HOME VISITS DURING A PANDEMIC

During the COVID-19 pandemic, communities will want to continue supporting Housing First participants to retain their housing. Housing First participants will likely need this support more than ever given changes to community services, requirements for social distancing and isolation, and the mental health challenges this presents. Home/support visits and connections will require creative approaches in order to keep everyone safe.

Tips for Conducting Home/Support Visits During a Pandemic

- **Increase Contact:** Wherever possible, increase contact during this time – weekly (or more for those that need it) at consistent days and times.

- **Connect Virtually or By Phone** – Base method on what is most convenient for the participant
  - Virtual support through a variety of applications, such as Skype, Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, or Instagram video calling
  - Phone support – [Check out some great examples from Spain.](#)
  - Telus has offered some communities free phones for participants without technology so communication and virtual home visits are more possible.

- **Continue communication through other means** – Possibly due to lack of minutes or lack of internet/phone lines, communication can still be accomplished via:
  - Typed notes that can be placed into a ziplock bag, wiped down and visible through the plastic, and passed under a doorway.
  - Small dry-erase boards that can be left for both participant and worker. Handle using gloves.
  - Weather permitting, standing outside while being mindful of appropriate [physical distancing](#) guidelines.

- **Calls should cover:**
  - How participant is dealing emotionally with the situation
  - Home visit checklist (below)
  - Other areas of concern.

- **Always end a home visit with scheduling the next one**

- **Home Visit Checklists** – Create home visit checklists that can be dropped off, completed, and made available for pick up later or create online checklists participants can complete electronically:
  - Food security
  - Rent payment
  - Home maintenance/cleanliness
  - Cleaning supplies (i.e. Sanitary wipes, bleach, etc.)
• Please keep in mind, non-alcohol or bleach-based products have not been shown to be more effective than using soap and water. This includes non-alcohol wipes, hand sanitizers, or even vinegar-based cleaning products.
  - Cleaning plans
  - Cleaning of toys if children in home
  - Guests management (social distancing guidelines)
  - Physical and Mental Health – make sure they have phone numbers to necessary supports
  - Medications
  - Linen and mattress conditions
  - Neighbour issues
  - Substance use

**Consider the following support areas/ideas:**
  - Work with participants on how to access food/grocery delivery or pick up services
  - Provide participants with prevention posters to put up in their homes (i.e. handwashing, social distancing, etc.)
  - Use this as opportunity to connect participants with family and natural supports
  - Encourage Meaningful Activities (reading, physical exercise, cooking new dishes)
  - Teach mindfulness exercises
  - Discuss harm reduction strategies

**Self-Isolation Problem-Solving** – If your client needs to self-isolate, complete an inventory with your client about what things need to be handled to ensure that they self-isolate and remain housed.

**Transportation**
  - Do not transport participants in your vehicle.
    - Alternatives: designated transport services or outreach vans or bus systems set up to handle this situation.
  - Provide bus tickets or taxi chits or vouchers to participants for trips to essential services.
    - Be informed about current status and appropriate use of public transit in your community.

**Landlord Connection** – connect regularly with landlords to identify any concerns or things that are going well and to update them. Be proactive and connect on a consistent basis.
  - Encourage landlords to establish virtual ways to communicate with participants.
  - Ensure that safe methods for handling problems or challenges are established including prioritization of tenancy issues.
  - Be aware of special COVID-19 pandemic supports for tenants and landlords – see this [Eviction Prevention one-pager](#) for further information.

Disclaimer: This document is a collection of resources and/or ideas compiled by the team at CAEH. Please follow [Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines on COVID-19](#) as the primary resource for all health-related concerns.

CAEH will continue to update this resource as new information or ideas become available. Please refer to the CNH3 website Resources page at [cnh3.ca/resources](#) for additional information. If you have an idea or resource to share or are seeking further support, please contact us at info@caeh.ca.