



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
North and West Vancouver  
*Mental health for all*

**North and West Vancouver Branch**  
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## CMHA NWV Office Reopening June 1

### COVID-19 Information and Direction *For Internal distribution on May 28, 2020*

Information adapted from: *BC COVID-19 Go-Forward Management Strategy and Worksafe BC COVID-19 Safety Plan*

The wellbeing of clients and staff is top priority for our branch. Our policies and procedures will evolve as we continue to learn from the changes we are implementing to our workflow and as new information and direction becomes available from the Provincial Health Office and BC Centre for Disease Control.

#### Information About COVID-19

Coronavirus is transmitted via larger liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, but also, potentially, when they are talking in very close proximity to another person. The virus in these droplets then can enter the body of another person when that person breathes in the droplets or when the droplets touch the eyes, nose or throat of that person. This requires you to be in close contact – less than the so-called social distancing of 2 metres. This is referred to as droplet transmission and is believed to be the primary way COVID-19 is transmitted. The goal of the plan presented in this document is to reduce risk of transmission for staff and clients when the office reopens on June 1.

#### Rationale for Reopening Office

The Office of the Provincial Health Officer and broader government have identified five goals amidst the current climate:

1. Protect lives by suppressing the transmission rate to the lowest rate possible for at-risk populations, until a vaccine becomes available.
2. Make sure the health system does not get overwhelmed to the point that it can't offer quality care to both non-COVID-19 and COVID-19 patients.

*Balanced against:*

3. Meeting the very real, ongoing physical and mental health needs of non-COVID-19 patients and populations.
4. Getting people back to work and rebuilding the economy
5. Optimizing the social fabric of our families and communities.

This is not a simple trade-off, but an extremely complex exercise for all of us in optimizing the physical, mental, social, and economic health of the people of British Columbia. While a return to normal levels, or near normal levels, is predicted to radically increase transmission, the move to 60% of normal is forecast to result in a flat transmission rate, as indicated by the number of patients requiring critical care.



## Working From Home

Our branch is continuing to encourage working from home whenever possible to reduce “contact intensity” and “number of contacts” in the workplace.

### Policies and Procedures at the Office to Reduce Transmission

COVID-19 can be transmitted through droplets in the environment if someone touches a contaminated area, then touches their face or eyes without cleaning their hands. Unfortunately, humans touch their mouths, noses, and eyes with a very high level of frequency per hour. This speaks to the importance of regularly cleaning one’s hands and also cleaning high-touch areas in the office environment.

First Level Protection (elimination): Limit the number of people at the workplace and ensure physical distance whenever possible. All staff are encouraged to work from home when possible.

- The office is opening so that counsellors and outreach workers can see clients by appointment. No one will be able to enter or access the office without an existing appointment or permission.
- Clients will be informed they are not to come to their appointment if they are experiencing symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, including a cough, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fatigue. Clients will be screened for symptoms on arrival.
- The occupancy limit for the office is 7 people. This includes staff and clients. Only one person will be permitted in the elevator at a time.

Second level protection (engineering): Barriers and partitions

- The reception area has taped markings to indicate where individuals can stand to ensure social distancing. Plexiglass will be installed around the reception desk where physical distancing is not possible. Chairs in the reception area have been arranged to allow physical distancing.
- Tape markers have been put down 2 meters apart in hallways and common areas inside the office.
- Offices have been reorganized to allow physical distancing between staff and clients. Offices are marked to indicate where each person should sit.

Third level protection (administrative): Rules and Guidelines

- Training for all staff accessing the office will be held May 28th at 2pm.
- Staff have been advised not to come to the office if they are experiencing symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19, including a cough, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, or fatigue.
- Counsellors and outreach workers must ensure their clients know they are not to attend appointments if they are experiencing symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19.
- A rotating schedule has been created for staff to take turns sanitizing all high touch surfaces in the office daily (specific to the days we don’t have a cleaner on site) . Staff will be provided with masks and gloves for this task. High touch surfaces include door handles, light switches, plexiglass barrier in reception, chairs in reception, elevator buttons and handrails, bar table and chairs in common break space, kitchen counter surface and appliances, printer, bathroom sink, toilet seat, toilet flush handle.
- Counsellors and Outreach workers will sanitize their office between each client appointment.

Fourth level protection (using masks): Optional measure in addition to other control measures

- Instead of requiring masks in the workplace we are ensuring physical distancing. If this proves difficult to enforce, we will reassess this decision and add masks.



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- Staff are invited to wear their own cloth or medical type masks in the workplace for personal protection.

### **Reduce the risk of surface transmission through effective cleaning and hygiene practices**

- Signs about handwashing are posted throughout the office, and staff have been trained about how and when to wash their hands.
- The office will be professionally cleaned twice a week now instead of once a week.
- Unnecessary office supplies, furniture and kitchen items have been removed from common areas.
- A rotating schedule has been created for staff to take turns sanitizing all high touch surfaces in the office daily (specific to the days we don't have a cleaner on site) . Staff will be provided with masks and gloves for this task. High touch surfaces include door handles, light switches, plexiglass barrier in reception, chairs in reception, elevator buttons and handrails, bar table and chairs in common break space, kitchen counter surface and appliances, printer, bathroom sink, toilet seat, toilet flush handle.

### **Administrative Controls**

Staff and clients are prohibited from entering the CMHA NWV office and all other worksites under the following conditions:

- You have experienced symptoms of a cold, flu or COVID-19 in the last ten days
- You were directed by Public Health, 811 or your doctor to self-isolate
- You have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last ten days
- You have travelled or been in contact with someone who has travelled outside of the province in the last 14 days

Counsellors and Outreach workers must inform clients of this policy in advance of their appointments. Counsellors and Outreach workers must ask clients if the above bullet points apply to them before the client enters the office.

Sick staff must report their symptoms to their manager. Please refer to the CMHA NWV Personnel Manual for more information about our sick time policy. As the benefit is quite generous, it is anticipated that this benefit, along with expanded work-from-home capacity, will be sufficient to address sick time required. If not, your manager and the Executive Director will deal with each situation on a case-by-case basis.