

## **Mediating COVID-19 Safety in Indigenous Communities**

Mediator brings her skills to Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANCOUVER, MARCH 25, 2020

Unable to return to her home on the rural, central interior reservation of Stellaquo, mediator [Julie Daum](#) is instead using her time in self-isolation to help Mediate BC launch a low-fee [Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service](#).

Daum is a Wet'suwet'en woman who, like many others, was caught abroad when COVID-19 travel advisories began. While able to return to Vancouver, she knew she would have to self-isolate there rather than risk bringing illness to her family's home community. Fortunately, Daum was able to stay with her children in Vancouver; but she is keenly aware that many others do not have this option. They may also not have the option to return to their home communities as increasing numbers of indigenous communities seek to close their borders to protect against spread of the disease.

Daum notes that many indigenous communities face different and greater risks from COVID-19 due to isolation.

"Indigenous communities have barely survived the diseases that have arrived with colonialism. Smallpox, the flu epidemic in the early 1900's, tuberculosis and H1N1 have had devastating impacts on our populations. The government response to the H1N1 crisis has many communities launching their own emergency response plans, and as a result many First Nations have closed their communities to everyone that isn't a member or an essential worker."

Of course the closure of communities brings its own challenges, including social isolation of members who cannot return. Increased anxiety for people sharing small spaces can increase normally manageable conflict in ways that put strains on relationships.

As a mediator and Vice Chair of Mediate BC, Daum saw one small way that she could help. Daum has joined with members of Mediate BC's rosters to launch a low-cost [Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service](#) to serve people finding themselves in conflicts related to quarantine or isolation. Daum hopes that this service will help with those difficult conversations about individual needs and community interests that are coming up everywhere, but have particular poignancy for smaller communities.

ADDITIONAL QUOTE

“I’ve had to navigate conflicts regarding my return home to a rural reservation in the North that is discouraging folks from the city coming to the reserve, hoping to ensure the survival of our treasured Elders. Many First Nations are prohibiting visitors and I am worried that some of the urban First Nation members who will be out of work will want to flee to the villages for health and financial reasons.”~ Julie Daum, Vice Chair, Mediate BC

#### MEDIATE BC CONTACTS:

Julie Daum  
Vice Chair, Mediate BC and Child Protection Roster Mediator  
250-699-1178  
[jdaum@netbistro.com](mailto:jdaum@netbistro.com)

Amanda Semenoff\*  
Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service Manager  
[Amanda.Semenoff@mediatebc.com](mailto:Amanda.Semenoff@mediatebc.com)  
778-877-7748

\* Amanda is also an Auxiliary Fire Dispatcher with E-Comm911 and is unavailable for comment while on shift.

Sharon Sutherland  
Director of Strategic Innovation  
[Sharon.Sutherland@mediatebc.com](mailto:Sharon.Sutherland@mediatebc.com)  
604-218-7214 (Text responses will be quicker)

#### ATTACHED IMAGES:

1. Julie Daum (Photo: David Luggi)
2. Ruby Adams of Babine Lake Nation fishing at Donald’s Landing, Babine Lake. (Photo: David Luggi)
3. Jordana Luggi at smokehouse at Donald’s Landing, Babine Lake. (Photo: David Luggi)