

Prince George & District Elizabeth Fry Society

COVID-19 Work Safety Plan

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The Prince George & District Elizabeth Fry Society and Housing Society (PG E. Fry) has been following the guidelines from WorkSafeBC in the development of a PG E Fry Covid-19 Safety Plan that meets the requirements as set out by the Provincial Health Officer in BC's Covid-19 Go Forward Return to Work Strategy. The goal of our restrictions and worksite adaptations has been to slow the spread of Covid-19 while protecting the most vulnerable people of our community and keeping our staff safe and healthy.

We will continue to ensure diligence to reduce transmission within all of our facilities by following these core workplace guidelines:

1. Actively promoting and monitoring personal self-care actions.
2. Actively promoting and implementing core measures for managing social interaction in our facilities in congregate social areas (kitchens, staff rooms, shared public spaces).
3. Have clear policies to enable and ensure that individuals who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or Covid-19 including any coughing or sneezing should not come into the workplace.
4. Implementing and sustaining higher levels of frequent cleaning of “high touch” areas in our workplaces throughout the day and ensure the availability of hand sanitizer stands and/or handwashing stations at entrances to our buildings.
5. Where appropriate, and practical, increasing use of temporary physical barriers (such as Plexiglas at service counters).
6. Implementing and staying up to date with the latest precautions and required directives as provided by the provincial health officer/minister.

Communication

During this pandemic, the health and well-being of our staff and clients have been our primary concern. As we look to re-open our buildings, this remains our main focus. With that in mind, we have developed the following protocols. Of course as the pandemic continues to unfold, we will be monitoring new public health measures and re-evaluating our procedures and processes in the light of any new information. This situation is complex and without precedent in the modern age. It is impossible to get this perfect, but we are going to do our best to educate ourselves and move forward with a measured approach and robust mitigation strategies in place.

We also know we have truly extraordinary teams that will do what we do best. That is to collaborate on new approaches, communicate if we feel like something is not working, and be engaged in this process. The protocols below are only a first step. We welcome input now and will seek continued feedback and communication to determine how effective these procedures are and if the benefits of each measure outweigh the potential harms.

1. Self-Monitoring

Pre-mitigation, including reporting and self-screening, will help to identify possible COVID-19 positive employees and proactively remove risks that they could inadvertently introduce coronavirus into the workplace.

Employees with COVID-19 symptoms must stay home and not come to work for at least 10 days, or longer if symptoms have not resolved. As per HealthLink BC, after 10 to 14 day self-isolation, you may return to your regular activities if:

- At least 10 days have passed since any symptoms started; and
- Your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Advil); and
- You are feeling better (there is improvement in runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue). Coughing may go on for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean you need to continue to self-monitor and self-isolate; or
- You were self-monitoring and never developed any symptoms.
- Call 8-1-1 for further guidance or COVID-19 testing.

Employees must also stay at home when sick to avoid spreading illness to others, even if symptoms are not consistent with COVID-19, as you may be non-symptomatic.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing reduces the potential of coronavirus being transmitted through airborne droplets. There is a possibility that even non-symptomatic carriers of coronavirus may transmit the virus in this manner, so physical distancing should always be observed, even in cases when people do not display symptoms of COVID-19.

- Access to our workplaces must be controlled and where appropriate alternative methods such as video or conference calls, be used for conducting business to prevent close personal contact.
- Lunchrooms, break rooms, boardrooms, reception and common areas must be arranged to follow physical distancing practices.
- Employees should remain on their primary work floor/area and not visit other floors/areas in the building unless absolutely necessary.
- Whenever possible, employees should travel alone in vehicles to ensure physical distancing.
- Business travel is not supported at this time and should only be on an emergency or “no other option reason” and cleared with the Executive Director.

Should you travel in Canada for personal reasons you will be expected to take all required precautions and it is recommended that you take a few extra personal days once you return to ensure that you are symptom free. If you have any symptoms you must remain at home and follow the COVID 19 guidelines and the provincial health authority directions.

2. Reducing Transmission

Physical distancing measures – measures to reduce the density (intensity and number of contacts) of people in your setting.

All Locations

Where possible’ continue to work by telephone, web, or electronic platform to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” in the workplace.

Where this is not possible or in addition to working from home policies, adhere to the following protocols:

- Consult your schedule/ calendar and adhere to in-office protocols for service delivery as discussed with program manager.
- Schedule in-office, physically-distant client meetings where safety can be maintained
- Consider alternative places to meet clients that allow for physical distancing (ie: outside, if safe and private)
- Ensure that all in-person appointments are scheduled and staggered to allow time to sanitize surfaces between appointments (e.g., schedule a break or virtual session following an in-person appointment) and to minimize contact with others.
- Restrict number of people who accompany clients where and if possible (i.e., no children, friends, or family accompaniment allowed)
- For family appointments, ensure that clients who attend are from the same household or “social pod”
- Staggered use of office space, or physically distanced office space and possibly with barriers in between to reduce contact.
- Identify any risks that arise from the reduction of people at the worksite; for example, counsellors working alone and/or with high-risk client(s). Address these risks as required with a manager.
- No in-person community group meetings, use virtual platforms whenever possible
- Internal meetings may be scheduled in spaces that allow for appropriate physical distancing

- Refrain from home visits and transportation of clients unless approved by Program Manager
- Request contactless delivery to maintain physical distancing requirement (e.g., delivery person leaves packages in a pre-arranged location) where possible
- Limit and post occupancy limits in all communal or multi-use rooms/spaces
- Have staggered begin and complete work times so that staff are not all arriving and leaving at the same time.
- Utilize hard surface meeting spaces for client appointments, avoid having appointments within your office space, **and sanitize after any visit or appointment.**
- **Each staff is responsible for maintaining their own safe office space, and must sanitize at the end of each shift, and after any visit of other employees/ personnel.**

3. **Physical Barriers**

– e.g. Plexiglas barriers; one-way systems for customer flow; physical space between seating.

All Locations

- Waiting areas minimized to a maximum of 2-3 clients depending on location.
- Consider alternatives, or if it becomes too busy: Ask clients to wait in their vehicles, or outside the office if possible, until just before their appointment or when they are called or texted to come in
- Communicate the process for entering the building/office to client, visitor or delivery person
- Hand sanitizer available at all locations in multiple spaces
- Have tissues, a garbage can, and hand sanitizer available and within easy reach of clients in every counselling office
- Lunch rooms, kitchenettes/ coffee spaces – Bridges and CLA rooms (upstairs) limited use:
 - only two people should be in the lunch/eating area at a time
 - Bridges and CLA rooms (upstairs) limited use as per the notice on/beside the door
 - If necessary small in-person internal group meetings may be scheduled in the Bridges or CLA room to allow for adequate physical distancing, you will need to book the room in advance
 - Do not use any cutlery, plates or other items. Staff should bring fully prepared meals in self-contained dishes that can be “packed in and packed out” of the workplace
 - Only fridge, microwave, kettle and coffee machine will be available for use
 - Disposable dishes and cutlery will be provided for use in order to reduce/eliminate transmission, that could typically happen with non-disposable items being handled
 - Once staff person has finished they will disinfect all surfaces they came in contact with
 - only one person in the small kitchenette/coffee space at a time

4. **Administrative controls** – rules and guidelines to reduce the likelihood of transmission in your setting (e.g. stay away if sick; hours of operation).

All Locations

Client Health

- Actively screening clients over the phone before scheduling or confirming appointments. This includes screening for any symptoms, asking if they have close contacts that have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or if client has travel history that may be relevant to COVID-19
- Ask clients about PPE. Do they want employees to wear PPE? If so, suggest a virtual meeting may be held instead
- When booking in-person appointments staff will ask clients to cancel, reschedule or schedule a virtual appointment if they develop symptoms or have a close contact that has confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Remind clients of this policy when they arrive for their appointment
- Reminder sign posted at door; if presenting symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19 they will be denied access to building

Staff Health

- Employees reminded to practice good health hygiene, frequent handwashing during the day
- Daily check-in for employees coming to the office. If experiencing symptoms please complete the Self-Assessment at www.healthlinkbc.ca.
- Any symptoms? Contact with individuals who have tested positive? If yes, contact your program manager or supervisor and arrange to stay home.
- Seek medical care early if you are experiencing symptoms and inform Program Manager or supervisor immediately
- If staff fall ill during work day they must immediately wash their hands, put on a mask and inform Program Manager or supervisor and follow directions for going directly home

Other

- Mandatory use of hand sanitizer at front door for every person entering the premises
- Limit the use of communal pens with clients/delivery people etc and refrain from exchanging items before and after the appointment (e.g., send documents and reports electronically)
- Minimize sharing office space or work stations
- Ensure staff use their own equipment (e.g., pens, staplers, and computers).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces before leaving the space, such as the computer keyboard and mouse, desk surface, and telephone
- Everyone must wear gloves when using the photocopier, and other pieces of communal office equipment
- All staff should ensure that they are sanitizing all high touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, light switches) before and after a client attends an in-person appointment
- Everyone is required to participate in the daily cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces, equipment, tools, common tables, desks, light switches, and door handles as per the cleaning checklist.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

- PPE available at all location (gloves, hand sanitizer, masks if/when available)
- If it is not possible to maintain physical distancing with clients, consider the use of non-medical masks or face shields. Masks/shields can reduce the spread of droplets from the wearer, but

may not prevent the wearer from inhaling the droplets of others. It is therefore important to ensure that clients as well as the counsellor are wearing masks to ensure protection for both parties

5. Other

Monitor and Update COVID-19 Safety Plan

Health and Safety Sub-committee for residential and community programs to ensure we:

- Assess COVID-19 safety plan procedures and determine if adjustments need to be made
- Identify new areas of concern and make changes as necessary
- Ensure staff are educated and informed of all COVID-19 policies and procedures
- Ensure a clear process for staff to voice concerns

It is very important that all staff communicate if they feel like something is not working and feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Travel Management Measures

No immediate change in the status of international travel measures. Employees who travel outside of the country will continue to be required to self-isolate for 14 days upon return.

Testing

As per Provincial Health Office, testing will remain an important part of the management strategy going forward. Public Health has guidance for COVID-19 testing as follows:

1. Test all individuals with new respiratory or symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild.
2. Individuals in the following groups should be prioritized for testing:
 - People working/living in congregate settings such as work-camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors' residences.
 - Essential service providers.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is an important public health tool to stop COVID-19 from spreading rapidly in communities.

Here's how it works:

- If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, a member from public health will reach out to let you know you may have been exposed.
 - If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you'll be asked to get tested.
 - If you don't have symptoms, you'll be directed to self-isolate for 14 days and self-monitor for symptoms.
 - If you test positive, public health will reach out to all your close contacts and restart the process.
- If you get sick, tell public health about the people you've spent time with. It's crucial to stopping the spread of COVID-19. Learn more:<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation/contact-tracing>

At work tracing:

We will be implementing (by August 24th) a sign in slip for all people coming into our site offices. Clients attending appointments or programs will not be required to sign in as their attendance in the building will be recorded by the program staff they are working with.

Here's how it will work:

- A non-client person enters the office, they will be advised of our contact tracing process.
- They will fill out a small slip of paper requiring their name, phone number, the date and time.
- They will place the slip into the covered slip receptacle- a small shoe box with a small slit in the top.
- At the end of the day the slips from the box will be emptied into an envelope, which will be dated, sealed and kept in a secure location for 15 days.
- On day 15 - if no contact tracing has been implemented, the envelope along with all of the slips will be shredded.
- If contact tracing is required by the health authority, we will be able to go to the envelope and retrieve the contact slips the day exposure could have taken place in order to facilitate the tracing process.

September 1, 2020 modifications include:

- The removal of initials from the bottom of each page of the Safety Plan document dated Aug. 19, 2020.
- The removal of the last bullet on page 2 of the sign off agreement.

October 1, 2020 modifications include:

In response to the provincial health officer indications that the COVID numbers are increasing, and the evidence that numbers in the North are rising significantly, we have had made the decision, as an organization to implement an extra measure of caution in order to keep everyone's safety a priority.

Effective October 1, 2020 Burns Lake and the Prince George office have moved to a locked door procedure. All individuals coming into the offices will be required to answer screening questions. If the answers to the screening questions indicate that there is no risk, then they will be able to enter into the office, -they will be required to wear a mask for the duration of the time that they are in the office. Staff will also be required to escort their client out of the building to ensure that the client doesn't inadvertently allow access to someone waiting at the outside locked door.

Each office will develop a site specific process for responding to individuals at the door. Staff who are expecting clients will make arrangements to greet their client and ensure the screening checklist is completed before the client enters the building. Individuals will be provided a mask if they do not have one. If an individual indicates that they cannot wear a mask – or won't wear a mask, then they will not be permitted to enter into the building. Staff will remain physically distanced while they offer alternative arrangements- such as phone call, or zoom/web contact to the individual at a later date.

All employees in the offices will be required to wear a mask while in the common areas or while in the presence of a client. Employees are reminded to wash/sanitize their hands every time they enter into the office building. Sanitizing the designated office spaces is still required twice/day.

Amended COVID -19 SAFETY PLAN AGREEMENT: It has become clear that our COVID documents are changing frequently. We will not be requiring a sign-off for any future agreements as it is becoming very time intensive in tracking the sign-offs. To that end the COVID 19 SAFETY PLAN AGREEMENT will now be called the COVID 19 SAFETY PLAN DIRECTIVE. The DIRECTIVE will provide the organizational expectations for each staff person in relation to their own personal health and COVID 19. All staff will be expected to follow the directive.