

MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES THAT RESPECT PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND SUPPORT ISOLATION

CAEH heard from community leaders that it has been challenging to keep people in isolation spaces and congregated settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This resource provides ideas for group activities that help people stay socially connected while respecting [physical distancing](#), as well as individual activities to counteract boredom or **encourage continued isolation** if isolation is required.

These ideas may not be the best fit for everyone. Applying a **person-centered approach** means organizing activities and social supports around a person and their needs. **Check in with people** to ask about activities they would normally do in the absence of COVID-19. Brainstorming how usual activities could be altered to respect physical distancing or isolation can go a long way. This may include facilitating access to drugs or alcohol, safe consumption sites, or harm reduction supplies that may encourage a continued stay. Activities with an * means they require some form of technology.

Group Activities that Respect Physical Distancing

- **Hallway Bingo:** Have people sit in their doorways if space allows to keep a safe distance and call out Bingo numbers from the hallway. Ensure materials are disinfected as COVID-19 can live on some surfaces for multiple days.
- **Balcony Ballads:** Take a page out of [Italy's book](#) and schedule times for people to join in song or dance while maintaining a safe distance.
- **Community Artwork:** Safely provide people with the materials to complete an art project. This could be a freestyle project or a more tailored exercise where each person is asked to create the same thing. Ensure the materials are disinfected before distribution. Hang the completed artwork in a common space or on a board that you can bring around to show participants. There's a reason adult colouring books became so popular; colouring can help reduce stress.
- **Physical Exercise:** Staying active is important under any circumstance. Exercise can reduce stress and improve sleep. Teach people some quick and easy exercises they can do alone or as a group. Google some dance party ideas, yoga positions, or other workouts that people can do while remaining at a safe distance.
 - **Walking Outside:** Going for a walk outside can help greatly with boredom or anxiety. While walking at a safe distance from others is permitted at this time, please take note of different provincial and municipal restrictions with regards to using public parks or common spaces.
 - Example: Staff in Moncton, NB organized **coffee walks** with three alternating guests per day.
- **Movies*:** Provide DVD's or create an organizational Netflix or Disney Plus account to share with people who live in the same building. Create a Movie Club where participants are asked to watch the same movie and then discuss through a chat, in writing, or in-person at a safe distance. Hold a **Netflix Party** if you are unable to share a Netflix account with everyone in the building.

- To use Netflix Party, you must have the Chrome Browser on your device. You can download the browser [here](#) for free.
- Once you have downloaded it, add the Netflix Party Chrome Extension. You can find it from this [website here](#), just click where it says, “Get Netflix Party for free!”
- Once you have the extension downloaded, all you need is an active Netflix account. Whomever is hosting simply starts playing a Netflix video, and anyone with a Chrome Browser with the Netflix Party extension who you invite can watch along with you. There is even a chat function if you want to discuss what you are seeing.
- [This video](#) is only two-and-half minutes long and can walk you through the process.

Individual Activities to Help Keep Clients in Isolation Spaces

- **Care Packages:** Providing clients with items that they need or want may help reduce temptation to leave an isolation space.
 - Example: Staff in Windsor, ON provided clients at an isolation site with snacks, magazines, coffee, laundry soap to wash their clothes in the sink, and meals delivered to their door.
- **Connect People with Similar Interests:** Not every activity needs to be done with an entire group. Connecting two or three people with similar interests can reduce feelings of isolation. Encourage social connection while stressing the importance of keeping a safe distance from one another.
- **Meditation Exercise:** Meditation exercises can be as simple as doing some deep breathing for 1-2 minutes. [Meditation](#) is any activity that helps quiet the mind, such as staring at a candle, repeating a mantra, or picturing yourself in a different setting.
- **Reading and Writing:** Provide people with a supply of books or connect them to a local book exchange. Ensure books are disinfected before distribution. In the same vein, provide people with writing materials (i.e. journals, pencils, pens) and sample pieces of work (i.e. blogs, short stories) to spark creativity and encourage people to complete their own masterpiece.
- **Music:** Suggest a new song, band, album, or favourite radio station.
- **Support Existing Hobbies:** Provide supplies that support common hobbies in the building, such as puzzles, beading, origami, cooking new recipes or meals, scrap booking, or photography.
- **Learn a new skill, topic, or language*:** Provide people with free courses or trainings, such as the ones found on [Coursera](#), [Lynda](#), or [Khan Academy](#).
- **Help people connect with their friends and family*:** Teach people how to use communication applications to stay connected with their loved ones who may be unable to visit, such as WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype, or Facebook Video Calling.

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.