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## COVID-19 Pandemic Workplace Guidelines

### Objective

THE ORGANIZATION is committed to creating a working environment that promotes health and well-being to all staff and clients. With COVID-19 now listed as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), THE ORGANIZATION has developed proactive steps to ensure a culture of safety for our staff and clients. The severity of this illness can vary from person to person. COVID-19 has presented all of us with challenges we have never seen before.

THE ORGANIZATION has implemented a number of guidelines that has helped us reduce exposure to transmission of the illness. Our four-phase approach has been in place since April 2020 and allows for much flexibility as we navigate varying adjustments based on directives from: Toronto Public Health and the Provincial and Federal Government.

Our objective is to provide guidance and information to: recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, identify and assess risks and potential hazards in the workplace, including risk areas outside of our worksites; commuter risks, shopping sites, and social/family gatherings. THE ORGANIZATION's guidelines will help us reduce exposure to and transmission of COVID-19.

### Recognizing COVID-19 - Symptoms of COVID-19

People with COVID-19 have a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills (fever higher than normal, 38°C (100°F))
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, swallowing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Nasal Congestion or runny nose- in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies

The above list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

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## How COVID-19 Spreads

- Respiratory droplets – generated through coughing, or sneezing
- Personal contact with an infected person - touching, or shaking hands
- Touching an infected surface and then mouth, nose, or eyes

## Experiencing COVID-19 Symptoms

Communication with your manager is very important. Staff experiencing any symptoms should not go into work and notify their manager. Staff at work should communicate with their manager and be immediately sent home.

Staff experiencing signs and symptoms are recommended to:

- Call Telehealth: 1-866-797-0000
- Complete the online self-assessment: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Contact their primary care provider (family physician)

If tested positive for COVID-19, THE ORGANIZATION's staff are expected to notify their manager immediately. The manager who has been advised by staff they have been tested positive for COVID-19 due to exposure at the workplace must give written notice within four days to:

1. Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and/or other funders
2. THE ORGANIZATION's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, or a health and safety representative

In addition, staff with asymptomatic (no symptoms) but may have been exposed to someone who might have COVID-19 are recommended to self-isolate.

*Self-isolation means, "staying home and separating yourself from others so you can stop the spread of the virus. It means no visitors." (TORONTO.CA/COVID19)*

- You must self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days if you've been travelling.
- You must self-isolate if you have lab-confirmed COVID-19.
- You must self-isolate if you've been in close contact with someone who has symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.
- You must self-isolate if you are sick with symptoms, even if you have not been tested.
- You must self-isolate if you are over the age of 70 and/or have a weak immune system or pre-existing medical condition.

For more information: [Have Symptoms or Been Exposed or Have COVID-19](#)

## **Risk Assessment at The Organization**

Risk has been carefully assessed by closely following Toronto Public Health's [Four Step Risk Assessment and Mitigation Guide for Community Non-Profits](#).

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In response to the risk assessment, measures and guidelines are in place at THE ORGANIZATION to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. See the following section *Reducing the Risk* for details of risk reduction protocols.

### **Reducing Risk at The Organization**

The following guidelines and protocols will be implemented to ensure the safety and well-being of all staff, participants and clients. THE ORGANIZATION staff are expected to adapt practices to ensure we continue to deliver programs and services, while also following control procedures to minimize hazards and risks to protect yourself and others at work and community.

### **Controls**

Controls include recommended measures for controlling and reducing the spread of COVID-19. They are Physical Distancing, Structural Changes, Service Provisions Changes and Hygiene Practises.

### **Hierarchy of Controls**

Below is the “hierarchy of controls” – or the most important measures for controlling the spread of COVID-19 in community service settings – ranked in order of effectiveness. THE ORGANIZATION has put all of these controls in place at all locations.

#### **Remove/block the hazard/source:**

- Front desk reception areas will now have glass installed (physical barrier)
- Established centre entry and exit points
- Integrate physical distancing in all centre activities- maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons
- Optimizing the movement of staff and clients to minimize potential contact hazard:
  - Staggered & alternate shifts
  - Staggered staff breaks and meals
  - Workstation/staff room spacing
  - Limited number of people in a work area
- Designated areas have been closed off at the centres to prevent large gatherings and to reduce use of space for possible contamination.
- Discourage sharing: telephones, keyboards, desks or workstation
- When in direct client contact, or in main centre/office area use of protective equipment is required: masks, face shields, gloves (as needed).
- Conduct an active screening before appointments are scheduled and Conduct virtual meetings whenever possible.
- Reschedule unnecessary visits to the workplace (i.e. vendors, deliveries).

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## **More about Controls**

### Physical Distancing

Staff have been oriented to the physical distancing measures in place at all locations and are expected to follow these measures (i.e. maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) or more between persons; limited number of people in a work area; workstation and common area spacing etc.)

We ask that you make responsible decisions in your personal life, avoiding concerts, sporting events, non-essential travel and other large public gatherings. We also ask that you follow: [City of Toronto's COVID-19: Reopening Information for the Public](#)

### Structural Changes

Physical barriers (plexiglass) have been installed at reception areas and in offices and common areas to block the “hazard source”. Staff are to follow established entry and exit points to the buildings and the rooms within.

### Service Provision Changes

We will continue to adopt and use virtual technologies to better enable remote work and service delivery in response to COVID-19. With the reopening of community services in Ontario and Toronto, and in order to best serve some clients, THE ORGANIZATION is providing in-person services by appointment.

### *Service Guidelines*

#### Participants, Clients & Office Visitors

At THE ORGANIZATION, serving clients and supporting our community is a priority. To effectively function and operate requires everyone's participation and engagement. THE ORGANIZATION is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.

To minimize risks and spread of COVID-19 the following service guidelines have been established.

- Participants and/or clients, visitors entering the centre showing any signs of COVID-19 or cold, flu symptoms will be asked to leave the centre immediately
- Participants, and clients at the centre will be required to wear a protective mask/face covering in main centre areas and when direct contact cannot be avoided
- Soft screening questionnaire to be completed prior to booking an appointment
- Confirmation calls prior to scheduled meetings, intakes and assessments
- Shared Appointment schedule between centre programs (upload on system)- to monitor number of people in the centre at a given time (Excel/Outlook/Bookings etc. – testing)

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### Hygiene Practises

Preliminary information on COVID-19 suggests that the virus lives on objects and surfaces. It is not yet known how long the virus lives on surfaces, but early evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to a few days.

### *Personal Hygiene*

It has been identified that worker actions or behaviours can reduce hazards.

The following controls have been adopted and implemented:

- Practice good hand washing and use of hand sanitizer
- Wash hands after contact with others, or with surfaces that have been touched
- Wash hands before breaks or shift changes
- Avoid touching your face
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue and discard it
- When possible use a clean tissue, or your knuckle/elbow to touch light switches, doors, buttons, etc.
- All classrooms and desks will have hand sanitizers and wipes dedicated
- Use hand sanitizer when receiving deliveries and interacting with the public
- Do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon exiting the centre

### *Clean Desk & Disinfectant Guidelines & Protocols*

As previously noted, COVID-19 virus can live on surface areas from a few hours to a few days. Increased cleaning and sanitization protocols have been implemented to minimize risks at our centres. Please ensure you are using the appropriate cleaning agent.

- All desks, work surface areas to be clean before and after each visitor
- Clean desk policy- staff desks to be cleared and cleaned and the end of each workday
- Clean touchpoints- doors knobs, computer keyboard, phone etc.
- Clean photocopier before and after each use
- Open close windows to improve fresh air intake/circulation.

### *Use of Masks & Gloves- When and How to Wear a Mask*

Where physical distancing is not possible a mask will be worn. Masking for a source of control protects others around you by catching your droplets.

While using a non-medical mask or face covering the following guidelines are recommended:

- Ensure the face covering is clean and dry.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap (at least 20 seconds) before touching the mask.
- Ensure mask covers both the nose and mouth.

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- While wearing a non-medical mask or face covering, it is important to avoid touching your face. If you do touch your mask or face, wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 15-20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Please review attached information sheets for wearing and disposing of non-medical masks and face coverings: [Face Masks and Coverings](#)

#### *Mandatory Use of Mask or Face Covering within THE ORGANIZATION Programs*

In compliance with the City of Toronto [By-Law 541-2020](#) THE ORGANIZATION will be enforcing the use and wear of non-medical masks, or face coverings when entering the centre.

THE ORGANIZATION trusts that our staff understands the challenges many of our clients and students face. We encourage staff to be mindful that we don't always know what someone is struggling with when entering our centre.

While listening to clients' body language and paying attention to their state of mind, THE ORGANIZATION has created policies to support staff on how to respond in various circumstances.

#### **Client Scenarios - How to respond in various circumstances:**

- ***Client arrived without a mask because they forgot or don't have one:***

As the client approaches front reception politely ask them if they have a mask. If yes, ask them to wear it.

If no, we can provide a disposal mask to be worn in order to access the centre.

- ***Client wanting more information about the policy and bylaw:***

If the client questions why they should wear a mask, please direct their attention to the bylaw poster (on wall) and mention that under COVID-19 this is a new bylaw (enforceable as of July 7, 2020) required by the City of Toronto, and policy signed by the Directors at THE ORGANIZATION.

- ***Client becomes aggressive about the requirement:***

As soon as the client shows some resistance or non-compliance ask the client to wait and immediately contact the manager to see the client.

Manager can remind the client this safety measure is to prevent the spread of the virus, and to maintain a healthy environment; THE ORGANIZATION is following the City of Toronto bylaw requiring the use of face mask or face covering in all indoor public spaces.

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- ***Client wanting more information about the importance of wearing a mask or the science on the use of masks:***

If a client is asking/questioning the purpose of wearing a mask, please hand out a copy, "How do cloth face coverings prevent the spread of COVID-19?" (The Science on the use of masks)

**Available to the public at front reception**

If the client is having difficulty reading, and/or understanding the hand-out, provide an overview for the client:

-wearing a mask is a preventative measure in combination with hand washing/sanitizing, and social distancing.

-wearing a mask prevents you and others in cases where someone is a carrier of the virus but not showing symptoms.

-Wearing a face mask in public is an effective means to prevent inter-human transmission (provides an extra layer of safety).

If the client persists in asking questions, ask the client to wait and contact the manager to see the client.

- ***Client inquiry about the availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration)***

Let the client know, all hand sanitizers we have at the centre are based on more than 70% alcohol concentration and approved by the government.

- ***Client wants to know if they can be fined (for not wearing a mask in indoor public spaces):***

Yes. The use of face mask or face coverings in all indoor public spaces is a bylaw. A mask bylaw has a set fine of \$1,000 for each offense.

**The following persons are exempted from requiring a mask or face covering and will not be required to provide proof of such exemption:**

- Children under two years of age.
- Persons with an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering.
- Persons who are unable to place, remove, or use a mask or face covering without assistance.
- Employees or operators of the Establishment, in a designated area not for public access, or within or behind a physical barrier.
- Persons who are reasonably accommodated by not wearing a mask or face covering under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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### **Mental Health**

Maintaining a safe working environment requires everyone's participation and support. As we adopt new protocols to continue service delivery, we need to remember to be mindful of our mental health and well-being of others.

*Wellness Together Canada* provides tools and resources at *no cost* to help Canadians.

<https://ca.portal.gs/>

1. Wellness self-assessment and tracking.
2. Self-guided courses, apps, and other resources.
3. Group coaching and community of support.
4. Counselling by text or phone.

### **Conclusion**

THE ORGANIZATION will ensure on-going evaluation of centre protocols and guidelines are being followed.

THE ORGANIZATION will continue to monitor COVID-19 updates. We will amend and adjust guidelines, and service delivery protocols as directives are given from Toronto Public Health, and the Provincial and Federal Government.