

COVID-19 Social Care Guidance

This guide is for health and social care providers supporting people exposed to social risks that impact health, caused or exacerbated by COVID-19. It is intended as guidance and should not replace clinical judgement.



ASK YOUR PATIENTS/CLIENTS

Suggested script: COVID-19 is impacting some people more than others. We are checking in on many of our patients/clients about issues that are important for health and well-being, so we can help people get the assistance they need.

1. Will you or your household **find it hard to pay for basic expenses** in the next 4 weeks?
2. Is there a risk you or your household **won't have food or be able to pay for food** in the next 4 weeks?
3. Are you currently **homeless or at risk of losing your housing** in the next 4 weeks?
4. Are you **alone, and do not have family/friends who can help you** during this time?
5. Do you have concerns about your (or your children's) **physical safety**?

Caution if asking in a context where an abuser could overhear

Note: Families with children face specific challenges and have access to specific benefits during COVID-19

Developing a clear follow-up plan with the patient/clients has been shown to dramatically increase the likelihood of connecting to a social resource.



RESOURCES

If these questions have identified needs, resources can be found at:

- Upstream Lab COVID-19 Social Resource Connector upstreamlab.org/covid19/
- The CEP COVID-19: Social Care Guidance <https://link.cep.health/covidsdoh>
- 211.ca resource hub

Framework and approach

The following principles for engaging in conversation with patients/clients are grounded in empathy and non-judgmental care and can help ensure your interaction is as client-centred as possible.

 Crisis Management	 Motivational Interviewing	 Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Practice	 Strength-Based Problem-Solving	 Trauma-Informed care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate concerns and evaluate severity of crisis • Stabilize, reassure & ensure safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore discrepancies between goals/values and behaviour • Avoid direct confrontation and adjust to patient/client resistance • Support self-efficacy and optimism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect differing views and ways of knowing • Provide non-judgmental, culturally safe care • Ensure shared decision-making with patient/client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with what is important to patient/client and focus on strengths • Acknowledge each patient/client has potential and resilience to create their change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the role of individual and intergenerational trauma • Promote safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment

Consider the following potential barriers as you co-develop a plan with your patient/client:

- access to phone, internet
- literacy and English proficiency
- comfort with using technology, websites
- ability to leave home if needed

Additional resources to help assess vulnerable populations

- CEP Poverty Tool. Available <https://cep.health/clinical-products/poverty-a-clinical-tool-for-primary-care-providers/>
- Goel R. A social history tool using the IF-IT-HELPS mnemonic. Available <https://cep.health/clinical-products/poverty-a-clinical-tool-for-primary-care-providers>



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