

Outreach Protocol

Purpose:

To set out the standards for outreach for participants presently enrolled in the Windsor Essex Housing Connections (WEHC) programs who have ceased contact with their Worker.

Roles:

Outreach Worker

- Creates and maintains both formal and informal links to community programs providing support to individuals for mental health, addictions and experiencing homelessness.
- Works with the By-Name List to provide outreach to eligible WEHC participants
- Develops and maintains relationships with participants of WEHC
- Ensures that individuals in the community served are aware of the WEHC programs
- Educates community partners and services and members of the community served about eligibility requirements for the WEHC program
- Collaborative working relationship with IST to receive participant specific information in the case of no contact or lost contact for outreach purposes, including but not limited to:
 - Locations within Windsor and Essex County that the participant frequents
 - Sleeping arrangements
 - Traveling routes
- Provides additional support to participants who may be facing hospitalization, incarceration, court proceedings in conjunction with the IST

Street Outreach

- Street outreach involves moving outside the walls of the agency to engage people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected and alienated not only from mainstream services and supports, but from the services targeting homeless persons as well. This is incredibly important work designed to help establish supportive relationships, give people advice and support, and hopefully enhance the possibility that they will access necessary services and supports that will help them move off the streets.
- Outreach strategies require the development of an understanding of the individual circumstances and needs of each individual, as well as cultural barriers that may prevent people from accessing either mainstream services or those that target people who experience homelessness (Aboriginal people, for instance). This means a personalized assessment of risk behaviours and circumstances. Through the development of positive relationships, the attainment of the larger goal of helping people access the services and

supports they need in order to help them move forward with their lives can be achieved. Outreach that merely helps support people who are living independently but without any shelter may be a necessary and important first step in relationship building, but the overall goal of street outreach should be tied to the larger goal of helping people move off the streets as quickly as possible.

IST

- Takes the lead to initiate outreach support from the Outreach Worker when an IST has no contact or lost contact
- Explores possible reasons for lost contact with Outreach Worker, and together formulate an individualized plan to locate/contact the participant
- Maintains up-to-date releases of information in order to maintain ongoing contact with community partners and social supports that area actively involved with the participant

Best Practice:

The key principle with respect to outreach when working with someone who is experiencing homelessness include:

- Mobile street outreach eliminates barriers since services are being provided directly to the individual
- Providing outreach to street-involved individuals reduces their vulnerability since most often these are the individuals that have a greater need for services

Evidence-Based Best Practice