



COVID-19 & Homelessness: Isolating in a Friendship Centre Context

People experiencing homelessness often have underlying health conditions and are unable to implement public health recommendations due to social and economic circumstances. For these reasons, people experiencing homelessness are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 or developing complications due to COVID-19.

Services that support people experiencing homelessness, including Friendship Centres have increased risk of a COVID-19 outbreak. Measures must be in place to control and prevent an outbreak. One measure is providing safe opportunities for self-isolation (determined through screening).

- Assess the capacity of your Friendship Centre to accommodate isolation spaces. Collaborate with Public Health, other relevant Community Agencies and the Municipality to secure spaces for isolation as well as determine a plan for operation.
- ** Staff/volunteers should **NOT** be designated as caregivers for symptomatic community members or those who tested positive for COVID-19. Contact Public Health.

There are **two isolation** options:

1. Assign individual community members to individual rooms with a private bathroom (ie. hotel).
2. A large, well-ventilated room to cohort symptomatic patients together (ie. recreational facilities, community centres, schools).

There must be two separate spaces that allow for isolation. One for symptomatic patients awaiting test results and one for those with confirmed mild cases of COVID-19. Isolation spaces for people with COVID-19 is not a replacement for the hospital system.

- In areas where community members with respiratory illness are staying, keep beds/mats at least 6 feet apart and use temporary barriers between beds/mats, such as curtains or plastic sheeting.
- Place possibly contaminated laundry into a container with a plastic liner and do not shake.
 - Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90 C) and dry well.
 - Clothing and linens belonging to the ill person can be washed with other laundry.
- Ensure frequent environmental cleaning.
- In collaboration with other relevant Community Agencies, determine other services that may be needed at the alternate site(s) (ie. mental health services, substance use programming/support etc).