



## Dalhousie psychologist calls on province to release clear plans for reopening Nova Scotia economy



BY **JESSE THOMAS** GLOBAL NEWS May 19, 2020

Dalhousie professor and psychologist Dr. Simon Sherry says the Nova Scotia government is suffering from “COVID-19” tunnel vision, arguing the “stay at home and stay safe” narrative is misleading and potentially harmful.

“If you suffer from COVID-19 tunnel vision, what happens is you place all your emphasis on reducing death from COVID-19,” said Sherry.

“And unfortunately there’s a rock and a hard place reality here. When you reduce death by COVID-19, you create death via other factors.”

Sherry says the lockdown conditions which were implemented to protect the public from the spread of the coronavirus are now creating other health care issues like depression and other mental health disorders, to other problems like heart disease which he calls frightening.

“Isolation and confinement is corroding our mental health,” said Sherry. “We are not in a safe place right now because we’re very vulnerable to depression and alcohol misuse and suicide.”

Sherry is calling on the government to release its “all-cause mortality data,” which shows how many deaths are taking place from all causes across the province, suggesting this would give a better understanding of how Nova Scotia is doing in relation to COVID-19.



- Halifax's reopening plan may include pedestrian-only zones

Sherry says the province needs to move quickly to open the economy and get back to reality.

On Friday, premier Stephen McNeil and Nova Scotia's chief medical officer of health Dr. Robert Strang announced the loosening of some COVID-19 restrictions, including the introduction of the "immediate family bubble."

This was welcoming news for many heading into the May long weekend but it left some people confused as to what qualifies as "immediate family."

"When they started talking about the bubbles, I thought, 'oh this is great, we have so many people that we miss in our lives,'" said Emily Gard Marshall, a health care researcher and professor at Dalhousie University.

"But then he (Strang) made the statement about immediate family."

Marshall and her husband are both transplants to Nova Scotia with no immediate family in the province but have friends they consider as such.

On Saturday, Premier Stephen McNeil took to Twitter to clarify, that if individuals who don't have immediate family to "bubble with," can "choose another household to be in their immediate family bubble."

This was welcoming news for Marshall.

"I tweeted back saying thank you (Premier McNeil) for making that opportunity," said Marshall.

**Prof Emily Marshall** @DrEmilyMarshall

Thank you @StephenMcNeil for adding the option to create a bubble for folks who don't have immediate family in NS. An important addition. Please fix your infographic now too. [twitter.com/stephenmcneil/...](https://twitter.com/stephenmcneil/)

**Stephen McNeil** @StephenMcNeil

If you don't have immediate family to bubble with, you can choose another household to be in your immediate family bubble. Remember, whoever you choose, family or friend, your two households will have to promise to be mutually exclusive & you can only bubble with each other.

**Immediate Family Bubble**

Two immediate family households can come together.

Promise to be mutually exclusive. | No physical distancing required. | No large family gatherings for BBQs, reunions, etc.

Take it slow and

2 5:10 PM - May 16, 2020

See Prof Emily Marshall's other Tweets

But the tweet came back with an infographic below that still referred to the bubble being allowed with an “immediate family.”

Town of Bridgewater mayor David Mitchell has nothing but praise for the provincial updates but admits there are gaps in the information. He himself is a Nova Scotia transplant and was confused about the “immediate family” bubble scenario and asked for clarification on Twitter.

When it comes to the reopening process Mitchell says he’d like to see municipalities consulted in the process.

“As a municipal leader I would love as much advance notice as I could have, recognizing that’s still going to be hours not days,” said Mitchell.

When the province announced they were opening provincial and municipal parks, he said he found out from social media.

When it comes to the early stages of opening the economy, Strang says more information will likely be shared Friday or early next week but long term plans are contingent on day-to-day microbiology.

“Decisions on that (reopening) will depend on what is the impact our initial steps of our recovery,” said Strang. “And how does that affect the epidemiology of COVID-19.”

Premier McNeil says consultations with business representatives regarding the first phase of reopening the provincial economy will be ongoing this week.

## Canadian cases



*Updates may take up to 10 minutes to appear in the table.*