

From: Brad Saunders, CEO
Date: November 13, 2020
Re: Update on COVID-19 Measures at CLTO

Over the past few months, Community Living Toronto (CLTO) has taken rapid and necessary steps to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these changes came about as a result of information from public health authorities that has been updated or amended as we have adapted to the crisis. We have extended many of these measures a number of times since March.

We enjoyed significant progress in battling COVID-19 throughout the summer months both at CLTO and across Canada. With the second wave of the pandemic upon us, our elected officials and Public Health authorities have enacted new measures to reduce case numbers and keep people safe. Over the past week, the provincial government declared Toronto a Red-Control zone due to escalating case counts and infection rates. These restrictions have been supplemented by measures from Toronto Public Health. Today, we are extending current measures to keep the people we support and our staff safe.

Group Homes

We have focused our efforts on keeping the people we support and our staff safe from COVID-19. Active screening measures are in place in all our sites and staff have been required to limit their employment in the vulnerable person sector to CLTO and school boards. Our staff are trained and continuously supported in infection prevention and control, cleaning, and disinfection protocols. Individuals living in CLTO residential programs have been receiving meaningful virtual and in-person day supports in their homes.

In keeping with recent provincial guidelines, all visits to CLTO sites must be scheduled with as much notice as possible. Indoor visits to CLTO residential sites are limited to “essential visitors” only. Essential visitors may include family members providing care, healthcare providers, and maintenance staff. Where possible and practical, essential family visits should be conducted outdoors while observing physical distancing, hand hygiene, and active screening measures. CLTO will provide masks and any other personal protective equipment necessary to keep these visits safe. All other visits must be conducted outside. Essential overnight absences will continue as they have been since the summer. Outings from CLTO residential sites are limited to essential trips, such as medical appointments or school.

Specific CLTO sites may be subject to further restrictions beyond these guidelines. Please consult with the site supervisor or manager with questions regarding site-specific restrictions.

These measures remain in effect until January 11, 2021. We will update these restrictions prior to January 11 if permitted to do so by the provincial government.

Day Programs

We remain unable to reopen large-scale congregate day programs due to provincial and local public health restrictions. Our small-scale day programs pilot has been paused due to escalating case numbers and public health restrictions. This program will remain paused until January 11, 2021.

While we cannot say exactly what will happen next, we know that reopening our services as we knew them is not an option. This is an opportunity to redesign our services in a way that furthers our core mission of supporting the rights and choices of the community we support through smaller, more individualized program offerings.

Passport

Our Passport staff have been supporting individuals throughout the pandemic with accessing technology and through virtual supports. We have resumed intake for community supports funded by the Passport program. Where possible, we will continue to support Passport-funded activities for people living in the community.

Virtual Offerings

We continue to offer virtual day supports as part of our menu of options at CLTO. These programs are offered via Zoom from 10AM to 3PM every day by trained CLTO facilitators. Activities include exercise classes, karaoke, and movie screenings. We also host fun activities on Facebook Live from our Community Living Toronto page. Highlights include Zumba, painting demonstrations, and accessible yoga. Beyond these measures, we are ensuring that all our group homes have the technology they need to keep the people we support happy and connected to their families and friends. Please contact your supervisor to arrange phone calls, Facetime chats, or other virtual connections with your family member.

Respite

We have opened after-school respite programs at three locations for a small number of participants. This program is operating at significantly reduced capacity due to public health restrictions. All participants in after-school respite programs are subject to active screening requirements and appropriate guidelines regarding physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other public health measures. The program is capped at current participants in accordance with public health guidelines.

Overnight respite programs remain closed across CLTO until January 11, 2021. This includes programs at Lawson, McMillan, TREADD, and Ennerdale.

CLTO Offices

CLTO has taken steps to significantly limit the number of people entering our administrative offices across the city, including our Head Office at 20 Spadina and all regional offices. Only essential staff are permitted entry to our offices, and anyone entering must wear a mask and be actively screened before proceeding into the building. All in-person training remains suspended across the Association and required and mandatory training is being provided online. These measures will remain in effect until January 11, 2021.

Individualized Supports, LIGHTS, APSW, Family Supports, Home Management, and Supported Independent Living

Many individuals supported or affiliated with CLTO live independently in the community with some or infrequent services from CLTO. We continue to reach out and support new and existing families with children and adults living at home remotely or through safe drop-offs of necessary items. We have recommended that people living independently take measures to limit the number of visitors entering their homes and that they practice physical distancing as much as possible. We have provided PPE to households or visiting staff where physical distancing is not possible.

Events Across CLTO

On the advice of Public Health authorities and in compliance with City of Toronto restrictions on gatherings and permitted events, we have cancelled all scheduled in-person events across the organization. Our flagship event, Community Rocks, has been postponed from November 2020 to November 2021.

Employment Supports

As much as possible, our employment supports continue to match individuals seeking work. We also continue to support individuals who are working in a CLTO-facilitated placement.

Shadow Lake

After a very successful summer of virtual camp and Facebook Live events, we were able to offer some in-person trial sessions at Shadow Lake in September. All activities were conducted in accordance with provincial and public health guidelines, including active screening, physical distancing, and proper hand hygiene. Looking toward next year, we will begin accepting applications for summer 2021 on December 1, 2020. We continue to accept registrations for Shadow Lake Virtual Camp on MyCommunityHub.ca. Shadow Lake staff are also offering online programming via Facebook Live every Tuesday and Thursday. Please consult the Shadow Lake Facebook page for further information.

With the second wave upon us, we must all do our best to keep each other and our communities safe. Basic public health measures like physical distancing and hand washing have never been more important. We remain laser-focused on keeping the people we support and our staff safe. Community Living Toronto staff are trained and experienced in the measures required to meet this challenge.

We will keep you informed as the situation unfolds. Thank you for your patience and understanding.