Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
Information for shelter service settings providers

This information is intended to help shelter service setting providers reduce the risk of exposure to illnesses including COVID-19. Shelter service settings may include temporary housing, shared living spaces or other services for people who are experiencing homelessness or who are underhoused (e.g. shelters, respite sites, drop-in centres etc.). This document provides recommendations for staff/volunteers, visitors as well as clients who rely on these settings for housing, support programs, food and other services.

Precautions in response to COVID-19:

- Post screening sign at all entrances and screen. Screening will reduce the spread of COVID-19 transmission in the community. If a staff, visitor, volunteer or a client has been exposed to COVID-19 or is symptomatic (e.g. cough, fever, difficulty breathing) have this person contact Durham Health Connection Line immediately for further direction.
  - Durham Health Connection Line 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 for a Public Health Nurse.
- Ensure you have a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) – disposable gloves, gowns, eye/facial protection and masks.
- Provide client(s) with a mask if they have respiratory symptoms and keep them isolated (e.g. single room, away from others at least 2 m distance, avoid common areas, designate a separate washroom, etc.).
- Practice good social distancing whenever possible (keep 2 m distance from others).

General steps to reduce the transmission of illness:

- Monitor clients for symptoms of illness and support them in accessing appropriate healthcare as needed.
- Ill staff and volunteers should notify their supervisors when ill.
- If staff, volunteers, visitors become ill onsite, they should isolate immediately and go home.
- Ill staff and volunteers should stay home until they are symptom-free, plus an additional 24 hours being symptom-free prior to returning to work.
- Practice proper hand hygiene by following proper handwashing and hand sanitizing methods.
Post hand hygiene signs in visible locations (i.e. washrooms, above sinks, dispenser holders).
Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) onsite should have an alcohol concentration between 70%-90%.
Offer supervised hand hygiene for clients prior to meals and encourage frequent hand hygiene.
Check liquid hand soap, paper towels and ABHR dispensers regularly to ensure continuous provision. Single-use, disposable products are preferred. If using refillable dispensers, ensure they are cleaned first followed by disinfection between refills.
Post Stop the spread of germs and Cover your Cough posters in visible locations onsite.
Practice proper respiratory etiquette (e.g. cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue and not your hands followed by appropriate hand hygiene).
Clean and disinfect environmental and commonly touched surfaces routinely and more often when someone is ill. Commonly touched surfaces include door knobs, light switches, handrails, faucets, keyboards, phones, etc.
Do not share items that come into contact with the mouth or nose such as eating/drinking utensils, drug-use equipment, cigarettes/smoking devices.
Personal grooming items should not be shared such as combs, brushes, toothbrushes, shaving equipment, nail cutters, etc.
Contact the Health Department for assistance and guidance if you suspect that there may be an outbreak of illness occurring.

Additional Resources:

- Durham Region Health Department is routinely updating COVID-19 online resources. Please check for up-to-date resources and information
- Facts About Novel Coronavirus COVID-19
- Facts About Novel Coronavirus Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Home
- Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings
- Cleaning and disinfection schedule (use as applicable)
- Durham Region’s Housing and Homelessness
- Contact the Health Department to obtain a shelter service settings information package

References:


March 16, 2020