

PATHWAYS ABILITIES SOCIETY

POLICY: UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS, COMMUNICABLE AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES PREVENTION

Applies to: All Personnel, Volunteers, Contractors and Persons Served

Original Approval Date: April 28, 2003

Date Board Approved: October 18, 2021

Replaces Policy Dated: June 24, 2020

Board Member's Signature

PREAMBLE

Pathways Abilities Society is committed to ensuring the safe keeping of all individuals, staff, home share contractors and volunteers. Implementation of the following measures and procedures are required in order to uphold a safe and practiced level of Universal Precautions.

Universal Precautions is the practice of stopping the spread of germs to others because 90% of the time we are unable to tell if someone is infected. All human blood and certain human body fluids are potentially infectious for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis A, B and C and other blood borne pathogens.

HIV and Hepatitis A, B and C can be found in blood, semen, vaginal secretion, feces and breast milk. Other body fluids such as urine, vomit, nasal secretion, sputum and saliva may contain infectious germs that cause other diseases therefore all body fluids must be handled as if they are infectious.

Pathways Abilities Society recognizes its role as an educator. We are committed to keeping resources and up-to-date information on HIV, Hepatitis A, B and C available and accessible to all service recipients and employees. Questions or concerns may be directed to a supervisor or management personnel.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable diseases that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus and seasonal influenza (WorkSafe BC Communicable Disease Prevention Guide).

Self-Isolation: Self-isolation means staying home and avoiding situations where you could come in contact with others (HealthLinkBC).

Sanitize: Disinfecting surfaces and hands.

Social-Distancing (physical distancing): Limiting close contact with others. When outside of your home, keep two meters (six feet) away from other people (BC Centre for Disease Control).

Disinfectant for hard surfaces: Surface disinfectant – Sani-Cide and bleach. Hand sanitizer – approved by Health Canada.

POLICY

All staff and volunteers must observe and adhere to the Universal Precautions, Communicable and Infectious Disease Prevention procedures.

All Pathways Abilities Society locations will contain:

- Hazardous cleanup kits.
- Disposable gloves (also available in all Pathways Abilities Society vehicles).
- Additional devices which potentially prevent the spread of germs or diseases.

Pathways Abilities Society recognizes that we may provide services to individuals or employ persons or volunteers who live with an infectious or communicable disease. Pathways Abilities Society's primary responsibility is to ensure everyone is safe. An individual receiving services, employee or volunteer will not be discriminated against solely as result of becoming infected with an infectious or communicable disease. Infection will be treated like any other medical problem.

Knowledge of an individual's condition will not affect the delivery of services to that person. Refusal to serve the person will be treated according to the same disciplinary process as refusing to fulfill any other employment obligation.

Pre-existing conditions of any illness may preclude an employee from being eligible for enrollment in the organization's benefit plan.

Pathways strongly encourages individuals accessing our services, staff, volunteers and home share contractors to obtain vaccinations and booster shots that prevent the spread of diseases.

Applying social or physical distancing and universal precautions is paramount to preventing the spread of diseases and directs service provision.

Hands must be washed throughout the day especially before and after eating, using the bathroom and before and after supporting someone with personal care. Employees are required to support individuals to wash their hands frequently.

Surfaces are continually sanitized daily including however not limited to table tops, chairs, light switches, door handles, bathrooms, taps, computer key boards, computer mice, photocopy machines, debit machines, bikes, bike parts, items used in activities, i.e. scissors, writing implements, sewing machines, bingo dabbers, etc.

Food and beverages will not be provided. Individuals and staff must bring their own drinks. Food containers will not be rinsed prior to being sent home.

If staff, home share contractors, volunteers, or individuals receiving service have communicable disease symptoms, if applicable they should be tested as soon as possible.

Individuals receiving services, excluding those who live in the homes, staff and volunteers are not permitted to attend services:

- If they are sick or have symptoms of a communicable disease.
- If they are being tested for a communicable disease
- If they have come into close contact with someone who tested positive for a communicable disease. They may be required to self-isolate. A health care professional will determine the self-isolation period. If after the isolation period they are showing symptoms of communicable disease, they must continue to isolate and call 811 for guidance.
- If they have been advised by Interior Health and/or 811 to self-isolate.
- If they have tested negative for a communicable disease however are still showing signs of illness, they cannot return to work until all the symptoms have been resolved.
- If someone in their household is awaiting communicable disease test results and Interior Health advises that everyone in the household should isolate.

If a staff, home share contractor, volunteer or individual alerts Pathways that they have tested positive for a communicable disease, the executive director, licensed practical nurse (LPN) or designate will contact WorkSafe BC and/or 811 to seek direction. Pathways will compile a list of all people who had direct or indirect contact with the infected person. If directed by Interior Health, the people deemed to have direct contact will be sent home to self-isolate the time-period determined by Interior Health. Pathways will follow all the recommendations and guidelines provided by Interior Health.

Pathways will ensure notification of all people affected by potential or perceived contact. Those notified are to be respectful and compassionate. Pathways will not tolerate any harassing or unkind behavior towards staff or the people we support.

Pathways will compensate employees who are required to self-isolate as outlined in most recent government and or employment guidelines. In the case of employees requiring to self-isolate due to non-compliance of provincial and/or federal recommendations and/or guidelines and/or orders, such employees are ineligible for compensation through Pathways for the duration of their self-isolation.

Pathways adopts as part of this policy any provincial and federal communicable disease health orders and recommendations. Individuals attending, staff and volunteers must adhere to provincial and federal orders and recommendations, this includes however is not limited to travel.

Individuals receiving services, staff, home share contractors and volunteers that chose to defy provincial and/or federal orders or recommendations are required to notify Pathways and may not be permitted to enter a Pathways facility.

Employees and volunteers who choose not to receive the recommended provincial or federal vaccinations are required to wear a mask their entire shift and or while attending

or receiving services and follow all protocols within the organization. Proof of vaccination is required.

Staff, individuals and visitors entering service sites must have their temperatures taken and immediately wash their hands. Anyone with an above normal temperature (above 38°C or 100.4°F) is segregated and must go home.

Occupancy limits may be established for all Pathway's buildings and specific rooms.

Outbreak of Disease

There are two major types of illnesses that can contribute to an outbreak:

Respiratory infections (RI) –This illness is spread in the droplets sneezed or coughed from infected individuals that then come into direct or indirect contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth, nose or airway of another person (Interior Health, 2018).

RI Case is defined as a new or worsening cough and a fever greater than 38°C or a temperature that is abnormal for the person and at least one other symptom which may include muscle/joint pain, extreme fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, and/or headache. This includes COVID-19 a newly discovered type of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

A RI outbreak is defined as two or more cases of RI occurring in the same home within a 7 day period amongst staff and/or home members.

Gastrointestinal (GI) infection – A viral or bacterial infection of the gastrointestinal tract causing any or all of the following symptoms: diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, fever, headaches and/or rashes. This infection is spread from person to person through direct or indirect contact via the fecal/oral route (Interior Health, 2018).

GI infection case is defined as one of the following conditions that cannot be attributed to another cause (e.g. laxative use, medication side effect, prior medical condition, diet). Two or more episodes of diarrhea or two or more episodes of vomiting in a 24 hour period, or one episode of both diarrhea and vomiting in a 24 hour period, or one episode of bloody diarrhea or positive culture for GI pathogen with a symptom of GI infection.

A GI outbreak is defined as three or more cases of GI illness in the same home setting in a four day period.

See the Universal Precautions, Communicable and Infectious Disease Prevention Procedure for instruction on what steps to take if an outbreak is declared.

Policies and procedures related to specific communicable diseases may be required.