Tue, Apr 7, 2020 – **Cohousing and the Coronavirus: Community Check-in***Almost a month since we first came together to share our ideas for weathering coronavirus together, we’ll come together as a community of communities to check in. How’s it going? What’s working? What new struggles have arrived? We will share our resilience as a community of communities. We’ll also check in on how communities are managing the age-old community question, “What do we do when we disagree?” – in this case with life and death consequences as the disagreement is about how rigorously to respond to the CV19 threat.*

45 participants

**Karin Hoskin** prompt: Query what changes have you made to the common house?

Colorado Springs - has limited it to mostly mail pick up and delivery, garden team is using to start seedlings

Brewster, Vermont - closed down except to mail, closed off renters, considering repainting during this time

Vermont- used for making cheese (as per normal), mail boxes were moved outside, packages now on front porch (Postal Service ok with this), sanitize at least once a day

Wapo wash...no common meals, however some take meals to go, sanitize once a day, garden crew helping

Portland, PDX Commons - developed health guidelines for building, occasional some take meals using in containers, sanitizing, dancing, exercise limited to less than ten, 6 ft apart, strong health team

A new team to figure out what to do if someone gets sick, mask making space,

Tucson (in Country) - closed common house, a few still using kitchen, wiping down areas more, one person in laundry room at a time, can gather outside 6 ft apart, more sanitize....

**Karin Hoskin:** I spoke to a community in another country who decide that the whole community considered themselves one household and are isolating all together

Cobb Hill, in our community certain groups of families are considering themselves one family, they let kids play together, and enter each other’s home,

Atlanta- 67 houses - multi generational, heated discussion re teens, and parents, a bit of rough going

Laurie, similar discussion, new committee, compromises made,

The new safety committee consists of the most fearful, and they rule the day, but because others are compassionate folks are all going along advice

Washington- assigned under 60 to clean more and are considering working without consensus,

**Karin Hoskin:** Anyone have COVID thus far?

North Carolina – We have one COVID male, we beefed up practices, when on shared headway (walkway) staying apart, some are wearing masks, new rules posted on all doors, those using shared equipment do extra cleaning, we ask those that are sicl what they needed, meals, regular check-ins....

Oakland senior cohousing, many individuals have difference medical conditions, different households are sharing together (as one family), some extra help for older adult members, some are wearing mask (some)

Davis – We adopted CDC quarantine standards if someone is sick...so fast decisions, adopted state rules, different levels of how fast some folks can adapt

**Karin Hoskin:** What are you doing to help folks emotionally.

Oakland – We have buddy system, check-in with each other every 24 hours, group zoom check in every day at 6 pm, at 6:30 we have some activity such as sing along, or dance together, play games together on Zoom.

Tucson... We have a slack channel, buddy system by quadrant, check-in every morning, weekly we have COVID Zoom check-in.... many seniors, we have all pertinent individual info on everyone’s fridge,

Central Coast Cal – has had 5 members get sick and all recovered including on 83 year old, closed, lock up team sanitize everything more, We no longer a fear of what might happen as it already has, each person has a had buddy, regularly check-in give food. It brought folks together, a lot more appreciative of each other; there has been poetry, reflection, deepened community, and time to reflect on own quirks, cut down on extreme fear taking care of each other.

(Berkeley), emotional support, primary – We have an empty household could be used for a quarantine home,

Karen Gimnig: As communities struggle with different ideas about how to approach Covid-19, it’s important to keep in mind that each person comes to this with unique experience. When I disagree with someone, it’s important for me to remember that even if I don’t agree with their perspective, it makes sense and is valid for them given their life experience. Holding this makes it much more likely that we will find a way to move forward with a sense of belonging and connection.

Overall, it appeared that folks were more considerate of each other, acknowledged different experience of living alone, or very social types versus introverts, folks had different risks levels, take on faith their different fears, it has made us all stronger as a community,

**CHAT:**

**-**Colorado Springs: What are you all doing about workout rooms and/or hot tubs? We’re just having one household using them at a time and completely sanitizing after use. They aren’t busy enough to do scheduling for them (yet)

-(Berkeley/Cohousing CA): **Your community and you can support the national cohousing association via the website. Contribute here:** [**https://www.cohousing.org/donate/**](https://www.cohousing.org/donate/)

-Has anyone in your communities been diagnosed with Covid-19?

-Curious about PDX Common’s 'health team' - did they exist before the pandemic? We have a team called "COVIDbusters" - which includes a nurse midwife and two folks who have graduate degrees in Public Health.

-One of our doctor neighbors tested negative a couple weeks ago, and one of our nurse neighbors just got tested yesterday, so we’re all trying to support him and hope he gets a ‘mild’ case

- We have had two members tested and both were negative.

-How are your communities or members supporting each other emotionally during this time? Any new practices?

-(Berkeley/Cohousing CA): We had someone with potential exposure early on (just before CA shelter in place, a night before the person exposed was at our community meeting and “Last Supper” meal) but neither the original person or community member or anyone else has shown any symptoms or indications of exposure.

* We have a similar situation here, Sandy.
* Re emotional support: We had a "Dose of Togetherness" session led by a member who is a mental health practitioner. IT's based on template and work created by Greater Good Science Center at Berkeley and an organization called ReImagine. Less formally, we're supporting emotional health through lots of gatherings online. Daily meditation (twice a day), chair and mat yoga (twice a week), craft nights, singing online and outside. Lots of things for morale.
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): A similar question has come up in some “group house” aka “cohouseholding” or #coliving communities - because they share bathrooms and kitchens within a house they know they can’t sanitize well enough to functionally separate so they are operating as a single extended family— and getting social pushback from others who don’t recognize them, because of age/race diversity, as a single unit, and yell at them. It raises the question as to whether traditional families should actually be separating strictly, and reminds me that the protocols are based on both rapidly changing science understanding and politics.
* I live in a house that has 5 occupants - ranging in age from 11 to 95, and we are a mother and child + 2 single people + 1 widow. Everyone understands this but even within our household we sanitize daily and keep 6-10 ft of distance from each other. (Except me and my child.)
* But I agree there are different concepts of what a 'pod' could be or is.
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): I love that level of consideration — is this a key difference in how cohousing can respond, be driven by compassion and empathy, hearing people’s pain and helping them feel heard and show through actions how we are working together to keep our communities safe and livable.
* I’m at Laurie’s Cohousing place and was on the safety committee. She and I are friends! But I would definitely disagree with her description of what the “hard” and “soft” liners believe. We who are called hardliners actually have no problem with going outside for essential exercise, shopping, laundry etc. But we believe in following the State of California order to not congregate in groups for workdays etc. she also didn’t mention we had a young member here with Covid. Just wanted to clarify. With respect and love
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): The San Francisco Bay Area has been in shelter-in-place for three weeks now; the rest of California followed the following Friday.
* -Our COVID team here emails info periodically based on Gov. Inslee's declarations and executive orders. And any CDC changes. We've also had two different Q&As about COVID-19 hosted by a professor here who teaches at Univ Wash School of nursing/public health.
* Sunnyside Village--WA: Is anything-positive coming from the special steps we are taking that we might want to take with us when we go back to normal?
* Sunnyside Village - one great thing is that the Associate members who don't live on site have been able to participate in our Zoom gatherings. So several of the associates are as active as the residents in participating in the community, which is nice.
* Oakland CA: Slack = instant messaging for teams/neighbors
* I’m from Raven’s Roost in Anchorage. We all have volunteer buddies. Calls to check-in and listen to how their day is. New connections are developing -What is a “slack” channel?
* Oakland CA: https://slack.com
* I love Slack and created an account for the community almost two years ago but can't get very many people to use it. Only maybe half a dozen used it for a bit. But they are super into the Zoom so that's good.
* My town has a 5-person limit of gatherings. So we can no longer gather on our plaza while maintaining 6 feet apart
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): To learn about File Of Life (always a good idea), see http://www.folife.org/
* I would like to re-ask the question asked earlier in the meeting. Are people still using the fitness room/gym and hot tubs?
* We are not using either.
* We don't have a fitness room/gym and hot tub here at Songaia, so it is not applicable for us. There is a playset, and that is still getting used by 2 of the kids.
* Aria Cohousing: We are about to be organized into clusters of 3 or 4 mainly for people who live alone. They will check in each morning by text to make sure everyone is well.
* Joanne - thanks for the information. That is so helpful and encouraging. Will share with the COVID-19 team here!
* I’d be interested in hearing about gyms too we closed our exercise room.
* At Greenock Commons in Colorado, we used a Google Form Survey and asked questions about what people may be able to offer and what they might need, etc. The survey sorts itself into a spreadsheet. Everyone who filled it out gets a copy. We are also good at checking in with immediate neighbors, so it currently appears that everyone who needs attention will receive it! I’m the head of our Community Life Team and as a team we are working on staying in touch with members in various ways, and being alert to whatever may be needed!
* Re: workout spaces: One mentioned only one household at a time; another mentioned bleach wipe downs after anyone uses space, and a third uses spaces standing 6 feet apart
* Milagro has instituted a Slack channel to discuss weekly the COVID19 issue and setting up plans in case someone gets the virus-how do we support them and still keep the community safe. We have Slack channels set up in quadrants for people to check in daily.
* From Greyrock Commons, I am Katharine Gregory. Not sure why it didn’t put my name in.
* I’m curious as to whether your communities are for the most part following county/state mandates? Or just doing their own thing? Or some combo of the 2?
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): I should say that my wife Betsy and I have been temporarily staying at AirBnB’s and would love to do a 1-2 month sublet at Cambridge Cohousing or Cornerstone in case there are any openings. So much easier to get all our needs met in community. We also would be up for a swap if somebody in cohousing elsewhere had a reason to be in the SF Bay Area, such as caring for a family member there.
* Tovar - the covid19 team here (a subgroup of the existing Emergency Preparedness Committee) tries to help assert the state and CDC guidelines and the community on the whole has been conscious of adhering.
* Oakland CA: **Please visit this link:** [**https://www.cohousing.org/donate/**](https://www.cohousing.org/donate/)
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): I note that our home community was doing preparatory steps more than a week before the shelter-in-place order, doing lots to restrict visitors and make meals safer.
* *Karen Gimnig*: If a video seems hard, a slideshow could be great too as an option for a virtual tour!
* To answer that question, at Greyrock we are following state mandates closely, but not obsessively, if that makes sense!
* Oakland CA: <https://www.cohousing.org/simple-series/>
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): or just send a kid to walk around with a phone camera on Zoom! We can help record anyone who wants to do that and also answer questions.
* *Karen Gimnig*: Feel free to take a look at **cohousing.org/past-web-chats**
* How did the community that had 5 infected specifically support them? What/how did procedures change within the community? I.e. require everyone to wear masks within the community, etc.?
* I've presented some WebChats on similar themes if you are interested. You can find them at cohousing.org/past-web-chats
* Oakland CA: Really good to be here with you all
* (Berkeley/Cohousing CA): **National Cohousing Open House day page:** **https://www.cohousing.org/national-open-house-2020/**
* THANK bye thanks!