Twitter Thread by Ottawa Public Health



Ottawa Public Health
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SEX, DRUGS & SANTA CLAUS

It's Friday, March 278th, 2020, and this is the longest thread we've ever written. Let that sink in.

So, we need to talk about how we're going to spend our holidays. Before we get into it, let's pause to appreciate being able to have this talk. (1/13)

We should be proud of our efforts that got us here. But we must stay the course. The winds can quickly change if we let our guard down.

We'll still celebrate the holidays...no one is taking that away from us. It'll just be different than normal. So let's chat about that. (2/13)

You've likely heard the term 'harm reduction' before. It's a pillar of public health based on reducing harms while still respecting autonomy. Evidence shows that just telling people to avoid certain things can be futile, so this approach guides you on being safer about it. (3/13)

Yes, when things are really bad, stronger methods are needed (i.e. lockdowns), but we're not there now.

So, why not say DO NOT GATHER WITH ANYONE & be done with it? Because experience tells us it doesn't work. Look at the ill-fated "Just Say No!" campaigns of the 80s-90s. (4/13)

Or go watch Reefer Madness. It's...it's a thing.

In our approaches to sexual health or substance use, our goal isn't to simply tell you not to do something and then call it a day. It's to provide you with the best information available so that you can make safer choices. (5/13)

This holiday season we're strongly advising that you only gather in person with members of your household. If you live alone, 1-2 close supports are ok.

We know some of you may choose to gather w/family from outside your household & some of you may travel. Don't do that.

(6/13)

But if you do, we can't stress enough how vital it is that you be as safe as possible. Wear masks at all times (preferably w/3 layers). Remain outdoors when possible.

And please consider those who may be at higher risk in your family and make good choices to protect them. (7/13)

We know some will say "It's not illegal b/c the current rules say indoor gatherings of 10 are allowed!"

Well, to be fair, the speed limit on the 417 is 100km/h, but that doesn't mean it's safe (or wise) to drive that fast in a blizzard. The actions we take must always be (8/13)

based on the current circumstances. And literally nothing about 2020 thus far gives the impression that this is the time to tempt fate.

Right now, it's not safe to gather with people who live outside of your household. But the holidays aren't cancelled, far from it! (9/13)

There are many ways to have a safer holiday. Need tips? https://t.co/WgtRPK8gMo

We know. This sucks. None of us want to be in this boat, but here we are. Speaking of boats, ever heard the phrase "steady as she goes"? It's an old nautical term, an order given to keep the (10/13)

ship moving in a stable manner, & it's that notion of "we know the seas are rough, so complete stability is not realistic" that speaks to us.

It's nautical harm reduction: knowing that a perfectly stable ship isn't possible during rough times. But stability is important, (11/13)

so let's keep it as steady as we can. You already know how to do that. Our hearts were warmed by the wise ways you celebrated Halloween, Thanksgiving & Diwali.

We know you can find ways to be creative again in order to celebrate as safely as our circumstances allow. (12/13)

December may be the hardest challenge we've faced yet. It's all hands on deck. We all wanted normal holidays with gifts & gatherings.

Well, our gifts to each other will be our actions. Because lockdowns are worse than coal.

Stay the course, Ottawa. #SteadyAsSheGoes.

-OPH out.