



# Brightside *COMMUNITY NEWS*

November 2020

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## COVID-19 & the Holidays

As we enter our ninth consecutive month living with COVID-19, many of us may be feeling “pandemic fatigue”.

With the winter holiday season quickly approaching, many of us may also be feeling more stressed and uncertain. How do we celebrate? Do we celebrate?

In this edition, we provide tips to self-manage this holiday season, as well as resources to mental and emotional support services in the community.

How you choose to celebrate the holidays this year, thank you for keeping yourself and others around you safe!



## Celebrating the Holidays During a Pandemic: Tips for Staying Mentally & Emotionally Healthy

*By Alan Stamp, MSc. PCFTTA, Registered Psychotherapist,  
Manager of Support and Information Services, West End Seniors' Network (WESN)*

The winter holidays - including Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and many others - can be an exciting time when friends and family gather. Even though I grew up in a non-religious family, the Christmas holidays were one of the best times of the year. I loved being out of school. I enjoyed the decorations at home and downtown, agape at the coloured lights. I ate from a seemingly endless buffet of my favourite foods. I delighted in the family get-togethers, save for a few relations who took Christmas cheer a bit too far. My friends and I would play in the snow until nearly frostbitten. We gleefully sang songs at our neighbour's piano until we were hoarse. Filled with the excitement of the season, we enjoyed giving (and receiving) colourfully wrapped presents.

When I became an adult, things became noticeably different. The cheer at holiday gatherings was lubricated with more than a glass of spiked eggnog. The aunt who was such a treasure became an argumentative nuisance to the point of offending other guests with her bad behaviour, embarrassing my mother. People were testy at times. My mother's complex holiday meals also had its share of culinary disasters, resulting in tears just visible through the billowing smoke of a smoldering turkey. As my mother aged, the fatigue of orchestrating yet another huge holiday supper on her own left her weary. Sadly, the promise of "happy holidays" withered away as we all grew older, leaving the "happy season" looking nothing like the Hallmark cards that adorned the cedar-draped fireplace.

I'm reassured that I'm not the only person who had become disdainful of the "most wonderful time of the year".

This holiday amid COVID-19 could feel more strained as we do our best to adhere to pandemic restrictions. Case in point: instead of large family gatherings, we are advised to keep groups small, "sticking to six"<sup>1</sup> of the same people. That might mean a very different type of holiday for many families

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing. Please check the BC Government or Vancouver Coastal Health websites for the latest updates on COVID-19 restrictions related to gathering size and other safety guidelines.



who are used to large-scale celebrations. Will friends and family be left out? What choices will be made to restrict who we connect with? Who will feel slighted?

As a therapist, I have worked with many clients who had had reservations about the winter holidays, and I'm sympathetic, having had several challenging holidays myself. However, the season can be fun for bigger kids too, and I have reworked how to enjoy them — family and all — without the same amount of stress as in years past.

Not surprisingly, it has to do with a few deceptively simple changes.

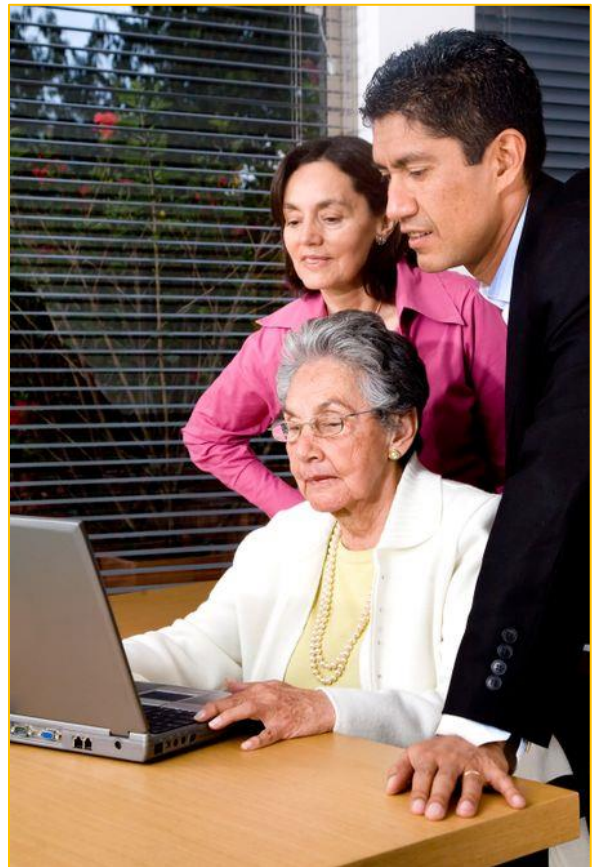
### *Some Holiday Tips*

- **It's not really about the buck, is it?** There's often a huge expense at this time of year with purchases that quickly can become out of control. Some family and friends may be on a fixed income, yet feel the expectation of purchasing beyond their means. Additionally, a great number of Canadians are not working due to COVID-19. Their income has taken a huge toll. Pride can sometimes dampen the desire to cut back on spending, which can become a source of pressure and stress. Many Canadians spend the New Year paying back their debt from the holidays. Vendors may have a mantra like this: "Spend, spend, spend!" However, this doesn't have to be *your* belief. I think this year, more than ever, talk to your family or friends about having a limit on gifts — no more than \$25.00, for example. It's amazing how creative people can become and how interesting the presents are on a fixed budget! Other people may wish to forgo presents entirely and focus on dinner or even the opportunity to connect with people they haven't seen in a while in ways that are safe for everyone.
- **Share the load:** My mother embodied the "holiday spirit", but after overseeing all duties at the end of the day, she would be slumped in the chair, in an incoherent daze of exhaustion. Instead of having one-person over-function into a coma, each friend or family member can share the load by bringing a dish of food, helping with



preparation, and cleaning up. Of course, we need to do these tasks and observe the COVID-19 practices of maintaining small family groups, frequent handwashing, and ensuring physical distancing. Everyone has skills and abilities; allow friends and family to shine! Communicating a new way of having holiday dinners will mean hosts can place more emphasis on catching up with family and friends. Sharing tasks is a great way to communally create a memorable meal. It's also fun to see what others may bring to the table! It might be different, but then breaking tradition can *become* the new tradition during holidays.

- **Adjust your expectations:** Children often have high expectations about what the holidays could bring. Adults and parents: visualize a different perspective and adjust their expectations on what the holiday season may bring. Talking with others about how you'd like to manage those expectations, and then commit to the change(s). If or when things don't go as planned, take a breath, gain your composure, and refrain from acting on any perceived or real disappointment. Instead, take a moment to reflect on the situation with a fresh perspective. Many of my clients express they can't last for three or four hours, let alone three to four days, with their families, but try to soldier on through anyway. The expectation to get along well can be unrealistic, especially given that most families have times of conflict. For some, a better approach might be to visit with family and set limits for yourself on how long you stay. Allow yourself the choice to leave and return the same or next day. This provides the best chance of having a non-conflictual interaction. This also means such a visit could be enjoyable by all, and it sets the stage for next year.
- **Manage yourself:** Often people experience strain and pressure as they relate with others in an attempt to make the holidays perfect. The result





can be exhausting. Instead, sit down with the people in your “bubble” and plan how the holidays are going to go; talk about making some changes; try to reduce the expectations on self and others, and focus on simplicity wherever possible. Ensure that you have time for yourself. Commit to all the “self” activities to de-stress your body and mind. Go for a walk, which most people can do anytime, anywhere is a good strategy when feeling agitated, spend time reading, listen to music, and do whatever provides you with a sense of calm or focus. When you are thoughtful instead of reactive, there’s a much better chance of enjoying others around you. It’s simple advice, but during the holidays many people overextend themselves, often increases the likelihood of conflict. It’s best to monitor your energy, patience, and if necessary, intervene on yourself.



- **Going Solo:** Truthfully, some of the best winter holidays I’ve had were ones spent by myself. I firmly believe in treating oneself as a best friend, and seasonal holidays aren’t any different. It can be restorative to sleep in, have a special meal, get to that book (or books!) you’ve been wanting to read for a while, binge watch a favourite program, go on a (local) day trips, or take on a project at home. Being active – even on holiday – is good for our mental health. It’s perhaps an underestimated skill to be able to be happy and content with ourselves. Though holidays can be an emotional minefield, for many, there is a quiet during this time of the year that people can find very peaceful and contemplative.



- **Families are strange creatures.** It’s true that the aunt, distant cousin, or grandparent with the horrifying behaviour will likely do something outrageous at the holidays. We can’t choose our families — much as we might wish to. But that doesn’t mean we can’t choose how to *be* with our families. Seasonal holidays may test our patience or trigger a slew of past or present issues, however, we have the ability to make informed decisions about what we can do when things aren’t going right during our visit so that it’s enjoyable and reflects on the most



important aspects of the holidays. Of course, these are tips that I've suggested, but you may wish to create ones that are appropriate for you, your family and friends.

**Note:** The contents of this article are for educational purposes only, and do not replace specific advice from your health professional.

If you are struggling and need mental health or emotional support and guidance, please contact your counsellor, local healthcare professional, or any of the free provincial mental health support service lines for help. (*See page 10 for more.*)

**Alan Stamp, MSc. PCFTTA** is a manager at West End Senior Network at Kay's Place, and has worked as a teacher, clinical supervisor, lecturer, therapist and clinic director for over 35 years.

He is the former Clinical Director of Jewish Family Services, where he oversaw a range of clinical programs for over 13 years, and has taught several courses for graduate students training to be family therapists for over 10 years.

Alan has also been a guest speaker on both CKNW and Fairchild radio, and published two books, one of which was a finalist for a Canadian book award in 2018.

Alan continues to have a private practice. He can be contacted through email at [astamp@shaw.ca](mailto:astamp@shaw.ca).

## Continue Staying Safe During the Pandemic

In general, you and your loved ones can continue staying safe by:

- Restricting your travel. No pleasure travel, but essential travel (e.g. medical appointments, trips to the grocery store, etc.) is okay.
- Keeping your distance.
- Wearing face protection, like masks and face shields, in public spaces, including transit and the supermarket. Be sure place used disposable masks in the garbage. Don't litter.
- Not gathering in groups. Right now, make your bubble smaller by keeping company with people in your household. If you live alone, keep your bubble small and ensure only a small number of the same people are in it.
- Wash your hands. Keep high touch areas in your home clean and disinfected.
- Cough or sneeze into your arm or into a tissue.
- Avoid group activities – indoor and outdoor – for now.

Orders and guidelines change frequently. Stay current on the latest COVID-19 updates and safety measures from the Province of BC and Vancouver Coastal Health.



## Care Pathways: Program Offers Newcomer Women an Alternate Path

*With contributions from Olga Zamudio, Coordinator, Care Pathways,  
Visible Minority Newcomer Women Program, Employment Programs, MOSAIC*

Care Pathways is a free program that provides visible minority newcomer women with an alternative pathway to a career in the senior health sector.

Funded by the Government of Canada's Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, MOSAIC ([www.mosaicbc.org](http://www.mosaicbc.org)) coordinates and administers this pilot program, which acts as both an employment project, and a research and development project.

Care Pathways prepares and supports visible minority newcomer women for entry level employment in seniors' care facilities in roles such as dietary aides and housekeepers, which are stepping stones to careers as Health Care Aides.

Some of the perks and benefits of this program include:

- First aid, workplace safety, food safety, WHMIS certification
- Intercultural, diversity and inclusion coaching
- Occupation-based essential skills training
- Occupation-specific language coaching
- Paid work placement
- Three months of one-on-one support during the work placement
- Up to six months of follow up support
- Transportation allowance during the training and the work placement

Participants undergo a one-month training process to develop essential and employability skills.

Behind the scenes, the program is also a research project, where MOSAIC partner with training consultants and employers to research the core competencies and develop relevant training for working in the seniors' health sector.

The results of this project will inform policy to design more effective programming for newcomer women while helping fulfill the demand for skilled workers in the local senior health industry.

If you are interested in participating in the program, please visit <https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/employment/care-pathways/> for information on eligibility requirements, or contact the Care Pathways Program at 604-254-9626 or [pathways@mosaicbc.org](mailto:pathways@mosaicbc.org).

**MOSAIC** is one of the largest settlement non-profit organizations in Canada, and serves immigrant, refugee, migrant and mainstream communities in Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley as well as throughout the province of BC and overseas via online programs.

MOSAIC is also the host agency for BC CRN's Chinese community response network (CRN) ([www.bccrns.ca/bccrnsnetwork/chinese-community-response-network/](http://www.bccrns.ca/bccrnsnetwork/chinese-community-response-network/)) that raises awareness on adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect prevention in the province's Chinese senior community. For more information on this CRN or to get involved, please contact coordinator **Daisy Au** at 604-254-9626 ext. 1005 or [daisyau@mosaicbc.com](mailto:daisyau@mosaicbc.com).

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## Free Online Education on Adult Abuse, Neglect & Self-Neglect for the Public

In times of COVID-19, vulnerable adults are more at risk of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect as an unfortunate result of physical distancing, and self-quarantining.

Awareness, education, and community are critical to keeping one another safe.

The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) is now offering *virtual* outreach programming to the general public and essential workers.

The ***It's Not Right!*** ([www.bccrns.ca/programs/its-not-right-program/](http://www.bccrns.ca/programs/its-not-right-program/)) program is for everyday citizens, residents, neighbours, family members, and friends of adults and older adults.

***Gatekeeper*** ([www.bccrns.ca/programs/gatekeeper-program/](http://www.bccrns.ca/programs/gatekeeper-program/)) is the program for you if you are an essential worker who has regular contact with the general public and vulnerable adult populations as part of your daily work activities.







## *It's Not Right! & Gatekeeper: Menu of Programming Offerings*

### ***It's Not Right! and Gatekeeper Light***

This 20 to 30-minute session is perfect for your next virtual lunch and learn, or extended coffee break.

In this presentation, you will receive an overview of BC CRN, their programs, and what it is you can do as a member of the public if you spot the signs of possible abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.

### ***It's Not Right! Plus***

This session is 1.5 hours in length and facilitators go into more detail on the different types of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect, and what you can do about it as a member of your community.

### ***Gatekeeper Plus***

This is a 2-hour session for essential workers.

This program is also beneficial for *any* community group or service provider, including Rotary Clubs, bank staff, non-profits, neighbourhood block watches, volunteer organizations, staff of neighbourhood houses, etc. Learn more about what abuse, neglect, and self-neglect could look like, the role of the Public Guardian and Trustee of BC, and the correct process and action to take to address it.

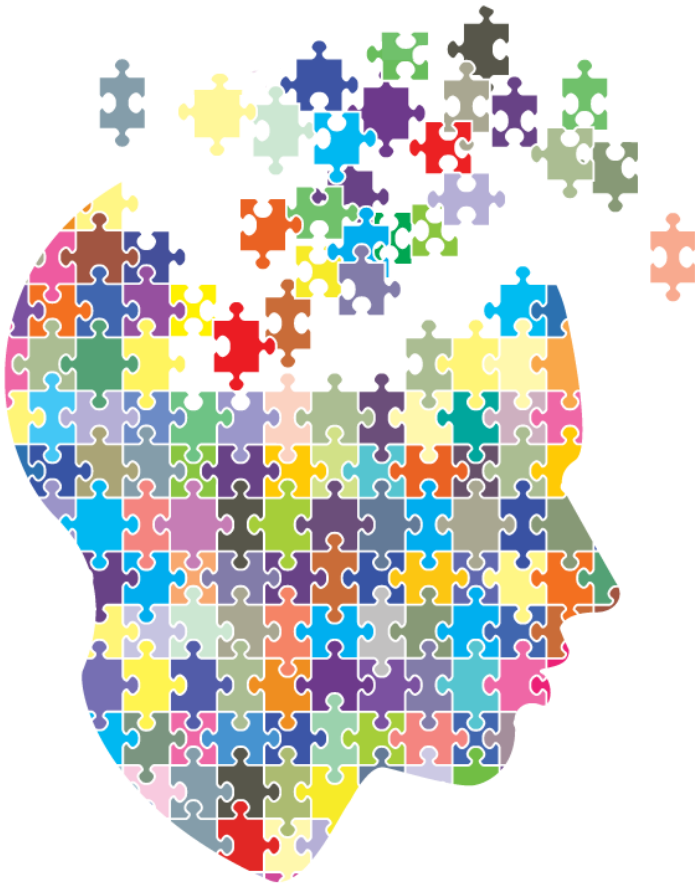
(BC CRN recommends essential workers and community service groups take both *It's Not Right! Plus* and *Gatekeeper Plus*.)

All sessions are **free of charge** and conducted safely as live sessions through Zoom.

Register your neighbourhood group or office team today by emailing BC CRN at [gatekeeper@bccrns.ca](mailto:gatekeeper@bccrns.ca) or [itsnotright@bccrns.ca](mailto:itsnotright@bccrns.ca).

*This article was originally published in the October 2020 edition of E-Connector ([www.bccrns.ca/news/e-connector-newsletter/](http://www.bccrns.ca/news/e-connector-newsletter/)) and is reprinted with permission from the BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) ([www.bccrns.ca](http://www.bccrns.ca))*

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## Get to Know Your: Provincial Mental Health & Substance Use Resources

The Crisis Line Association of BC (CLABC) ([www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/crisis-line](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/crisis-line)) is the provincial association representing member crisis lines from across British Columbia.

Members of CLABC provide emotional support, crisis and suicide assessment and intervention, and resource information.

Crisis line workers are trained in critical skills such as empathetic reflection, active listening, and collaborative problem solving. They use crisis and suicide assessment and intervention protocols that are based on recognized better practices.

The following crisis line services are available:

**1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)** ([www.crisislines.bc.ca/services](http://www.crisislines.bc.ca/services)): for individuals who are or know someone who is having thoughts of suicide. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in up to 140 languages. Operated in partnership with Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC.

**310-Mental Health (310-6789)** ([www.crisislines.bc.ca/services](http://www.crisislines.bc.ca/services)): This number is for individuals who would like emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health in British Columbia. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is toll-free anywhere in British Columbia. There is no need to dial an area code.

**Map of Crisis Lines** ([www.crisislines.bc.ca/mapcrisis-lines](http://www.crisislines.bc.ca/mapcrisis-lines)): This interactive map allows you to search for the direct numbers to local crisis line services in British Columbia. While 1-800-SUICIDE is available across the province and is designed to transfer callers to the local crisis line service closest to the community of the caller, some individuals may prefer to contact the crisis line in their community directly.

Source: BC HealthLink BC ([www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/crisis-line](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/crisis-line))



## Resource of the Month: The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB)

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) provides assistance to approximately 8,500 people weekly across Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, and the North Shore.

Of their clients, 24% are children and youth, 58% are adults, and 18% are seniors.

GVFB provides food support to approximately 80 community agencies throughout these communities, such as housing agencies, women and children's shelters and after school programs, who in turn provide hot meals and snacks to thousands of people each week including those struggling with homelessness. We reach and support a broad spectrum of people in need through our agency partners.

Basic groceries are provided free of charge to anyone in the community who may need some help with food security that week. No questions asked.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, food distribution sites have changed temporarily. For the Vancouver area, the nearest food bank location is at:

**1428 Charles Street, Vancouver**  
**Tuesdays to Fridays\***  
**10 AM to 2 PM**

Please arrive no more than 15 minutes before opening.  
Remember to wear some form of face protection.

*\*This location is closed the week of December 21, and from December 31 to January 1.*

If you are interested in making a donation or supporting the GVFB in some way, please visit [www.foodbank.bc.ca/ways-to-give/](http://www.foodbank.bc.ca/ways-to-give/).

(NOTE: If you are experiencing food insecurity and going to the food bank isn't an option for you, please also check with the neighbourhood house in the community you live in. These organizations often have food programs serving its community residents.)

Source: The Greater Vancouver Food Bank ([www.foodbank.bc.ca](http://www.foodbank.bc.ca))



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **Seniors Community Action Committees (SCAC) in BC: An Overview from the Provincial SCAC Working Group (Webinar)**

**December 9, 2020 from 7:00-8:00 AM**

*Hosted by Healthy Aging by UW, Provincial Seniors Community Action Committees (SCAC) Working Group*

Seniors Community Action Committees (SCACs) are local/regional groups (also known as Senior Planning Tables/Seniors Action Committees) that support the capacity of community to collaborate, plan, and mobilize to improve the lives of seniors. The Seniors Community Action Committees (SCAC) Provincial Working Group supports them by addressing their needs and interests through means such as advocacy, education, and awareness.

In this webinar, the SCAC Working Group will be showcasing the highlights and needs of Seniors Community Action Committees across BC. They will also be discussing progress on creation of a Provincial Framework for Seniors Community Action Committees aimed at profiling information about these groups, such as their geographical reach, their needs and challenges, and the important work they are doing for seniors.

To register: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_HNF1Ak7vR4q1QktGwRu7Vg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HNF1Ak7vR4q1QktGwRu7Vg)



## **BC Men's Virtual Caregiver Support Group**

**December 8, 2020 from 7:00-8:30 PM (Virtual Meeting)**

*Hosted by the Family Caregivers of BC*

This monthly Virtual Caregiver Support Group is a space for men to come together to connect, receive support and share experiences as caregivers. The group is facilitated by Ben Ziegler, an experienced facilitator. You must pre-register to join each session.

This group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 7-8:30pm.

To join the group, contact our Support Line at 1-877-520-3267 Ext 1 or email [cgsupport@familycaregiversbc.ca](mailto:cgsupport@familycaregiversbc.ca) no later than 24 hours before the meeting time. You be provided with instructions on how to join by phone or online using the Zoom platform.



### **Provincial Learning Events – Online Recordings**

*Hosted by the BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN)*

Online Provincial Learning Events are currently on winter hiatus until January 2021.

The next webinar is on January 19, 2021. Email [info@bccrns.ca](mailto:info@bccrns.ca) to be placed on the association's notifications list, or follow them on Facebook or Twitter for the schedule for 2021.

In the meantime, recordings and presentation materials from all of our 2020 webinars are available online, free of charge at [www.bccrns.ca/provincial-learning-event/](http://www.bccrns.ca/provincial-learning-event/).

Get caught up on the latest resources in your community in the comfort of your home at your own pace! See you in 2021!

*If you have a community event or education session you'd like to promote in a future edition, email [info@brightsidehomes.ca](mailto:info@brightsidehomes.ca).*

*Be sure to include all details, like date, time, and cost, as well as a description of your event and any registration information*

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## **Brightside in the News**

**100 social housing units proposed near Arthur Laing Bridge in South Vancouver**, Vancouver Daily Hive, November 9, 2020.  
([www.dailyhive.com/vancouver/8725-french-street-vancouver](http://www.dailyhive.com/vancouver/8725-french-street-vancouver))

**Brightside plans 100 affordable rentals in Marpole, Urban YVR, November 12, 2020.**  
([www.urbanyvr.com/brightside-marpole/](http://www.urbanyvr.com/brightside-marpole/))





## Cook's Corner: Trinidadian Currant Rolls

"Currant rolls are a traditional and popular Trinidadian pastry. They are easy to make, healthy, and make a very delicious snack – especially over the holidays!"

*--Chantel Paul, Front Desk Coordinator, Brightside*

### Ingredients:

#### *Pastry:*

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup butter (cold and cut into cubes)  
1/2 cup veg shortening (cold and cut into cubes)  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 cup or more ice-cold water

#### *Filling:*

1 1/2 cups currants  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1 tablespoon cinnamon  
1/2 cup melted butter  
1 egg + 1 tablespoon milk

### Instructions:

Start by making the dough for the pastry. It needs time to chill in the fridge for at least half an hour (Two hours is best).

Sift the flour into a food processor, add the salt and cubed butter and vegetable shortening. Pulse a few times until you have the texture of little peas.

Add ice cold water, about ¾ cup to start, and pulse your food processor again until you have a loose, crumbly dough. Add more water if needed.

Tip your dough onto a flour-dusted surface and (quickly) shape into a smooth dough ball. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge to chill for about 2 hours.



While the dough chills, make the filling.

In a large bowl, mix the ground cinnamon, currants, and brown sugar and set aside. If you want to be a bit creative, you can certainly add some raisins and a drop of vanilla. (Vanilla is not a traditional ingredient for this recipe, but it tastes delicious!)

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Cut your dough ball in half. (The dough will be a bit sticky.)

Roll out one of your dough pieces into a rectangle shape about half a centimeter thin on a flour-dusted surface. (Be sure to dust your hands and rolling pin with flour as well.)

Brush the surface of your dough rectangle with half of your melted butter.

Spread half of your currant mixture evenly onto the flattened dough, leaving about 2.5 cm border at the edges.



Roll your currant layered dough tightly into a fat cigar shape. The tighter you roll; the more layers the finished currant rolls will have. Pinch the ends of your cigar to create a seal.

Set your roll onto a parchment lined baking sheet.

Repeat the above steps with your second piece of pastry and remaining currant mixture and melted butter.

Beat together the egg and milk. Brush the egg wash onto the surface of each roll. Sprinkle some granulated sugar to taste and place your tray on the middle rack of your pre-heated oven for 50 minutes or until golden.

Allow to cool and set before slicing.

Slice on an angle and serve.

*(If you like, you can brush on more butter and sprinkle more sugar on top of your rolls immediately after they come out of the oven! – Chantel)*

Send your favourite recipe to [info@brightsidehomes.com](mailto:info@brightsidehomes.com) or Brightside Reception Desk for consideration in a future edition.

Source: [www.carribeanpot.com](http://www.carribeanpot.com)

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## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



"I love fall colors! This is the view from my balcony and I had to share it with you all."

-- Graciela Young, resident, Brightside

Drop off or email your favourite photo ([info@brightsidehomes.ca](mailto:info@brightsidehomes.ca)) for consideration in a future edition!  
Be sure to include a description of your picture and your name in case we need to follow up with you.

Brightside Community News is a monthly newsletter for Brightside residents, volunteers, community partners, staff, and friends alike. Send your content for consideration to [info@brightsidehomes.ca](mailto:info@brightsidehomes.ca) or submit your idea in writing to Brightside Reception.

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We acknowledge the generous support of the [BC Association of Community Response Networks \(BC CRN\)](#).