

## RESEARCH COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Meet **Barry Isaacs**, Director at Surrey Place.

*Surrey Place is one of MARCO's Community Agency Partners. Surrey Place provides specialized clinical services for children and adults living with developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and visual impairments. Visit their website [here](#).*

### **Can you tell us a little bit about what Surrey Place does, and the community Surrey Place supports?**

Surrey Place serves people of all ages with developmental disabilities, and their families. We provide specialized clinical services, including health and mental health related services, and allied health services like speech and communication, occupational therapy, behaviour therapy, and case coordination. We also provide specific autism services for people under 18 years old.

### **What has been Surrey Place's biggest challenge during COVID-19?**

While we have successfully transitioned to offering many of our services remotely through our Telehealth services, the biggest challenge is providing services to clients who cannot connect virtually.

### **How have your programs or policies had to change in light of COVID-19?**

We've certainly had to adapt during the pandemic, and one way that it's affected Surrey Place is trying to find new ways to connect with clients and address their needs. For example, we've been trying to fill gaps by developing tools to help clients in specific situations. We've also been part of a larger, sector-wide pandemic planning initiative in developmental services. That initiative is working to create a sector wide-response to the pandemic, and address clients' needs at the service sector level.

### **What do virtual services look like at Surrey Place? Has everybody moved online?**

All our clinicians have moved online and are working from home. However, while our offices are closed, our services have remained open. We're providing services to clients over the telephone or online, but we're still not seeing clients face-to-face. At the moment, we're working towards a gradual reopening.

### **How is Surrey Place involved in MARCO?**

By participating in MARCO's research, we're hoping to contribute to the understanding of how COVID-19 has impacted people with developmental disabilities. We are in the midst of putting forward a particular program for evaluation by MARCO. Outside of that program, we are also involved so we can learn about what's going on in other sectors and try to contribute to research that helps vulnerable populations in the short and long term.

**What inspires you about the response to COVID-19 at Surrey Place, and among the wider community that Surrey Place supports?**

I am inspired by the degree of caring that's come across. It's clear that people care deeply for their clients, and the effort that people have put in since the COVID-19 pandemic started has been just incredible. I think people are working harder than ever. The degree of creativity shown by our staff and their work to reach and support our clients has been really inspiring.

*To learn more about the MARCO Project, visit <https://maphealth.ca/marco>*