

## Safe Operating During Phase 3 COVID-19 – September 1, 2021

The following considerations and procedures are a plan to guide the face-to-face counseling services of the Elkford Women's Task Force Society as we provide face-to-face services amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employers are required to develop a COVID Safety Plan that outlines the policies, guidelines and procedures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The risk reduction plan includes the following:

Assessment of Risk At Workplace – Assessment of workplaces to identify places where the risk of transmission is introduced. The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, or from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. To further assess risk at the workplace the following are circumstances to consider:

What job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with one another or members of the public?

What equipment do people come into contact within the course of their work?

What surfaces are touched often, such as doorknobs, pens, games, shared resources, and tables?

Implement Measures to Reduce the Risk – We must select and put in place measures to minimize the risk of transmission.

Working from home or remotely is the most appropriate way of limiting transmission.

Limit the number of workers and clients in one space at a time.

Maintain a distance of 2 meters (6 feet) between workers, clients and others whenever possible.

Implement measures to ensure workers can maintain a distance of two meters when serving or working with or near members of the public.

Ensure the use non-medical masks for staff and clients.

Provide adequate hand-washing facilities on site for all workers and ensure location is visible and easily accessible. Provide hand sanitizer when hand-washing facilities are not available. Develop policies around when workers must wash their hands.

Implement a cleaning protocol for common areas and surfaces.

Remove any unnecessary tools or equipment that may elevate the risk of transmission.

Develop Policies – Develop policies to manage your workplace, including who can be in the workplace, how to address illness, and how workers are kept safe in adjusting work conditions.

The Provincial Health Officer and the BC CDC have issued the following guidance around self-isolation, which must be reflected in policies:

Anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days must self-isolate at home; symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and new muscle aches or headache.

Anyone under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer to self-isolate must follow these instructions

Prohibit or limit visitors.

Have a plan around workers who may start to feel ill while at work, including who they should notify and how they will travel from workplace to home.

Develop safety plan for workers working alone.

Develop work from home policies.

Develop Communication Plans and Training – We must ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers and clients, know how to keep themselves safe while accessing program services.

Be sure everyone is trained on the measures put in place and the policies around staying home when you are sick.

Post signage, including occupancy limits and effective handwashing practices.

Signage should be posted at entrance and easily visible.

Ensure supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

Monitor Workplace and Update Plan as Needed.

Circumstances change as our business operates. If you identify a new area of concern, or if it seems like something is not working, take steps to update policies and procedures. Involve workers in this process.

Ensure workers can raise safety concerns. This may be addressed through Executive Director. If employees feel Executive Director has failed to address worker concerns presentation of concerns to Board of Directors is applicable.

Assess and Address Risks In Resuming Operations – If workplace has not been operating, there may be risks arising from restarting that need to be addressed.

Consider the following:

Staff turn over

Will workers need time or training to refresh their skills after having been out of workplace

Have we changed anything about the way we operate?

Are there processes required for start-up that might introduce risks?

## In-Person Counselling Protocols

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, by the amount of time you spend near them, and by the number of people you come near. The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene measures help mitigate this risk. As of August 21, 2021, as per Provincial Health Orders counselling staff is required to wear masks while providing services to clients, while meeting with other staff members face to face, or while attending outside agencies.

The best way to limit contact and potential exposure to COVID-19 is to work remotely and deliver services using technology that is appropriate. If delivering services using appropriate technology, please provide parent/guardians with appropriate documents concerning electronic service delivery and privacy. Further, services must be able to be delivered to clients in an appropriate setting that allows both counsellor and client privacy while delivering services. The appropriate information will be provided to parents/guardians at the time of intake and worker will go over the documents with parents/guardians to ensure a clear understanding of expectations and service delivery requirements. If intake is done remotely a note indicating consent will be included on clients' file.

In cases that it is determined that in-person counselling is most appropriate the following procedures must be followed:

Informed consent, including acknowledgment of the risks of COVID-19, must be obtained from parents/guardians prior to delivering in-person service.

A health screening questionnaire must be completed with clients and parents/guardians prior to each appointment. (See attached screening document developed by Hilary Mozeski). The counsellor will contact the parent/guardian in the morning prior to the scheduled appointment to complete the health screening questionnaire. Any affirmative answer to a health screening question will result in the appointment being rescheduled. If a worker and/or worker's family member or a client and/or a client's family members have been or are ill the session must be rescheduled.

As winter approaches delivering services in an indoor setting is likely. Ensure that the space is large, can accommodate physical distancing and can only be

accessed by client/worker while delivering service. As per Provincial Health Orders made August 21, 2021 mask should be worn by staff while delivering services in person. Further, clients should be strongly encouraged to wear masks. It is acknowledged that for some clients masks may not be appropriate due to health reasons or previous trauma.

Two meters (six feet) of distance between worker and clients is **mandatory** and must always be maintained.

Hand washing/hand sanitizer use should be completed at the start of each in-person session and at the completion of each session. Appropriate supplies will be provided by the employer.

If client sessions are taking place at a table, on a bench or using a stationary surface sanitizing of surface must be done prior to and at the completion of the session. Cleaner will be provided by the employer.

Supplies and resources should not be shared between clients without proper disinfection after each session.

In-person group services can not be delivered at this time. Group services delivered remotely are appropriate. As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve in-person group services can be re-evaluated when it is safe to do so.

Transportation of clients can not be provided at this time.

Home visits are not appropriate currently.

Please schedule additional time between clients to allow for proper cleaning and sanitization to occur.

Ask clients not to be early for appointments to discourage groups waiting for service. Please ask clients to wait in their vehicle until they are called or texted to come.

As you are working alone, only do so if you feel safe working with clients. If you feel unsafe, please contact the Executive Director immediately.

It is important to avoid face touching while delivering services, even when physical distance is being maintained.

Ensure good respiratory etiquette by covering the mouth and the nose with the crease of the elbow or a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing. Ensure used tissues and disinfectant wipes are properly disposed of.

Refrain from providing snacks and beverages to clients currently.

The employer will be responsible for providing safe practice updates during COVID-19.

If you become ill while at work, please notify the Executive Director immediately.

If you are not working remotely, please proceed to your home and self-isolate as per the Provincial Health Officer guidelines. All guidelines issued by the Provincial Health Officer must be adhered to when delivering services.

If you have questions, please ask.