Nurse's Notes _{Vol. 6}

by Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN

We have certainly come a long way since we first started social distancing. This week, we will take an in-depth look at what the plan is to re-open our state.   It is imperative for all of us to know exactly the steps we must take to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe. The following plan was presented by the Governor this past week in an effort to convey clear guidelines for reopening our state.

Phase I: Testing the Water

This is the time when we can increase our social contacts to ten people. This will be so exciting for so many of us, but let's be conscious of social distancing. We must continue to be vigilant about hand washing, wearing masks when in public, and continue to thoroughly clean surfaces that are touched often. Social distancing of six feet is imperative. For those over 65 years of age, or with compromised health, it is recommended that they go out only for work or to purchase groceries or medications. With this phase comes the reality of us all doing our part to help each other stay healthy.

Phase II: Navigating Our Way

When we enter this time, we can see some businesses reopening, some childcare businesses with strict guidelines, some restaurants and hair and nail salons. We can increase our social gatherings to fifteen people.   Many people will still work from home, we still need to wear cloth masks in public, practice distance of six feet, and be vigilant about hand washing and cleaning of surfaces. Vulnerable members of society - those over 65 and those with pre existing health conditions - will still be encouraged to stay home except for shopping for essential groceries and medications.

Phase III: Picking up Speed

In this phase, we can look forward to schools reopening with restrictions. We will be able to see more of our friends and family, but must still wear masks, and continue with hand washing, and social distancing. We will be limited to social gatherings of 50 people at this point. More people will be working from home. It will still be important to clean vigilantly, especially as our exposure to more people increases. Surfaces we touch where we work and live will need to be cleaned thoroughly and frequently with approved disinfectants.

How do we advance through the stages?

When our health experts feel that there has been a downward trend in cases OR in declining hospitalizations over a fourteen day period, then we will move through one stage to the next. Testing will still be done on those with symptoms within 48 - 72 hours. Contact tracing is incredibly important as we move through these stages. The other guidelines to reach are listed in the Reopening RI model which can be seen below, or accessed on reopeningri.com.

Our goal is to keep ourselves safe, listen to our public health experts, and help our communities! This is our moment, our time to leave a legacy of confidence in facing monumental challenges - let's do so with grace and dignity.

If you would like more information on this or any related topic, feel free to email me at mhabershaw@iccatholicschool.org.
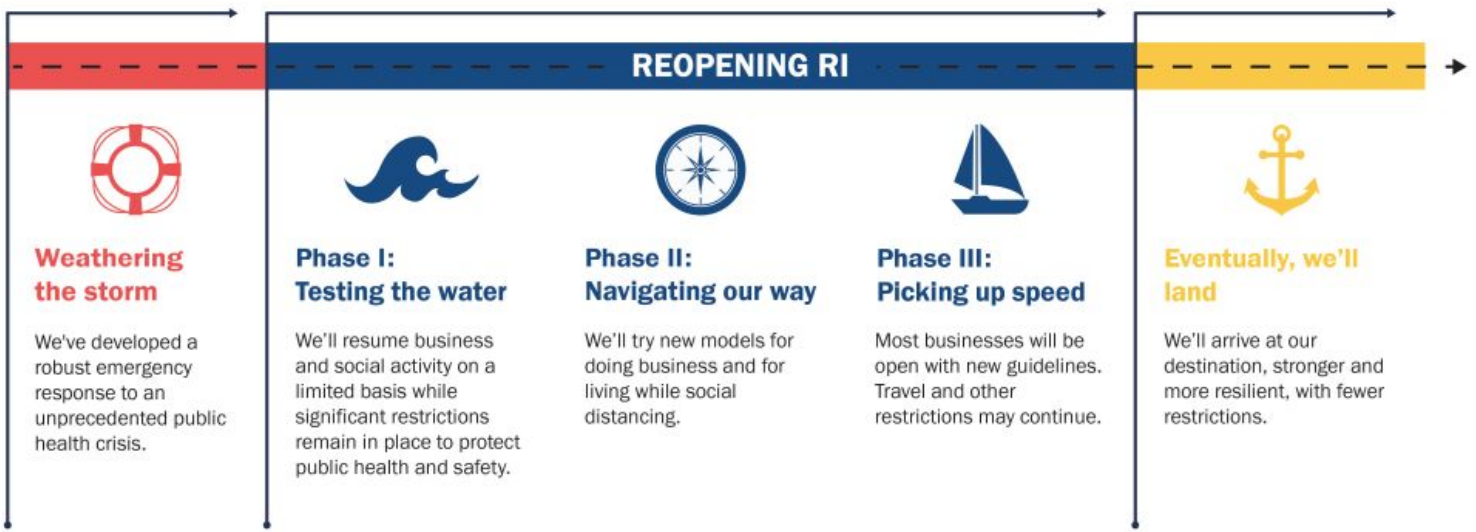
Take care!

Marie Angell Habershaw

THE PLAN

Our strategy to reopen the economy is a phased approach to maintain flexibility.

REOPENING RI

Weathering the storm

We've developed a robust emergency response to an unprecedented public health crisis.

Phase I: Testing the water

We'll resume business and social activity on a limited basis while significant restrictions remain in place to protect public health and safety.

Phase II: Navigating our way

We'll try new models for doing business and for living while social distancing.

Phase III: Picking up speed

Most businesses will be open with new guidelines. Travel and other restrictions may continue.

Eventually, we'll land

We'll arrive at our destination, stronger and more resilient, with fewer restrictions.

KEY INDICATORS

We'll begin reopening Rhode Island when we can answer "yes" to these questions.

01 Has the rate of spread continued to decrease?

02 Do we have the capacity to quickly identify community spread on an ongoing basis before a major outbreak occurs?

03 Do we have the necessary supports in place for vulnerable populations and for anyone in quarantine?

04 Does our healthcare system have the capacity and the PPE to handle future surges?

05 Do businesses, schools, childcare sites, faith organizations, and recreational spaces have plans for long-term social distancing?

06 Are we prepared to reimpose measures, or reclose certain sectors of the economy, if it becomes necessary?