

6/26/20



Greetings from the School Health Unit

Summer doesn't feel the same this year, and it's not the same, that's a fact. The end of the school year, typically filled with celebration, just sort of arrived, with no sense of relief or closure. I want to honor the sense of loss this brings, in addition to any other losses you are burdened with at this time. For those who knew and cared for Laurie Melchionda, I am holding you especially close in my heart.

I know that many of you had your **regional meetings cancelled** and I understand that although you may not want to meet NOW, you may want to meet with colleagues over the summer. I will explore holding Regional Meetings in late summer, prior to the start of school, and in the meantime SHU staff are here to help in any way we can. **We will likely start to process medication delegation applications in mid-July**, and will let you know when that happens and what the process will be. BU SHIELD continues to work on our **mandated trainings**, and we hope to have SBIRT and Screening trainings up soon, and a new, fully virtual Foundations training available sometime in August.

I want to leave you with some of the words I spoke during the two regional meetings we were able to hold last week:

We are living in unprecedented times, during pandemics of illness and racism, and at a time when protections for some people are at risk. This is requiring us to *become comfortable with being uncomfortable*. Some of us may feel discomfort when faced with our own and institutional privilege, many of us are extremely uncomfortable with the unknown that COVID-19 presents. However, discomfort often precedes personal and societal growth, and I urge you, in the words of one of my go-to gurus Brené Brown, to choose "courage over comfort" and "accountability over blame." We need to lean into our discomfort and vulnerability in order to move forward in any meaningful way.

I, and so many others, see and appreciate the work that school nurses have done so far during the pandemic. However, we also need to work with our educational colleagues to *promote a culture of shared responsibility*. Nurses are strong, creative, diligent, and a lot of other things, but you alone cannot, and should not, bear the entire burden of student and staff safety during this pandemic. As we have seen so far globally, a mix of interventions requiring collective impact is what reduces morbidity and mortality of COVID-19.

I saw it said on Twitter recently that "nursing itself is an act of justice." I have been sitting with that statement, thinking about my own personal practice and the specialty practice of school nursing in particular. We are uniquely positioned to influence our communities, and self-

reflection and self-care are two critical elements we cannot overlook. Yes, I will be working this summer, as I imagine a lot of you will be too. But I will also be spending some time reading and listening to teachers on racism and trying to unlearn things I don't even yet know I need to unlearn. And I WILL devote some time to rest. And fun! In fact, I urge you to *put the same effort into leisure this summer as you do into your work* the rest of the year. The students and families need you whole.

Take good care,
Karen

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