

Media Release

FIREFLY – 17 March 2020 – FIREFLY Expands Service Delivery Options to Continue to Offer Services during COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, all FIREFLY offices are closed to the public effective immediately. FIREFLY will not be offering face-to-face service to clients for a minimum of 3 weeks. However, FIREFLY is expanding its service delivery options to continue to offer services to clients while our communities practice social distancing to limit the spread of COVID-19.

“FIREFLY is still delivering services to our clients; we are just doing it a little differently,” said Karen Ingebrigtsen, FIREFLY CEO. “We will be offering children, youth and families the option to participate in services by telephone or online. Over the next days, our clinicians will be reaching out to our clients with upcoming appointments to discuss the options that are available during this time.”

FIREFLY also continues to operate the Centralized Intake line for children, youth and families who are looking to start to receive services.

“For our Child and Youth Mental Health programs, we recognize that these times of uncertainty are when children, youth and families will need our services the most. We also know that for our Child and Youth Development Services, consistent, structured, uninterrupted services will have the greatest benefits for the families we serve to continue to build on their strengths. For this reason, we have really broadened how we are delivering services to ensure that children, youth and families in our communities are well supported while also ensuring the safety of our staff and that FIREFLY is doing its part to follow recommendations from Public Health to limit the spread of COVID-19,” shared Karen Ingebrigtsen, FIREFLY CEO.

FIREFLY recognizes that the COVID-19 virus could be causing anxiety and stress for children, youth and families in our communities and they offered the following advice:

Begin with informing yourself. You can find up to date information about the symptoms, prevalence and current recommendations from your local public health unit or the Ontario Public Health (<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/>). The World Health Organization and Government of Canada are also providing large scale updates. Remember, choosing responsible sources for your information demonstrates to your child how to make good choices around media and information gathering.

Focus on the details that are most relevant and/or things that you and your child can control. Limit conversations with/around them about things they can not control or help with (i.e.- lost wages for parents, a family friend who has travelled, a classmate that may have been exposed, etc.).

Limit routine changes where possible Routine allows for predictability, which can be supportive for those with anxiety disorders. When routines can not be kept up (school closures, activity cancellations, etc) then contemplate what structure you can provide. Consider supporting your child with an individual routine including such activities as learning opportunities, self-care activities, and physical activity. Be sure to add in something that helps to bring your child joy each day.



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Share information in as concrete a way as possible. *Speak to them about the ways you and the other adults around them are helping to keep them safe!* Review good hygiene practices and, if appropriate, make fun games out of these habits. If they wish to discuss case numbers, statistics they have heard, economic impact, political fallout, etc., help them to be sure they have a reliable source.

Take time to validate their concerns with your words and your attention.

Correct misinformation Help your child/teen to have the facts to work with. Ask them what they know about Coronavirus and what they have ‘heard’ (from friends, media, family members, etc.). Spend some time helping them to talk through this and encourage them to approach you with any other questions they have rather than going to the internet, the media or friends. *BE HONEST! And answer in a way that accounts for the child’s age.* Worry will not help them but being confidently prepared and “armed” with correct, timely information may. It is best to avoid statements like, “Don’t worry” or “It will all be alright” you can assure them that you and other adults around them are doing everything they can to help keep them and the people they love safe and healthy.

If you have general questions, questions about closures, or questions regarding FIREFLY EarlyON or Childcare, please contact us at 1-800-465-7203.

Our intake line remains open. For referrals or to connect with a service, please contact our FIREFLY Centralize Intake line at 1-833-696-5437.

If you are experiencing a crisis or emergency, please call Kenora-Rainy River District Crisis Response at 1-866-888-8988 or attend your local emergency department.

Follow FIREFLY on social media for the most up-to-date information.

Contact:

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