55,000 confirmed cases in the UK, with over 6000 deaths

• Increasing challenges re. procurement of PPE and ventilators, a number of Canadian companies have voluntarily adapted production lines to meet the needs

• In the US the defense measures act has been invoked

• Yesterday Trump blocked a shipment of masks from 3M that had been destined for Canada- Canada has emphasized it is still sending the pulp needed to make the masks to 3M despite Trump

• As of today Canada has 17,840 confirmed cases

• Public health officials caution that the numbers don't tell the full story, as they don't capture information on people who haven't been tested or cases that are still under investigation. (there is no testing/ contact tracing happening beyond outbreaks, hospitalizations, and health care providers

• In the US 731 deaths TODAY in NY alone. (5,500 deaths in NY alone) NY citys death toll officially eclipsed 9/11

• 370,00 confirmed infections in the US with death toll of over 11,00

• BC Update: one additional death

• No new cases on the Island

• 53 additional cases in BC

Feeling here is generally that we seem to actually be flattening the curve. The question then becomes how do we keep it that way?

8 April

• BC update" There were 45 new cases reported April 8 bringing the total to 1,336 confirmed cases. There have been five deaths over the past 24 hours bringing that total to 48.

• There are 450 active cases in B.C., of which 315 are recovering at home. Two people have died at home so far, the remaining 46 died in hospital. Median age of death is 87.

• There are 135 people are in hospital, including 61 in intensive care.

Victoria is very upper middle class and very white. The city is also expensive and has a growing percentage of the population that is homeless or precariously housed. In the park that is about a block from our house, people have been given permission to pitch tents. Over the past 4 days it has become a total tent city. The news says there are 80 tents there- when I drove by it looked more like 120 +. I completely understand that they need to find options for the homeless population and I have always been one to criticize NIMBY attitudes. But I am struggling with this being so close to my house and my discomfort with this has surprised me. The tents are very close together, porta potties have been brought in but there is limited access to clean water. Once COVID 19 is in the camp I don't see how people can effectively isolate themselves and it feels like a disaster waiting to happen. On the upside, the Islands new reported infections have stalled so there is a very small chance the tent city may not be impacted. I guess we will see. The role of the SDOH in COVID 19 spread, and health outcomes is so evident. I wonder what If any policy changes this might prompt?



8 April: Pop up tent city in our neighbourhood. (Supported by resources from the City) There are clearly huge challenges when we think about how to encourage social isolation – which requires housing and space- among our most marginalized populations. Photo by author.

9 April

Today the PM announced that there will be no 'return to normal' until a vaccine is developed. I find myself wondering about the weight of the economic cost in all of this. Would a slow and controlled approach to infection / building immunity make

sense- not so possible when you think about the transmission rates/ contagion of COVID 19 but the economic impacts are going to be so incredibly far reaching. Sweden has taken a moderate social distancing approach – with no lockdown, no school closures etc. I wonder if a more moderate approach like this is really going to be lauded in retrospect. And then I think about how different I would feel about this if my children were in a high-risk group.

I am on a whatsapp chat with my College classmates from around the world. This whatsapp chat, is dominated by a very smart, very pessimistic, very conspiracy-focused voice. There have been days where I have had to just step away. It's ridiculous. He's also pushing chloroquine and the idea that COVID was manufactured to pull attention away from other conflicts/ Trump, so there is that underlying discourse as well.

I am thinking a lot about privilege and how stratified the experience and outcomes of COVID 19 are going to be. If you have the privilege of space; a yard, a detached single-family house, easy access to uncrowded space the experience is going to be so different. For people in urban centres, in shared housing, in apartment buildings the lack of control, reliance on the actions of others (following public health advisories etc.) the fear, intensity, and visibility of COVID 19 has got to be heightened.

10 April

Total confirmed cases as of April 9 in B.C.: 1,370

• New cases: 34

• Hospitalized cases: 132

• Intensive care: 68

• COVID-19 related deaths: 50

• Recovered: 858

• Long-term care and assisted-living homes currently affected: 20

Confirmed cases by region:

• Vancouver Coastal Health: 626

• Fraser Health: 508

• Island Health: 82

• Interior Health: 130

• Northern Health: 24

There are 22148 confirmed cases in Canada, no confirmed cases in Nunavut, 5 in NWT and 8 in the Yukon (Quebec has 11677, Ontario has 6237) – numbers aren't really representative though as the testing strategies and availability seems as through it is very different province by province.

The start of Easter weekend and the 40th birthday of one of my best friends. I am so ready for a long weekend. It feels as though the initial panic and stress of the instigation of social distancing is wearing off. Our family life has fallen into a new pattern. I get up early and go upstairs to work. The kids and ed are usually up by 7/ 730, we all have breakfast together, Ed keeps the kids busy with Daddy school all day. (Daddy school includes a long hike between 10-12; this is when I try to do anything that requires quiet (recording etc.) We are so lucky that Ed is off and able to do this. We have lunch together every day, we have dinner together, after dinner the kids

and I do a scooter lap of the block (I run). At 7:00 we go out on our front step and bang pots and pans to acknowledge front line workers. We have rarely spoken to our neighbours but the family across the street and the family 2 houses down as well as the older couple across the street all come out and bang pots. Now we shout hello across the street (on the day of the pea gravel delivery, we had a conversation about the amount of gravel we accidentally ordered – who knew 2 cubic yards was so much? Who knows what a cubic yard is off the top of their head anyways).

Recognizing that this is the new normal, I feel like I have started to really appreciate the family time, and worry a bit about my friends who are single or live alone. One of my best friends ended things with the guy she'd been seeing for 6 months yesterday. (He let her know that he wasn't over his ex and just didn't 'feel butterflies' when he thought about her – he's a 45 year old art student; I feel like his butterflies expectation is ridiculous. And they had just a few days prior decided to include each other in their 'household circles' – I'm guessing it was too much pressure for him. So now my friend, who turns 40 this year- we all do- is now alone, sad about the end of her relationship and adding the 'do I want to be having kids' pressure to it all – not exactly easy to date during a pandemic!



April 10: New patterns and routines in the day to day. Evening scooter and lots of family time. Photo by the author.

11 April

Today is one of my best friend's 40th birthdays. We organized a birthday facetime at

11:00 to give her a present (a subscription box) and a secret 'convoy' by her house at 5:00. Then we are getting a group together over zoom after the kids go to bed to play some jackbox drawful. Interesting how that is now the new normal. I am an extrovert and am finding the whole not having people over very challenging – but lots of zoom organizing.

It was SO GREAT to see friends from a distance today. It's been a while.

Sarah Fletcher



Birthday Caravans and changing celebrations over the Easter Weekend. Photo by the author.

13 April

• 11 more deaths in BC but lowest daily increase in 4 weeks

• Bonnie Henry's 50th daily update

• 45 new confirmed cases bringing the BC total to 1490 (update reflects 2 24hour time periods with 25 new cases between Saturday and Sunday and 20 new cases between Sunday and Monday

• Too early to set date for relaxing restrictions

• Thousands are signing a petition to ask travel to Vancouver Island be restricted

• 926 recovered, 137 hospitalized, 58 in ICU

• There has been an outbreak at the prison in Mission – 35 cases with 8 in hospital

• BC is not currently procuring rapid testing kits

16 April

Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 1,575

• New cases since April 15, 2020: 14

• New deaths since April 15, 2020: 3

• Hospitalized cases: 120

• Intensive care: 56

• Deaths: 78

• Recovered: 983

Federally, yesterday measures were announced to expand CERB eligibility

My research analyst is sick. She is in Vancouver (way more COVID there than there is here) and she lives in a household with 6 other adults – which seems much harder to control in terms of social distancing/ potential exposure. She has not yet called a doctor (says she will tomorrow if it continues) and says she has never experienced anything like this before. It seems less chest infection more horrible flu right now but we will see. She has been sick since Sunday and off work since Monday.

I zoomed (this has now become a verb) with two of the mothers of students in my son's class tonight, one of whom gave birth to her second child on 3 April. She seems to be doing well I can only imagine what a tricky time this would be to have a new baby and adjust to life with two kids. (I think I mentioned in an earlier entry that she had to introduce the new baby to her mom through a car window, as her mom works in a clinic) The other mother is a junior high school teacher and is trying to balance having 2 very active little boys (3 and 6) with also trying to teach remotely, while her husband (who is an accountant and it's tax season) tries to work downstairs in their small townhouse. The 'normal' for this family is incredibly active – both boys are in hockey (and lots of it) the mother and father also both are in hockey and skating and I think they both work out at least 4 times a week, on top of this they manage to fit in other sports (lacrosse, softball, and swimming lessons) and it just amazes me. I feel like they are really struggling with the lack of space and change.

This week has been incredibly busy. I've realized that back to back video conferences

require a different kind of attention and it's exhausting. As we have now extended our household to include my parents (who live on a 10-acre beachfront farm about 40 minutes outside of Victoria) my son went for his first solo sleepover tonight. Having one child this afternoon felt like such a luxury!!! Extending our household to include my parents feels like cheating....

Sarah Fletcher



16 April: Art on the window. Hearts in the window have become a thing. People are putting up hearts to show support health care workers. This was a big thing in the first few weeks and seems to have died down. The 7 pm pot banging also feels less meaningful than it did at the start. I think this is in part due to fatigue but

mostly on the island where we live the curve seems to have flattened. The hospitals have yet to experience the surge that was anticipated. Regardless the kids have been very keen on the idea – interesting that his hearts included a note about staying 2 meters apart! Social distancing messaging is clearly getting across to him! Photo by the author.

17 April

My research analyst took the online COVID screening tool but she doesn't qualify for testing (the testing is still limited to health care providers or people in hospital but there is talk that this may be opening up soon). Now that we expanded our household to include my parents (and their farm in Metchosin) the kids can go there and it is amazing! The sleepover on Thursday night was a huge success, next week the 3 year-old gets to go. The negotiation of households right now is interesting. Who is in and who is out, how family is defined and redefined, what this means for people who live alone, for people who are actively dating, etc. is particularly interesting. I wonder if the physical nature of households will also adapt – I know of a number of young people in Vancouver who have left the city to return to live with parents.

One of my best friends is a realtor- she has created her covid policies – she will do virtual tours, people are allowed to have an in-person tour if the sellers agree, and if tenants agree, etc. She was ahead of the game as she was already doing virtual tours. But the freeze on eviction for tenants makes the sale and purchase of houses challenging – if someone buys a house that is occupied there is, I guess nothing they can do to force a person to leave?

Every Friday night I have been hosting zoom parties with a large group of friends. It's pretty much the only way I know what day it is anymore! (That and the not heading

upstairs to work (much) on the weekends.

18/19 April

So, on Saturday our kitchen sink stopped draining and my husband tried to plunge it- pushing the blockage out and also apparently causing the corroded drainpipe to explode in the wall, leaking water down into the ceiling of our downstairs unit, making our kitchen sink unusable and allowing us to experience booking emergency repair services during a pandemic. The plumber was not available until Monday morning.

While we were trying to figure out what was leaking, where the issue was and how to fix it my almost 4-year-old got on zoom with her almost 3-year-old friend and they actually played- kind of independently but entertaining each other for over an hour. It was amazing.

Sarah Fletcher



Virtual playdates are now a thing I guess. Photo by the author.

But the weather was beautiful, we ate dinner outside, and the kids were getting

along well, so I guess that is a win overall.



Spring is here- the first outdoor dinner of the year. Photo by the author.

Sarah Fletcher

20 April

• 52 new cases over a two day reporting period for a total of 1,699.

• 5 new deaths reported for a total of 86.

• 104 people are in hospital. 49 in critical care.

• B.C.'s top doctor says anyone with symptoms can now be tested for COVID-19.

• A new outbreak has been confirmed at Chartwell Willow, a long-term care facility.

• TransLink has announced almost 1,500 layoffs and reduced services to save costs.

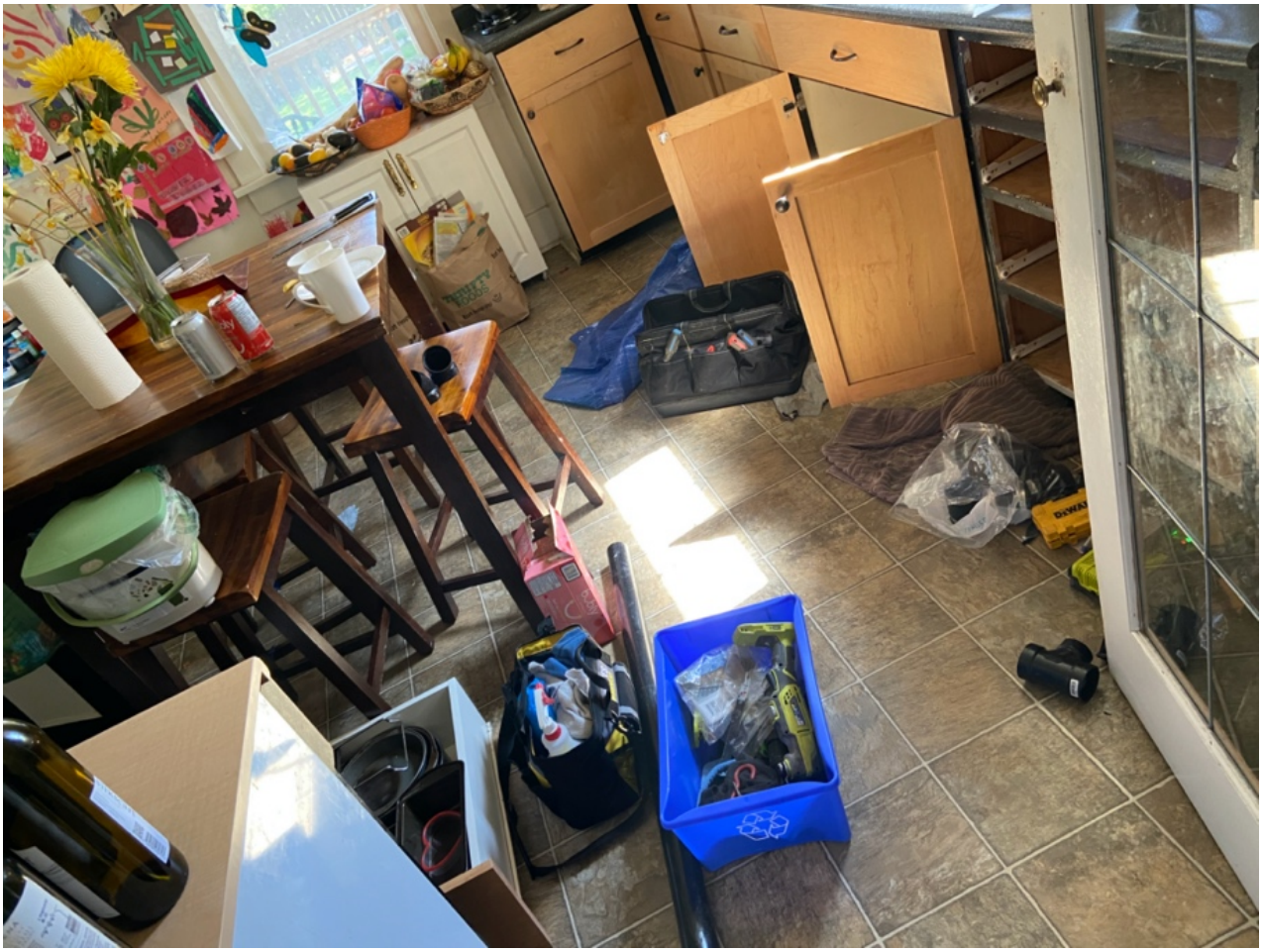
• B.C. announced a new framework for health care in rural, remote and Indigenous communities

• Police now have the power to issue $2,000 fines for reselling and gouging prices for medical supplies.

• The annual 420 cannabis celebration in Vancouver is being held virtually today.

Monday mornings seem to be especially rough on my kids. For the past 2 weeks Mondays have seen HUGE meltdowns as I announce that I am headed upstairs to work – in pre work from home/ school from home times I don't remember the transition being so rough. The lovely plumber was here all day. In gloves and mask, and Ed kept the kids busy outside. So glad that the repairs could happen quickly, and that we sold our rental house before this all started. Thinking about how people living in precarity would cope with something like this, now, and feeling pretty thankful that we were able to manage paying the bills for this fairly easily. Had this happened in October of this past year, this would not have been the case for us and

we probably would have needed to either wrack up a credit card bill (if there was room there) or get a second mortgage- which wouldn't have been a quick process.



Everything breaks. Navigating emergency home repairs in the context of the pandemic. (Also there is no doubt in my mind that plumbers are an essential service). Photo by the author.

22 April

• Cases in Canada have now topped 40,000

• 3 new outbreaks in Fraser Health region have fueled a spike in confirmed cases (71 new cases)

• This is the largest spike BC has seen in weeks.

• 103 patients in hospital including 46 in intensive care

• 3 new deaths in LTC homes, bringing the BC death total to 90.

• 1079 people recovered

• Hospital wards at 46% occupancy

Hospital wards continue to be at low occupancy. There are increasing discussions of the 3rd and 4th 'human centred' waves of COVID 19- the 2nd wave will likely happen after restrictions are loosened- increased spread. The 3rd wave is related to the backlog at the systems level when we think about chronic disease management, 'elective' surgeries that have been cancelled (including things like mastectomies and other cancer related surgeries, and prevention focused interventions that are not considered 'essential' but will likely result in negative health outcomes down the line). The 4th wave is focused on mental health outcomes- both in terms of increased anxiety, PTSD and other negative outcomes tied to social isolation for those who were previously not accessing mental health supports and mental health outcomes for patients who have pre-existing conditions / result of interrupted treatment etc. (Victor Tseng has an interesting infographic that shares this modelling) 4th Wave

I have really noticed a drop in the sense of urgency related to the pandemic for myself and I think for my community. Social distancing measures are still in place, and people seem to be adhering fairly well. However, new infections are so low on the Island right now that the measures, to a certain extent feel excessive and this is for me, someone who has a very good understanding of the importance of adherence

to public health measures. I anticipate it is going to get harder for people to listen. But so far, restrictions remain in place.

The Tent city down the road continues to grow. There are now over 200 tents, and on the news the other night a resident of the tent city was saying how great it was, how there was food, water, showers, and services and how she didn't understand how everyone didn't come there. There were also 2 deaths reported in the tent city today (overdoses), and yesterday, shots were fired. This is very concerning as it is literally 3 blocks from our house. Although it is being held up as a success (in terms of controlling the mobility/bodies/ options for people without access to housing), crime in the neighbourhood has apparently skyrocketed. We haven't experienced this personally (really cars always get broken into, our house has been broken into several times in the past so it was always a neighbourhood that has a wide breadth of residents and is a boundary neighbourhood (between downtown and more suburban areas). Two weeks ago my sons scooter got stolen from our van. (I can't remember if I mentioned this in an earlier entry. He was so upset and it felt like such an invasion of our personal space. But I doubt this was directly tied to the tent city, and is the kind of thing that happens fairly often here (well, often for Victoria which is, in general a very privileged city).

The reality is that COVID is part of a double pandemic. The opioid crisis and contaminated drug supply (fentanyl) alongside the physical distancing guidelines has resulted in a huge upswing in overdose risk across BC.

Sarah Fletcher



“The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted.”
https://boasblogs.org/curarecoronadiaries/the-privilege-of-a-yard/

Today it rained for the first time in a while. Our living room couch became a giant fort. I'm so thankful for the space we have and it is feeling smaller and smaller these days, particularly inside! Today Spain announced they are going to let children outside (in Spain children have been barred from leaving the house for the past 6 weeks. I cannot even imagine how hard this would be on children and their parents). Photo by the author.

25/26 April

I had a total breakdown on Friday night. I've realized I'm not someone who deals well with unknowns/ inability to plan. My husband (who grew up as an army brat and moved frequently) on the other hand, is very good at living in the moment and not projecting forward. Having no real sense of timeline- particularly for my kids and school and childcare and all those interrelated pieces (including if and when Ed is going to be able to start looking for work again) is really hard for me. (I am also very aware of how lucky we are right now that we have one of us who can take on the majority of the childcare.) Somehow this was all made worse for me by the fact that golf courses are re-opening and questions are looming for me about making decisions re. combining households etc. On Saturday I went for a long walk without kids and met up with one of my closest friends for a 'socially distant walk'. I realize I need to make the effort to do this more often, for my own sanity.

My friend and her partner are starting to have 'nights away' (where one of them goes downstairs at 4:00 and get to 'be away' without kids or interruptions for the rest of the evening). Too funny… but also an interesting solution for people who are more introverts and need 'alone time' I think.

Sarah Fletcher

29 April

Today the premier of BC announced that schools will not be reopening until at least the fall and that BCs plan for reopening will be coming next week. Around the world re-opening plans are starting. New Zealand has for now eliminated COVID. Australia is close to doing so. Denmark has reopened schools – with some social distancing measures in place. Italy and Spain are both now letting children outside/ – The treatment of children at a policy level; by countries that completely disregarded the rights and agency of children- is something that I think we will look back on very harshly. The fact that children in Spain have had their movement so restricted, their bodies completed regulated by the state – and that it happened with so little outside commentary is surprising. Friends in Italy are furious with the governments' announcements re re-opening. Salons will open, restaurants will open, but schools and daycares are set to remain closed. The pressures that this puts on families with two parents working are incredible.

Other things I am thinking about

• Regulation of bodies in shared social spaces

• Family dynamics and what the prolonged new normal means for families with 2 working parents

• Impacts of social distancing on reproductive planning/ choice/ outcomes – expect a spike in first children 9 months from now and a decrease in second children? What about people who were planning IVF, mid cycle, considering surrogacy? Increase in unwanted pregnancy due to limiting access to clinics / barrier to accessing contraception?

• Stress / covid stress/ longer term outcomes

• The idea of the human centred waves of COVID – what of the 3rd and 4th waves

(being delayed CDM and mental health for both providers and patients)

• COVID and SDH/ privilege (school differentials, space, etc.)

30 April

Today marks 100 days since the first coronavirus warning in BC.

• 2121 people who have been diagnosed in BC

• 25 new infections

• 120 in Vancouver Island Health Region

• 24 active outbreaks in LTC, no new outbreaks but new cases in LTC (153 staff, 256 residents). 12 outbreaks considered over.

• Outbreaks also at 2 poultry factories

• And Mission correctional facility

• 82 people in hospital now

• 30 in ICU

• 2 additional deaths

• 1122 people fully recovered

Last night both kids went to stay with my parents. There was one night last summer, when I was really sick (with a non-covid chest infection!) that my parents took both kids for the night. Last night was the first time I have been healthy, and home with just my partner and no children, since my first child was born, almost 7 years ago. It

was very surreal. I worked late. We had dinner later than our usual 5:30 kid dinner time, we went for a walk after dinner (with road pops in coffee mugs. We smoked a joint that my partner had purchased from the newly legal pot shop down the street, pre- covid. Actually, he bought it in January I think, but I never really felt like smoking it – the 'what if the kids need something' paranoia always loomed large… so we took the opportunity to relax a bit. We walked around the neighbourhood and through a park that I used to walk to with a friend when I was in high school (she lived right around the corner).Last night was the first time I have been back there without kids.

Today the break from the everyday (getting up and going straight to work, not making anyone breakfast, not juggling things) feels incredible. I ran to my daughter's school to pick up an art order (only about 2km away) while listening to an online podcasting course I am taking. And now of course I miss the kids- my partner is picking them up shortly, but the relief I feel as a result of a small break is palpable. AND I am someone without pre-existing mental health challenges and with good coping mechanisms. I keep thinking about my earlier work on stress and resilience and on the potential of shared experiences of stress to both enhance resilience but also the very real, potentially negative outcomes of prolonged stress. I wonder what kind of covid related explanatory frameworks/ illness narratives are going to start to emerge.

1 May

Today Bonnie Henry (everyone's new hero, the PHO) talked about how we want to and how we can expand our social circles, in a thoughtful way. She also said there will be 'no indoor parties this summer' clarified that most meetings are going to be outside etc. For me thinking though the expansion of circles without the strict no expansion rules is challenging and the level of social distancing that can be seen now

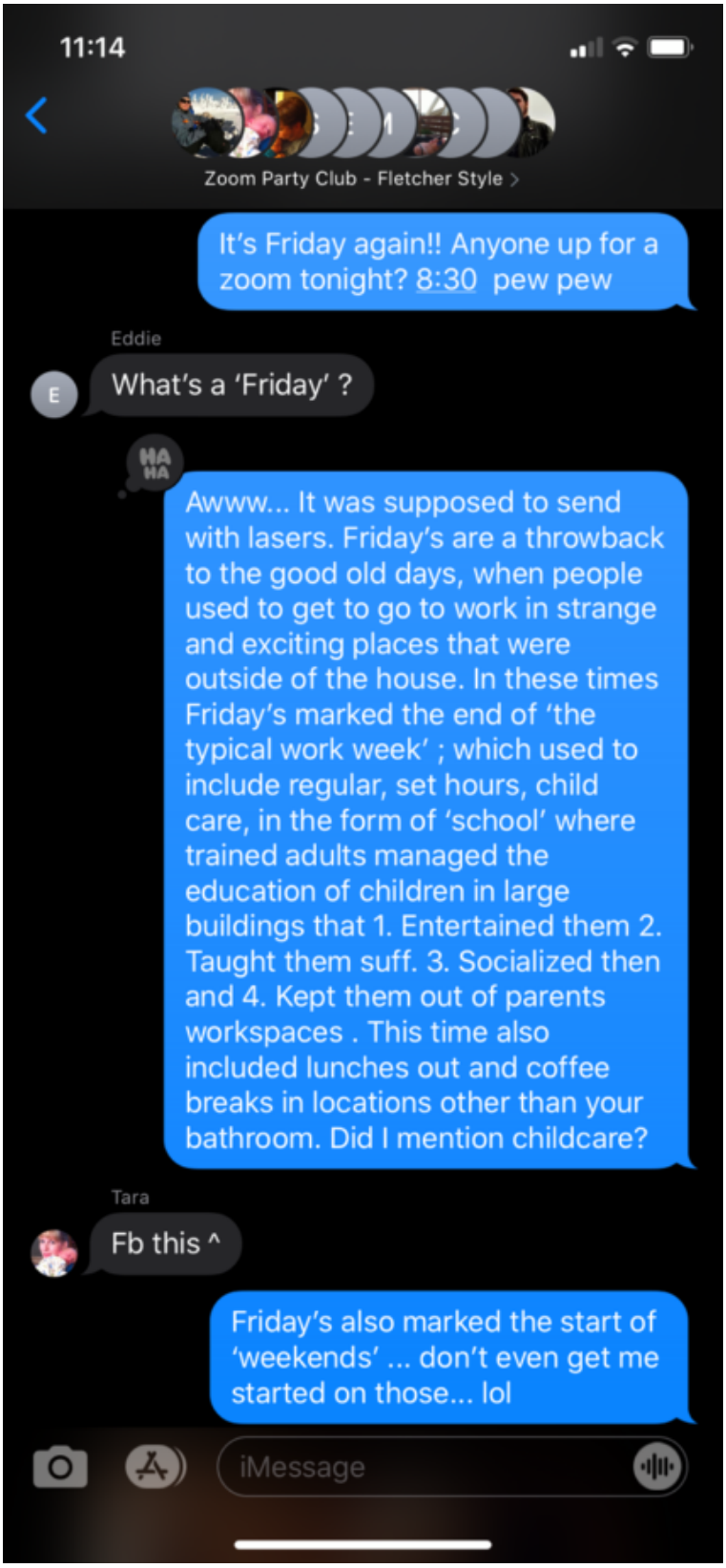
Sarah Fletcher

'feels' different. The relaxing of the rules hasn't even officially happened yet. They are just talking about the eventual potential at this point.

The epidemic on top of the opioid crisis/syndemic is particularly challenging. In Victoria, it is amazing to me that as of yet, we have no cases of COVID in the inner-city community. I know this is not the case in the DTES in Vancouver. Two residents of topaz park died on Wednesday as a result of overdose.

With the ISU we have just finished a successful round of interviews for a couple more coordinator positions. And I think we are going to hire 4 additional staff. We also have 3 Med students joining our team for their FLEX projects and 2 coop students, as well as (potentially) an additional analyst. This is exciting but is also going to be a massive change.

Sarah Fletcher



"The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted."
https://boasblogs.org/curarecoronadiaries/the-privilege-of-a-yard/

Our weekly Friday night party zoom calls continue. I've realized ever more that I am an extrovert and a social connector and that zoom doesn't *really do that, but something is better than nothing... Photo by the author.

2/3 May

One thing I am really enjoying about our new normal is our weekend hikes. The kids and my partner do this most days, they have their 'coronavirus adventures' sheet where they are slowly working through the alphabet of adventures. I don't get to do these except for on the weekend. Golf courses have re-opened (which makes me irrationally angry and if I'm honest, jealous, as now my partner has a social outlet – that takes hours LOL). On Saturday morning he went golfing for a friend's birthday, (no cart sharing, no food and beverage but still golfing). The kids and I went on an adventure and found some brand new covid-inspired graffiti art in the middle of the forest.

Saturday afternoon we went to hang out in the backyard of close friends of ours, for the first time in the last 6 weeks. The kids were so excited, and cautious. Playing together without touching and I noticed my son in particular backing away 'too close!' whenever the kids got within 2 meters of each other. But they were OVER THE MOON excited. And it was so lovely to see other people. It poured briefly, but they had some tents up in the backyard so it felt very much like westcoast camping (Even had a propane powered firepit in the middle). We are discussing combining our households when it is announced that it is ok to do that. (It's hard because I know there are at least 4 families that would like to do this and feels kind of like picking teams in highschool – we jokingly discussed becoming sister wives).

Sarah Fletcher



“The privilege of a yard is something that I will no longer take for granted.”
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Covid-themed graffiti art in the middle of the forest. Wash yo hands. Photo by the author.

4 May

Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 2,224

New cases since May 2: 53

• Hospitalized cases: 77

• Intensive care: 26

• Deaths: 117

• Recovered: 1,417

• Long-term care and assisted-living homes currently affected: 23

• Canadian cases: 60720 confirmed

Sarah Fletcher



My Kids are incredibly excited that it is Star Wars day. Over the course of the pandemic we have watched all the Star Wars movies (with fast forwarding through the extra scary bits) and we are working our way through the Mandalorian. My 3 year-old in particular runs around the house channelling a very strong and serious Rey for hours on end. In her daily virtual circle times she talks very quickly and only about Star Wars, inserting herself as Rey into the stories as she tries (unsuccessfully)

to catch her classmates up to her latest adventure in the 2 minutes she has to 'share' with the circle and be unmuted in zoom. I think her teachers may think we are crazy. Photo by the author.

6 May

Today was a hard day. The weight of the unknowns and everything really got to me and near the end of the day my partner told me that a good friend of a friend of ours, who we had spent time with at a wedding in the UK, passed away, and I assumed it was from covid 19. This was a 36 year old male. Not what I thought would be the demographic of the first direct contact I know who has died from COVID 19, and it hit me much harder than I anticipated it would. I later found out that he actually died of bowel cancer, which somehow heightened the whole uncertainly around COVID diagnosis, outcomes and timeline for me. The perpetual uncertainty is getting to me. Change is good, and I thrive in contexts of rapid change, at least work wise, but I do like to have a plan and this all seems so hard right now.

Case summary:

• Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 2,255

• New cases since May 5, 2020: 23

• Hospitalized cases: 74

• Intensive care: 19

• COVID-19 related deaths: 121

• Recovered: 1,494

• Long-term care and assisted-living homes currently affected: 17

Today is the day BC is announcing their re-start plan. From the outset, BC's focus has been slowing the rate of transmission and it seems as though we have done a better job than most of making this work. Particularly when you consider that BC did this all with minimal regulation – no stay at home or shelter in place orders. Just recommendations, clear guidance paired with a number of protective measures. I am listing them here (from gov.bc.ca)

Protective measures B.C. has taken have included:

• Providing physical distancing and hygiene guidelines for people, businesses and essential services to follow

• Banning mass gathering of more than 50 people to reduce the risk of outbreaks

• Closing bars, dine-in service at restaurants, and personal service operators, like barbers and dentists, to reduce the risk of transmission

• Reducing in-classroom learning and child care

• Requiring travellers to develop and stick to a 14-day isolation plan when arriving in B.C. from abroad

• Restricting visitors to health care and assisted living facilities to protect some of our most vulnerable people

• Postponing non-urgent and elective surgeries while maintaining urgent and emergency procedures

Modeling suggested a return to pre-covid normal at this point would have disastrous effects but that increasing contacts to about 60% of pre covid contact would maintain a flat transmission rate. (Similar to the Double your Bubble statement that

the PM of New Zealand made yesterday I think). So BC is encouraging Staying home if sick, getting together in small groups of 2-6 , and continuing to minimize intensity of contact. BC never had a total shut down, essential services remained open. From mid may (phase 2) we will be – rescheduling elective surgeries, re opening dentistry, physio, Chiro, etc., reopening of retail sector for curbside pickup only (I think), hair salons, in person counselling, restaurants, cafes, pubs (with sufficient distancing), museum, art galleries, libraries, office based workspaces, recreation and sports, parks, beaches and outdoor spaces and child care.

Phase 3 (June to Sept) under enhanced protocols : Hotels and resorts , parks (including camping), film industry, select entertainment (sticking to the no gatherings of over 50), post secondary education with a mix of online and in class (ALTHOUGH I know Royal Roads University has announced only online courses for the Fall term and I have heard that the larger universities are considering the same), k-12 education- with only a partial return this school year (September 2020)

Phase 4 is TBD and includes live audience professional sports, conventions, concerts and international tourism.

They are saying that summer camps will open but we will see. It's hard to align the idea of 'okay you can now think carefully and see 6 people' with send your kid to camp.

We have decided that we are doubling our bubble by including our close friends and their 2 kids (5 and 2) in our 'bubble'. I'm really unsure how to proceed though. I know in theory we can now start seeing more people, outside and at a distance, and if golf is now ok I feel like I should be fine to do this but the feelings of guilt/surveillance/ wanting to adhere to recommendations are ever-present. We had dinner tonight (takeout, everyone eating from separate boxes lol) and spaced out but together and inside, which felt very strange and a bit too soon really. But our friends' grandma passed away today along with one of his good friends (who I mentioned earlier) so it

felt important and I think we all really needed to see other people. Thinking about what works in terms of support and mental health is also going to be important as we move forward.

8 May

New numbers show that BC lost 396,500 jobs in the months of March and April due to shutdowns caused by the pandemic.

• Yesterday there were 33 more cases and 2 more deaths

• Announcement that catching up on the backlog from cancellation of elective surgeries could take 2 years and cost 250 million

11/12 May, Mother's Day Weekend

The weather was amazing this weekend. We are not yet at phase 2 (next weekend) but it seems like many people were out, socially distance hanging out. My kids gave me a hilarious series of coffee mugs (Mommy's before coffee coffee and mommy's after coffee coffee) that somehow speak to the insanity of trying to balance everything and work from home right now. On Sunday I met my mother and best friend and her mother for a socially distanced walk (every mother's day the 4 of us get together and have been doing so since before my friend and I had children ourselves). These outings have shifted – we used to go on little trips to Seattle, Vancouver, or elsewhere and eat/drink/shop. Then we had a good 6 year period in which the two of us in the younger generation had 4 children, so our 'without children' outings with our moms became more meaningful. It was wonderful to see them both today and although we were doing everything 'properly' re social

distancing, being outside the 'guilt' feelings/ sense of breaking-the-rules I had, surprised me. It was so nice to see them though.

My kids also gave me a fitbit (and I've got to say the weird combination of bodily surveillance and wearable biofeedback seems to be working for me – I'm motivated to drink water and move more than before which is great … also I am shockingly sedentary with the working upstairs from home and now go for hours without moving unless I intentionally make time for it- something that is definitely a shift from pre-pandemic working environment).

Sarah Fletcher



First Pandemic mother's day. The extra large 'mommy's before coffee, coffee' mug (complete with angry children faces that my kids think is extra hilarious now that they see me working and drinking lots of coffee ALL the time. Photo by the author.

21 May

Sarah Fletcher

And just like that I fell off the fieldnote wagon. I was getting behind and the stress of feeling like I needed to catch up became one thing I just couldn't do. I'm not going to try to catch up. I'm just going to skip over last week, in horrible ethnographic field note practice!

We have now had 14 days of no new cases in our health region-at the provincial level this has been more variable but still trending down. Now the real longitudinal nature of the interventions/ physical distancing etc. is becoming evident. And I'm struggling to deal with it I think. The thing is, it isn't surprising. I've been talking about a 3-year timeline since the start, but now the novelty, if you can call it that, has completely worn off and the challenges of negotiating household bubbles – who is in who is out what is safe- is becoming part of our every day. I think this is even trickier when the actual 'risk' appears lower- like it does here right now, when we have only 1 active case in the whole region. I'm starting to feel like we are 'bubble whores' LOL. (To clarify, Bonnie Henry has mentioned the idea of doubling your bubble, that hanging out with small groups of people outside is ok but still being conscious of your bubble).

Realistically the 'see people outside' thing has proven particularly hard with kids. What if they have to pee or want to play inside? So our Bubble now includes my parents my partners parents (with less contact) plus we have given in and let one of my sons friends (who has a new 6 week old baby brother) come play; and we decided earlier we would extend our bubble to include another family of four, but now we have also seen two other families and their kids (again not prolonged contact but we have gone indoors). There are no essential workers in this whole group, everyone is working from home, and our combined contacts are low BUT I worry that it's too much. AND it's hard to say it's a problem when it feels like we have little to no risk here… AND I know that public health interventions only work if EVERYONE tows the line. AND they are now giving people the option of sending kids to school June 1st so if kids can safely attend school surely we should be safe in connecting with the

people we are seeing (to be fair we are an incredibly social family... well, I spearhead it I guess!) so this is still way less than 60% of our normal social circle (which is the other guideline we have been hearing about) .

Schools are set to re-open – with school looking different and only being part time on June 2nd. My son's school has sent out 4 emails and surveys today alone. I think it would be easier if they just stayed closed but also know how important it is for them to open for childcare options for working parents.

22 May

Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 2,507 (310 active cases)

• New cases since May 21, 2020: 18

• Hospitalized cases: 41

• Intensive care: 8

• COVID-19 related deaths: 155

• Recovered: 2,042

• Long-term care and assisted-living homes currently affected: 14

• Acute care facilities currently affected: 2

By midnight tonight we have to respond to a survey to let my daughter's school know if she will be returning or not on June 1- there's no maybe option (obviously, to support planning) but I am feeling really conflicted about it. We have had no new infection on the island for 14 days, and only have 1 active case. So the coronavirus

risk is almost 0. However, teachers will be wearing full visors, kids will be separated, hallways will look different, friends may not be there, and I am just not sure it's worth it, for the stress it will cause the kids- and she's only in preschool- and the fact that my partner is home and able to look after them.

From our surveying of parents, we know it seems like most are choosing to keep kids at home (again this speaks to the privileged position so much of our community are in) – not because of the COVID risk but because of the potential trauma to kids going back part time with a very different set up for such a short period of time.



New masks. If school re-opens are kids expected to wear these all day? Will they even be effective for younger children? The questions around the logistics and

decision-making around school re-opening are overwhelming. Photo by the author.

26 May

My son's school sent out a video of what school would look like – one way hallways, emptier classes, adults accompanying to bathroom trips, no touching outside, line ups, 2m markers on floors. After watching it he decided he was ok not to go back, so I don't think we will send either kid. It is a lot of change for the last 3 weeks of school, and only 2 days a week. This week hair salons and some bars and restaurants are reopening. It's very hard to balance the bars reopening with the 'limited household/ social bubble' to me.

I'm struck again and again by how this whole thing is such a different experience for my friends without kids. One of my best friends is a realtor and has spent a lot of time developing and re-developing her policies for how she is working, and how she is interacting with clients. Since she is interacting with clients / outside household more than others, she has completely isolated herself otherwise, aside from being in a bubble with her older parents .Because of this she's not comfortable hanging out at other people's homes even though it's allowed. I am really struggling with not being angry about it. Which is irrational. I completely understand that everyone has different thresholds of risk. Our health region currently has 1 active case and has had an incidence of 0 for 18 days."

Bars are open, salons are open, malls are open, and I know part of the reason we have done so well with flattening the curve is that people have been isolating themselves very effectively. I also anticipate our incidence in likely to go up in the next few weeks... But it's much harder to continue with social distancing when the immediate threat is gone and you are in this liminal space of minimal risk yet the continuation of strict public health measures (and of course, these are completely

necessary, I am just finding navigating the space challenging- and if I am finding it challenging I am sure others are as well.)

2 June

As of the latest numbers on June 2:

• Total confirmed cases in B.C.: 2,601 (225 active cases)

• New cases since May 30, 2020: 4

• Hospitalized cases: 31

• Intensive care: 8

• COVID-19 related deaths: 165

• Recovered: 2,229

• Long-term care and assisted-living homes currently affected: 8

• Vancouver Island: 0

Over the last couple weeks everything has shifted. While our coronavirus incidence continues to trend downwards (at least here in BC) and has remained at 0 on Vancouver Island now for over 3 weeks, the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officers, on top of decades of oppression and structural violence has contributed to mass unrest in the US and Canada. While white Canadians like to think that 'we are not the US' the same systemic racism persists in this country, upheld by the fact that so many people who would consider themselves as 'allies'/ non-racist, remain silent and leave the majority of the work of anti-racism to people of colour. I count myself in this group and am going to have to work to do better.

Sarah Fletcher

On Sunday night I was talking with my son (6) and I asked him if he understood what was happening in the states and why. We have previously talked a lot about colonization, First Nations people and residential schools and the impacts of intergenerational trauma on First Nations in Canada, but we had never really spoken about race and racism. I realize this is because of our privileged white positionality, but it was harder than I anticipated, and important. My son listened- about George Floyd, the riots in the US and to my perspective on what was happening. He then asked if this was also why the girl fell off the balcony. On May 27th Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a black woman in Toronto, fell from her balcony after an 'altercation' with police. My son's question took me by surprise, and I realized I had been framing everything in the context of what was happening in the US, staying away from the reality that racism and challenges with the police are also prevalent here in Canada. I need to do better, and am now committing to building anti-racism into my work and parenting.

I really do feel like now the focus has shifted. CoronaVirus is still the backdrop to all this but where we are in the world it has taken a back seat to the discussions of structural violence, institutionalized racism, white privilege and police brutality that need to become the focus. It's time to get uncomfortable and figure out how to best engage in this work. Here the first wave of the pandemic is over. I'm sure there is more to come, but it feels like a good time to end this phase of documenting experience.