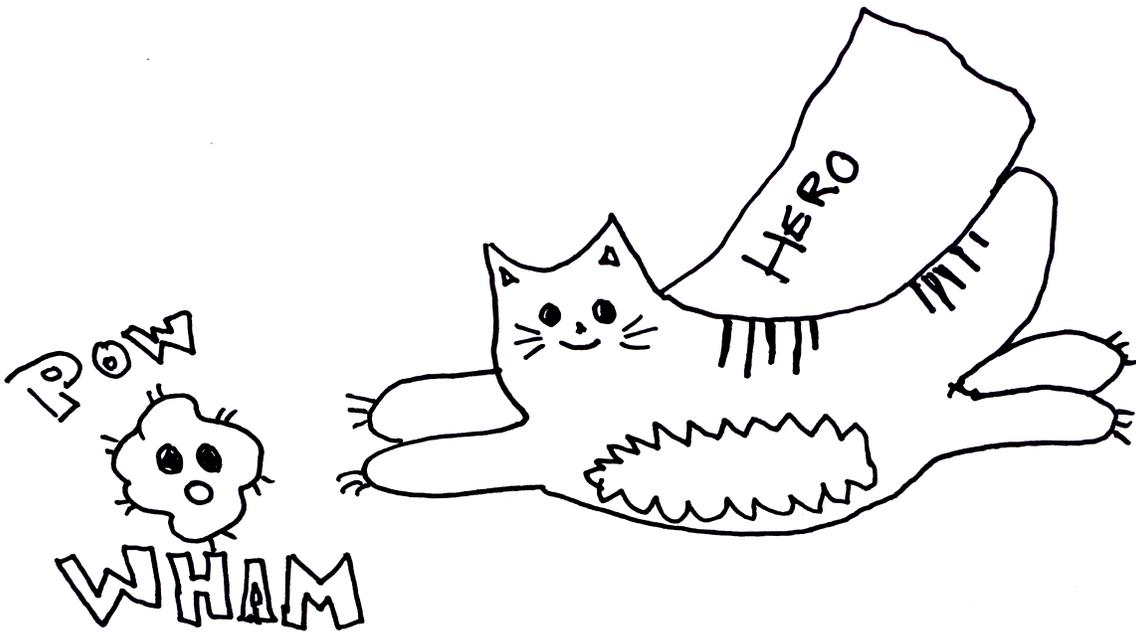


We are Heroes

A Plain Language Guide about
Covid-19
and some of the changes in our lives



Produced by Autistics for Autistics Ontario, an autistic-led organization

a4aontario.com



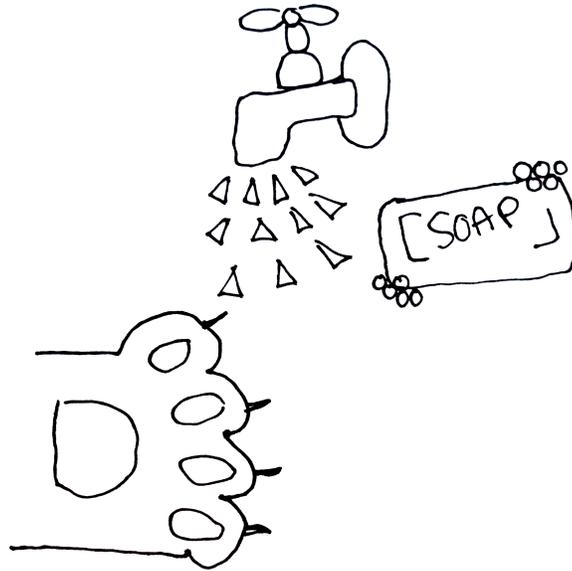
A lot of things have changed in the past couple weeks.

- There are a lot of new announcements.
- Many places are closed.
- People are staying home.
- Everyone is washing their hands a LOT more.

Why are these things happening? Why are we making all these changes?

Because we are being heroes. We are all saving people's lives, by protecting each other from the coronavirus, Covid-19.

These changes are not forever. It is just for now. Things will get back to normal again.



What is Covid-19?

You probably heard about the new coronavirus, or Covid-19. It is a germ that makes some people very sick.

Covid-19 goes into people in different ways—for example if someone coughs near them, or if they touch something that had the virus on it, then touch their eyes or mouth.

Covid-19 is spreading around the world right now. It is in Canada now.

The reason things are closing, and people are staying home, is because of Covid-19. People don't want to get sick or get other people sick.

We won't be staying home forever. It is just for now. The scientists can't say how long it will be yet. They want to find out too --and they will tell us as soon as they know.



Why are we staying home?

When we stay home, we stop Covid-19 from spreading.

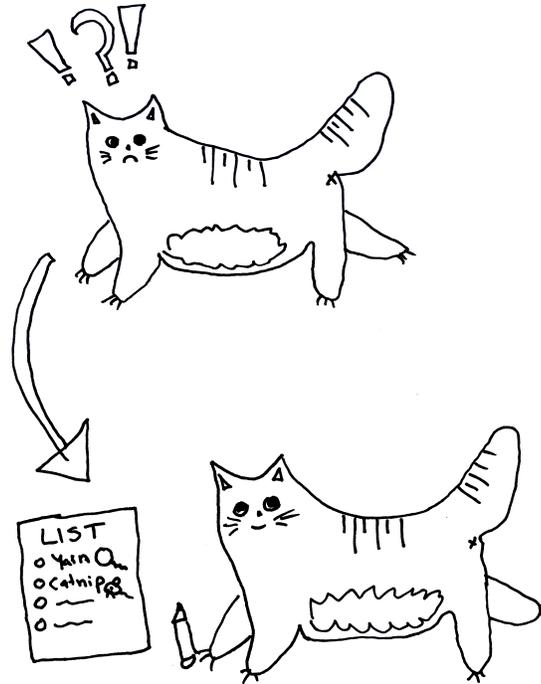
Scientists know how to stop Covid-19 from spreading. One way is by washing hands. Another way is by not shaking hands or high fiving. Another way is called "social distancing".

There are different kinds of social distancing:

- Sometimes it means not having big events, like hockey games and parades.
- Sometimes it means not having other things, like school or work.
- Sometimes it means staying home, away from people who are not your family ("sheltering in place").

With social distancing, less people will get sick--and the doctors will be able to help everyone who has to go to the hospital.

When you do social distancing, you are helping doctors, hospitals and all people who are in the hospital. You are helping our whole city to be healthier and safer.



Up and down feelings about staying home

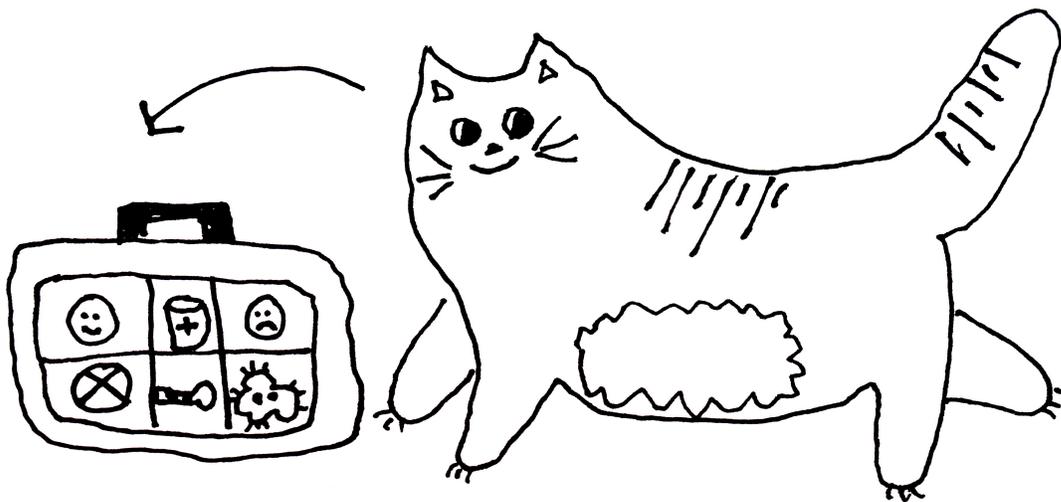
Staying home can be really hard, especially at the beginning, because it feels like nothing is the same.

It is normal to feel upset and confused. As days go by, we usually get more used to things being different.

Sometimes it's fun to be at home! What are some of the things you like to do when you're at home? Make a list of things you'd like to do while at home.

Sometimes there are bad mornings, or bad days. People will say confusing things about Covid-19. Sometimes they will talk calmly about it, and other times they will sound upset and angry.

What do you do when you get upset, to calm down? Make a list of what you like when you're upset, and a list of relaxing things you like to do to calm down. Have your parent or carer make the same list, for themselves.



AAC resources

There is a new speech board with words, ideas, images & videos about Covid-19. It works for people that use the CoughDrop platform. You can get it online at coughdrop.com.

Other apps, like Proloquo2Go, may have their own symbols. Another place to get information is assistiveware.com.

More AAC resources are being created and we will update soon with more information as new AAC resources come out!

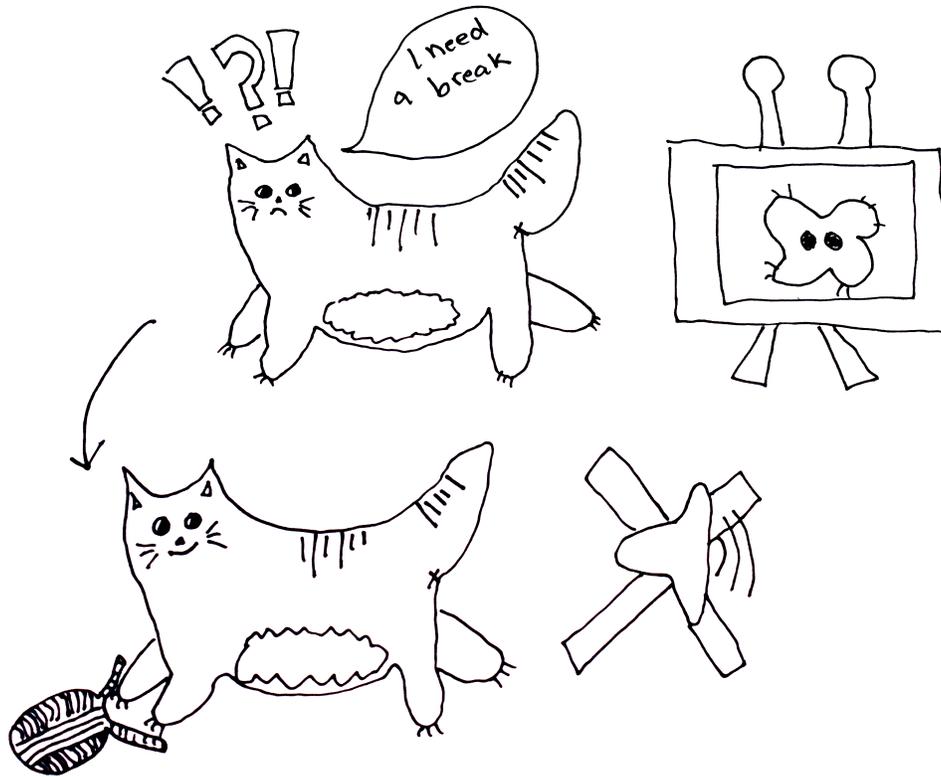


Keeping connected

Just because we need to do social distancing doesn't mean we can't connect with our friends and other people we are close to.

We can use texting, FaceTime, Skype, phone and more. There are lots of fun things to do like draw pictures together and guess what they are, play games or give each other tours of our houses! It can also be fun to make plans about what you will do when you see each other again.

Set a regular time each week or day to meet. This way, they will be there and can answer back when you have a text or phone call. Make a plan just like you do when you're meeting up in person.



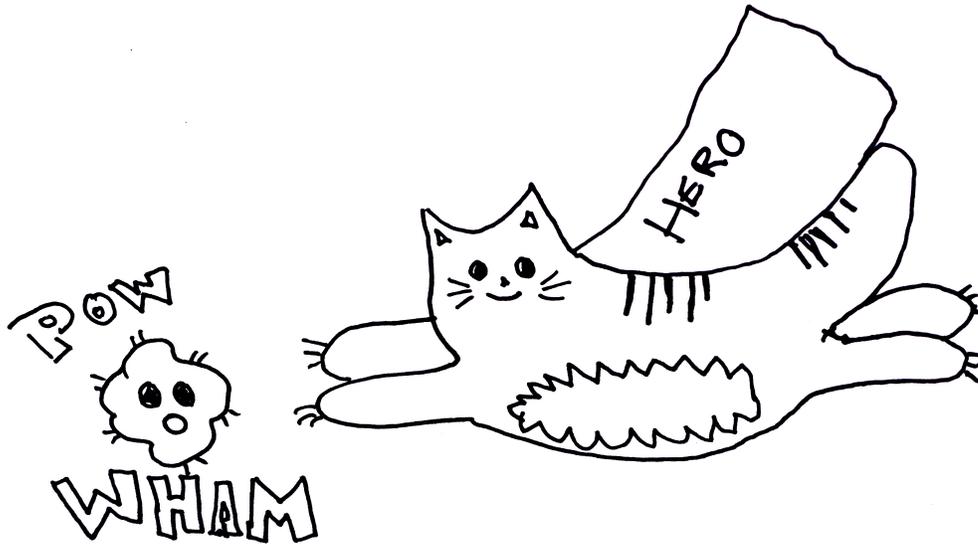
Taking a break from Covid talk

People are talking about Covid-19 A LOT. Sometimes, it can feel like too much.

If someone is talking about Covid-19 and you need a break from that, you can tell them:

- “I need a break from talking about this”
- “No Covid right now”
- “I need a break to relax”

Your parent or carer can also agree to a special time of day where they talk or watch news about Covid-19, and get a plan for you to do something different then. You can make that plan together.



What's next?

The doctors and scientists will tell us when it is safe to start opening up schools, restaurants and other places. They don't know yet, but they will be keeping us updated.

When it is safe, we will all slowly go back to doing our favourite things that are not at home. Then we will look back on this and remember it, as something from the past.

We are in this together

We are all working together, being heroes together. We are protecting ourselves and the people we love--and people all across Ontario. Thank you for being a hero.

This Guide was written 100% by autistic people, who work at an organization where autistic people are in charge. Our group is called Autistics for Autistics Ontario (a4aontario.com). We hope you found our booklet helpful!

c. March 2020, Autistics for Autistics