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## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

As COVID-19 vaccinations have become widely available the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission and serious consequences has diminished. Despite this, the virus will still circulate like other communicable diseases.

We are now in Step 3 of BC's Restart Plan. Requirements state that our plan be renamed a "Communicable Disease Plan" encompassing all illnesses and details measures to keep everyone safe when there is an elevated risk of any communicable disease.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a work place from one person to another. Examples of a communicable disease include COVID-19, norovirus and seasonal influenza.

### Step 1: Understanding risks at Yellowhead Community Services Society

Yellowhead Community Services provides a wide range of services from various locations in the North Thompson Valley and Cariboo. Each site may differ slightly, however, site specific policy and procedure will ensure compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements.

The community visits our offices to access individual counselling services. Adults with disabilities gather for group and individual programs and we provide child care services. It is a base for Transit, a hub for YCS financial and administrative programs, child, youth and family services and where the public access a community garden. We facilitate the Trusted Third Party, literacy for youth and adults, a business center, drop in play groups, employment and senior's services. We also operate a community garden.

Our staff provide a range of services that require close contact with community members and each other. Staff cook, take part in activities, transport and care for participants. Educators provide children with a safe and home like environment while parents work. Counsellors support community members, both adults and children. Transit drivers collect fares and share the bus while riders travel to their destinations. Administration staff work closely with everyone who enters the building. In home and public visits to families and children are organised from the office and seniors are provided with services to help them remain independent.

As you can see, almost all of our work relies on human interaction. It is the very

foundation of our services. We love to connect with people, read emotions, observe successes and challenges and learn so much from people by the way they react. This means that on a daily basis there are multiple opportunities for the spreading of infectious diseases.

At YCS we will continue to take ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission. This includes implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis.

## Step 2; Measures, practises and policy to reduce risks

*COVID-19;* If a staff member **or service user** tests positive for workplace transmission of COVID-19, Public Health will provide immediate consultation to support decision making in regards to facility closure. If closure is required this will be effective for at least 10 days.

*Mask wearing;* **Mask wearing in public shared spaces is mandatory for adults and children aged 12 years plus regardless of vaccination status.**

*Vaccinations;* YCS encourages all staff to participate in the vaccination program. Staff needing time off work to attend a vaccine clinic and receive a vaccination may request time from their manager. This will be accommodated to the very best of YCS's ability.

YCS does not require proof of vaccination status by staff or service users.

*Daily health check;* Staff are required to be healthy to attend their work facility and provide services.

*When staff are unwell;* We ask that staff experiencing any type of symptom related to a communicable disease, such as fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea, vomiting or sneezing avoid being in the work place.

Staff who experience mild communicable disease symptoms but are well enough to fully execute all work duties and can perform their duties from home should notify their manager and make arrangements to work from their home in accordance with our 'Working from Home' policy which references;

Health & Safety 7. Safety Check-In Policy  
Human Resources 15. Use of Equipment & Premises  
Human Resources 16. Internet Usage  
Human Resources 17. Social Media  
Technology Policy – Security & Confidentiality

Staff who are not able to provide services from home must notify their manager as soon as possible. Staff will be required to remain at home until they are symptom free or well enough to return to work.

Staff with symptoms of COVID-19 are expected to follow guidelines for testing and recovery as instructed by their General Physician or contact at 811.

*Hand Hygiene;* Everyone using YCS facilities must wash or sanitize their hands on entry to the YCS facility: *\*see the WorkSafe BC hand washing poster*

Staff and visitors should also wash their hands frequently throughout the day and always after

- using the toilet
- before and after eating
- after handling money
- when ever hands are visibly dirty

*Coughing and sneezing;* Please use a tissue to catch sneezes, then throw the tissue in the garbage. If you do not have a tissue available, you may sneeze into the corner of your elbow. Wash hands after sneezing.

*Cleaning and disinfecting;* Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high touch surfaces continues to be important to help to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases. Staff are required to clean their work area at regular intervals on a daily basis, but particularly at the end of their daily work shift. This includes regular sanitation of work vehicles.

Spray bottles with sanitizing liquid inside are placed strategically throughout the office for frequent and readily available use

Prior to flushing the toilet, users must ensure there are no bodily fluids in locations that will not be flushed away. The toilet lid must be lowered prior to flushing.

**Gatherings;** organised gatherings and groups can have a capacity of 50 people or 50% of capacity, whichever is greater. However, where there is a 'walk through' element to the event, such as a Farmers Market or music festival, there is no restriction in capacity.

**Ventilation;** Good ventilation is required to limit the spread of transmittable diseases. Windows or doors should be left open to allow for air flow. Room temperature should be cool with air conditioning and heating supporting a fresh healthy temperature.

**Physical distancing;** the 2-meter space between people to promote a safe distance is no longer required. However, some people may feel more comfortable with extra space between them and the next person. Please be respectful of peoples 'personal bubbles' and allow for a distance if it does not impact service provision.

**General good practice;** Receptionists and staff will ask clients about their health and well-being before services begin and staff should reassure clients that they are also healthy and are not symptomatic.

Staff are expected to model good practise while at work. This will consolidate learning and understanding for our clients, and each other, and ensure compliance with the communicable disease prevention plan.

### Step 3; Ongoing communication

Management at Yellowhead Community Services Society will continue to monitor and update the communicable disease prevention plan. YCS relies on the Federal, Provincial and Local Governments, BC CDC, Public Health and WorkSafe BC to provide the most current and relevant information to shape our communicable disease prevention plan.

This plan may be updated according to local incidents and outbreaks.

Supervisors and managers will be notified of any changes immediately as will the Health and Safety Committee. An email will also be sent to all staff should the plan be updated. Any updates will be supported by additional documents and signage in the work space.

Signage used includes;

- handwashing protocols
- **mask wearing requirements**
- health and wellness requirements

Questions regarding the plan should be directed to individual staff supervisors, in person, by email or telephone. Chief Operating Officers will be happy to provide additional information if required.

Supervisors will check in with individual staff to ensure they have read, understand and are complying with the communicable disease prevention plan.

#### **Step 4; Monitoring and updating the plan**

Management at YCS will continuously evaluate the communicable disease prevention plan to reflect changing risk levels and work practises. Strategies in place include;

- Work place inspections by managers and/or the Health and Safety Committee to ensure compliance with the communicable disease prevention plan. Checks will be recorded in the health and Safety binder.
- Ongoing supervision with staff to ensure measures are functioning properly, that they are being followed and maintained.
- Notices, orders and recommendations from Public Health are being monitored by YCS management.
- All staff has a responsibility to bring observations and concerns to the attention of management/Health and Safety Committee.
- If staff have concerns, ideas or questions, please speak with your manager or a member of the Health and Safety Committee.
- Staff may also contact WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1.888.621.SAFE). You'll be able to speak to a prevention officer to get answers to your questions, and if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.