



The Vodec Voice

A Publication of the Vocational Development Center, Inc.

Realizing **Potential**

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Steve's Corner: The Impact of COVID-19 and What I've Learned

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by Steve Hodapp

The novel coronavirus – called COVID-19 or 'Rona' by some – still has its grip on the world. I continue to be mystified by how such an itty-bitty thing can have such a huge impact. The health crisis was enough. Then came the economic crisis with record numbers of people unemployed and businesses closed for now or forever.

Trying to catch any news that isn't about COVID-19 is a challenge. It's depressing and creates anxiety. Yet here I go using it as a launch point for this column, but I want you to know how the pandemic has impacted Vodec.

The first impact is on our consumers. Some residential consumers were displaced from their homes to temporarily live with family. If families felt this was the safer environment, then so be it.

As this issue of THE VOICE went to print, consumers in our Iowa day services are restricted from attending on-site services by proclamation of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. Consumers in our Nebraska day services were not similarly restricted. But about half of them either chose to self-isolate at home, or the choice was made for them by families or residential providers other than Vodec.

Every day I hear about consumers wanting to return to services. They miss their friends. They miss their activities. They miss their work. And we miss them! We all look forward to when we get back together again.



Consumer absences also have a financial impact on Vodec. Fewer consumers in services translates into less revenue. Simply put, no service used, no revenue for it.

Below are my takeaways and observations in no particular order. Some came to me out of the blue, while others came in strings through free association. A few struck me as being very dark, while others made me smile (maybe you, too). Some just made me sad. I imagine these may be similar to some of yours, and you likely have more to add particular to your experiences.

As I finished this list, there was a lot of chatter about opening up the states again. I'm hopeful the decision-makers make decisions with good outcomes. What do those look like? By opening up, I think the decision-makers' #1 desired outcome is economic recovery.

My hope is this does not have the negative impact of worsening the health crisis. Only time will tell.

Here goes...

- I learned how to wear (and even make) a face mask (like the American Express card, don't leave home without one).
- Clorox wipes are good, but the little dispenser hole at the top of the container sucks.
- Zoom, GoToMeeting and Facebook Messenger help with the loneliness.
- A distance of six feet distance is not the same for everyone.
- I get dirty looks in grocery stores when I misjudge six feet.
- Too many people are dead because of COVID-19.
- Too many families are grieving because of too many dead.
- Too many health care providers are being traumatized by too many dying patients.
- My late parents' stories of living through the Great Depression are resonating with me.
- People are extremely creative with their homemade masks.
- I find governors' press conferences more interesting than I thought I would.
- I have a renewed appreciation for my team of directors, who aren't afraid to give me input.
- I admire our employees who keep showing up, even if it's to paint (straight!) stripes in parking lots and work floor walkways.
- I am grateful for a board of directors who express appreciation for me (THANK YOU).
- I feel awful telling families they cannot visit their son, daughter, brother or sister because they may bring COVID-19 into the residential setting.
- I'm thankful for having a temperature below 100.4 degrees (thanks, Kasey, for taking my temp every day).
- I'm irritated as I still wait for the thermometer I ordered through Amazon.
- It's eerily quiet without consumers at our Council Bluffs and Urbandale centers.
- I'm realizing our elected officials are human as I watched Gov. Reynolds break down during a press conference when announcing the numbers of dead.

- I wonder if the hoarders who cleared store shelves realize half the stuff they bought has expiration dates.
- I realize how lucky we are as Vodec employees that we're an essential business while unprecedented numbers of people are recently unemployed.
- I miss hugs.
- I miss shaking hands. Will we ever do that again?

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