

THE 2020 HOLIDAY SEASON

This year, the holiday season might look a little different than we are used to. However, no matter how different the holiday season looks, it is still important to keep our health and wellness in mind. Visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/healthy-holiday-tips for information on our healthy holiday tips.

While we are all at home during the 2020 holiday season, don't worry, because there is still quite a bit of holiday fun to be had! Visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/at-home-holiday-fun for information on holiday activities that can either be done at home or virtually.



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BCES BC Epilepsy Society

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020

Improving Lives. Inspiring Courage.

INSIDE:

Year-End Letter,
The 2020 Holiday
Season
... AND MORE!

A SPECIAL 2020 YEAR-END LETTER FROM KIM DAVIDSON

Dearest BCES Friends and Families,

As the end of the year approaches, I wanted to share an important message of hope with all of you. We know that COVID-19 is one of the most critical challenges, that crosses all domains of the human experience in recent history.

Early on, in March 2020, we endeavored to dedicate ourselves to rethinking not only the way we work, but also how to pivot, and re-focus our limited resources to mitigate the impact and devastation that COVID-19 has had on the lives of people living with epilepsy in BC. We swiftly moved all of the in-person support groups to an online format and increased the frequency of groups; from March 2020 to June 2020, we delivered weekly online support groups. As the province opened up, your need for weekly groups (drop in attendance) was no longer necessary, and from June 2020 onwards, we have continued to run monthly online support groups.

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The 2020 Holiday Season

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If you would like to host a virtual holiday party this year, visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/virtual-options-for-the-holiday-season for information on the options available to you for a virtual hangout, including Zoom, Skype and many more.

Also, if you are hosting or attending a virtual holiday party this year and are looking for things to do during the party, visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/options-for-online-games-during-the-holiday-season for information on options for online games that can be played either using a computer/laptop or Smartphone device.

We hope everyone has an enjoyable and safe holiday season this year.

Happy Holidays!



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The provincial support groups that we offer include Online Peer Support, Family Peer Support, Young Adults Peer Support, BC Epilepsy Parents Network (BCEPN) and two sessions of Epilepsy Friends Forever (EFF). Please visit our website for more information on our online support groups. bcepilepsy.com

2020 was an epic year of legacy building initiatives, health promotion, and advocacy for the epilepsy community in BC

In February 2020, we started a petition on Change advocating for the BC Provincial Government to put an end to the epilepsy crisis in BC. This petition can be found at www.change.org/p/british-columbia-provincial-government-end-the-epilepsy-crisis-in-british-columbia and has now been signed by over 3,000 people who are all advocating for significant changes to the adult epilepsy system in BC.

In September 2020, we created the **Your Voice Matters: Adult Epilepsy System Report Card** survey to give people living with and affected by epilepsy in BC the chance to share their experiences with the adult epilepsy system and assign a report card grade. Through your participation, you graded the adult epilepsy system in BC with an overwhelming F. The results from this survey and the failures of the adult epilepsy system in BC can be found at bcepilepsy.com/files/BC_ADULT_EPILEPSY_CONSUMER_REPORT_CARD_2020.pdf. *continued on page 3*



The purpose of our Epilepsy and the COVID-19 Pandemic in British Columbia survey was to determine the effects that the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic has had on people living with and affected by epilepsy in BC, including on their daily life, seizures, seizure frequency and more. Check out our report on

the results from this survey bcepilepsy.com/files/Epilepsy_and_the_COVID-19_Pandemic_in_British_Columbia_Survey_Results.pdf.

The purpose of our Your Voice Matters: Adult Epilepsy System Report Card survey was to give people living with and affected by epilepsy in BC the chance to have a voice to share their experiences with the adult epilepsy system in BC and assign a report card grade to BC's adult epilepsy system. Check out our report on the results from this survey here bcepilepsy.com/files/BC_ADULT_EPILEPSY_CONSUMER_REPORT_CARD_2020.pdf ❄️



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As you are aware, the **What If ... Documentary Series™** was born out of necessity to highlight the lack of action and leadership from the BC Provincial Government. It includes over a dozen unsuccessful attempts to meet with government over a period of 26 months. During this time, the adult epilepsy crisis in BC worsened. Due to the government's inaction, British Columbian's continued to die (by SUDEP and suicide), go homeless, and seize without any medical interventions as they continued to wait years for the treatment and care that they so desperately needed. Our **What If ... Documentary Series™** is an unprecedented social justice initiative for our advocacy for change. The episodes are an honest and fearless recount of what people living with and affected by epilepsy in BC are going through while navigating an under-funded and under-resourced system. In October (during the BC provincial election) and November 2020, four episodes of the **What If ... Documentary Series™** were released, including episode 1: **FAILURE: The Black Mark on Canadian Health Care**, which now has over 52,000 views; episode 2: **PRISONER OF PURGATORY: The Jared Ricks Story**, which now has over 43,000 views; episode 3: **UNASHAMED AND UNAFRAID: The Allison Hegedus Story**, which now has over 15,000 views; and episode 4: **JESUS LOVES ME: The Mackenzie MacWilliams Story**, which now has

**WE ARE
FEARLESS,
WE ARE
ONE
VOICE
&
WE WILL
GET
THERE!**

over 14,000 views. All episodes can be viewed on our BC Epilepsy Society YouTube channel.

2020 was also the year that we increased our provincial reach to the public through our social media accounts and media projects. Although our media productions have slowed due to COVID-19, we look forward to growing our media productions in 2021 to build an even stronger legacy.

In 2020, BCES created and produced four new brands within our revolutionary media production framework. I am proud to highlight our compelling media works that entertain, inform, and inspire. See side bar.

You have – and always will have – our continued commitment to use every avenue available to raise awareness, educate and advocate for more provincial and federal funding to address

the deficiencies in British Columbia for therapeutics, medications, in province brain surgeries, medical staffing, system navigators, equitable disability benefits and much more. Look at the success that we managed to have during this pandemic. I can only imagine the momentum and success we will build from this point forward into 2021. We are fearless, we are one voice & we will get there! I wish everyone health, wellness, and peace this December.

**Warm regards,
Kim Davidson**

CEO & Executive Director, BC Epilepsy Society Founder, I AM A VOICE for Epilepsy Awareness™ campaign, Creator and Producer,

What If ... Documentary Series™
bcepilepsysociety channel / BC Epilepsy Society

Epilepsy Expert Webinar Series – Neurologists, Epileptologists and other professionals in the field of epilepsy present their medical expertise through topic-focused webinar presentations.

Voice Epilepsy™ Podcast
Podcast episodes that present information on a variety of topics related to epilepsy, advocacy, therapeutics, law, employment, surgery, mental health, stress and stigma, among many others.

E-News™ Broadcasts – Video broadcasts of epilepsy news updates, covering epilepsy-related inter-national news stories from Google Alerts.

What If ... Documentary Series™ – Documentary episodes expose the failings of the current infrastructure of the adult epilepsy system in BC through telling stories of people living with; dying from; and affected by epilepsy in BC. The Documentary sounds the alarm on the disparity between BC and all other provinces in Canada - adult epilepsy in BC is the black mark on Canadian healthcare. The Epileptologists & Neurologists (aka. our Heroes) are sadly trapped in a grossly under-resourced, under-funded adult epilepsy program that lacks provincial over-sight or government leadership to fix the problem. There is a successful template that has already been established and implemented in Ontario (Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Epilepsy) across the life span. The guidelines can be viewed at ontarioepilepsyguidelines.ca.



December 2020

COMMUNITY UPDATE

BC RECOVERY BENEFIT AND BC RECOVERY SUPPLEMENT

Dear Community Partner,

DABC followed up with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction last week on a few questions related to the BC Recovery Benefit, a provincial benefit that will provide a one-time payment of \$500 to eligible individuals and \$1000 to eligible families. We have clarified the following:

◆ Everyone, regardless of whether you are or not on provincial income or disability assistance, will need to apply separately to receive the BC Recovery Benefit. The application process will open online on December 18th, with telephone support available starting December 21st. Here is the website with all the detailed information on it: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit.

◆ Ministry clients who receive the BC Recovery Benefit will be able to keep it in addition to any income and disability amounts for which they are eligible.

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E-NEWS™ BROADCASTS



Our E-NEWS™ broadcasts provide information on news and stories related to epilepsy from British Columbia, Canada, the United States and around the world.

Check out videos of our E-NEWS™ broadcasts.

Watch our broadcast from Friday October 30th
www.facebook.com/BCEpilepsySociety/posts/3501838499932645

Watch our broadcast from Friday November 6th
www.facebook.com/BCEpilepsySociety/posts/3521011858015309

Watch our broadcast from Friday November 13th
www.facebook.com/BCEpilepsySociety/posts/3540338202749341

Watch our broadcast from Friday November 20th
www.facebook.com/BCEpilepsySociety/posts/3560048564111638

Please note that due to the fact that we work within a small studio space, our productions have slowed down as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

We look forward to relaunching our productions, including our E-NEWS™ broadcasts in 2021 so stay tuned for that!



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH COURSERA

If you're looking for something to do while at home during the 2020 holiday season and if one of your New Year's Resolutions is that you want to learn something new and exciting, you can try doing a course through Coursera.

Coursera is an online education provider that offers individuals access to courses from some of the top universities and colleges in the world. One of the best things about Coursera is that anyone can take a course and you don't need a university or college degree to take one! Another one of the best things about Coursera is that some of their courses are completely free! Visit www.coursera.org and use the search to find free courses.

Here are just a few of the amazing courses that Coursera has to offer:

Positive Psychology: Resilience Skills.

Offered by the University of Pennsylvania - Beginner level. This course will teach you about resilience so that you can learn how to incorporate it into your own life.

www.coursera.org/learn/positive-psychology-resilience

Health Behaviour Change: From Evidence to Action.

Offered by Yale University - Beginner level. This course will teach you about the social and behavioral factors that contribute to health behaviors so that you can learn how to incorporate it into your own life.

www.coursera.org/learn/health-behavior-change

Brilliant, Passionate You

Offered by University of Michigan - Beginner level. This course helps you envision your "perfect day" through elements like finding your purpose, defining success, mental and physical health, the importance of community, and navigating risks and challenges

www.coursera.org/learn/brilliant-passionate-you

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◆ In addition to the above BC Recovery Benefit, there is a \$150 per adult per month BC Recovery Supplement for people receiving income assistance, hardship assistance, provincial disability assistance, or comforts payments. Also, some eligible Senior's Supplement recipients will receive the BC Recovery Supplement.

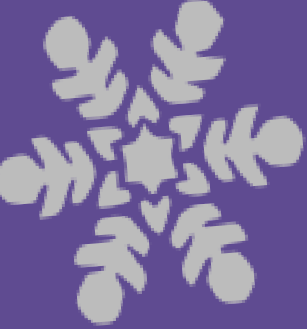
◆ People who are receiving federal benefits, including the Canada Recovery Benefits (CRB, CRSB, CRCB) or Employment Insurance (EI) will not receive this supplement.

◆ The BC Recovery Supplement will be automatically added to cheques issued January through March 2021 (February through April benefit months). There is no need to apply for it.

◆ It does indeed look like the \$300 monthly COVID-19 Crisis Supplement is being replaced with the above BC Recovery Supplement. The last payment date of the \$300. COVID-19 Crisis Supplement is December 16, 2020 (for January benefit month) and December 22, 2020 for seniors receiving the senior's supplement.

While DABC acknowledges and appreciates the BC Government's response to aiding our communities into economic recovery from COVID-19, we are saddened to see that this new BC Recovery Supplement in particular will ultimately result in a drop of COVID-19-related financial assistance (from \$300 a month to \$150 a month) for people on provincial income and disability assistance. DABC has been lobbying the BC Government to make permanent the \$300 COVID-19 crisis supplement for income assistance and disability assistance recipients, further indexed for inflation, because we know that current income and disability assistance rates are below the poverty line and therefore inadequate to meet basic needs. DABC will continue to advocate on this issue despite the drop in COVID-19 financial assistance, as we understand this affects people on income and disability assistance beyond our current COVID-19 situation. ❄️





Coursica

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Offered by
Yonsei University.
Beginner level

This course will teach you how to read and write in the Korean alphabet, communicate in Korean with simple expressions and learn basic knowledge of Korean culture.

www.coursera.org/learn/learn-korean

These are just some of the many outstanding learning opportunities offered through Coursera.

Visit www.coursera.org to learn more about Coursera and the learning opportunities they offer.



The What If ... Documentary Series™ was born out of necessity to highlight the lack of action from the BC Provincial Government and includes the Society's unsuccessful efforts to meet with government over a period of 26 months. Kim Davidson, the CEO & Executive Director of the BC Epilepsy Society and the Founder of the international I AM A VOICE for Epilepsy Awareness™ campaign is the Creator and Producer of the What If ... Documentary Series™. The adult epilepsy crisis in British Columbia is ongoing and patients continue to die while waiting years for the treatment and care they need.

Four episodes of the **What If ... Documentary Series™** have been released. Please see pg 7 for more information on the Episodes.



EPISODES

All of the Episodes can be viewed on www.youtube.com on the BC Epilepsy Society channel.

FAILURE

THE BLACK MARK ON
CANADIAN HEALTH CARE
SOUNDING THE ALARM
EXPOSING THE TRUTH
SAVING LIVES

EPISODE 1 | OCTOBER 6TH | 3 PM

The first episode of the What If ... Documentary Series™, **FAILURE: The Black Mark on Canadian Health Care**, now has over 52,000 views

PRISONER OF PURGATORY

THE JARED RICKS STORY
SOUNDING THE ALARM
EXPOSING THE TRUTH
SAVING LIVES

EPISODE 2 | OCTOBER 13TH | 3 PM

The second episode of the What If ... Documentary Series™, **PRISONER OF PURGATORY: The Jared Ricks Story**, now has over 43,000 views!

UNASHAMED AND UNAFRAID

THE ALLISON HEGEDUS STORY
SOUNDING THE ALARM
EXPOSING THE TRUTH
SAVING LIVES

EPISODE 3 | OCTOBER 21ST

Episode 3: **UNASHAMED AND UNAFRAID: The Allison Hegedus Story**, which now has over 15,000 views.

JESUS LOVES ME

THE MACKENZIE
MACWILLIAMS STORY

SOUNDING THE ALARM
EXPOSING THE TRUTH
SAVING LIVES

EPISODE 4 | NOVEMBER 24TH

The fourth episode of the What If ... Documentary Series™, **JESUS LOVES ME: The Mackenzie MacWilliams Story**, now has over 14,000 views.



EPILEPSY AND MEMORY

People living with epilepsy may face issues with memory as a result of their epilepsy, their seizures, their medication, or a combination of all three.

If you face issues with your memory, know that you are not alone and there are many ways that you can face any memory problems and improve your memory. Please visit here bcepilepsy.com/blog/memory-tips-for-people-living-with-epilepsy to find out more about some of our memory tips for people living with epilepsy.

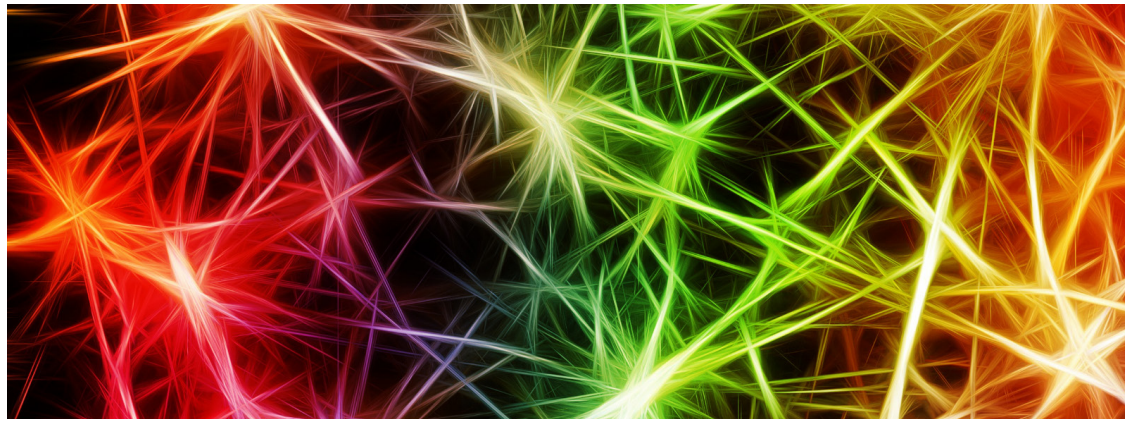
MEN AND EPILEPSY

If you are a man living with epilepsy, it can sometimes feel like your epilepsy overtakes your entire life. However, the more you learn about your condition and learn how to actively cope with it, the less that your epilepsy will be a concern for you.

Please visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/men-and-epilepsy for more information on some of the unique challenges men living with epilepsy may face and how to combat them.



SEIZURE TRIGGERS



A trigger is something that could potentially induce a seizure in someone with epilepsy.

Because epilepsy affects everyone that has it in different ways, what triggers a seizure in one person with epilepsy may not trigger a seizure in another person with epilepsy and some people may experience no triggers for their seizures.

If you are a person with epilepsy who has known triggers for your seizures, it is important to make note of what that trigger is and try your hardest to avoid it.

Some of the most common seizure triggers include:

- * Missed Medication
- * Lack of Sleep
- * Flashing Lights
- * Stress
- * Illness or Fever
- * Hormonal Changes
- * Drug Interactions
- * Alcohol and/or Drug Use
- * Hyperventilation
- * Dehydration
- * Overheating
- * Low Blood Sugar Levels

Please visit bcepilepsy.com/blog/what-trigger-a-seizure-in-someone-with-epilepsy for more information on seizure triggers. ❄️

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