



<b>Procedure:</b> 4.5 Safety measures for PATHS staff
<b>Approval date:</b> July 11, 2024
<b>Approved by:</b> Director, MB HIV Program

## PURPOSE

This procedure provides guidance and outlines safety strategies for the PATHS pod to practice safely while working within community settings. PATHS host sites are strongly encouraged to use the safety measures below, especially in the absence of robust host site policy and procedures related to care provision outside of the clinic setting.

## BACKGROUND

As a service delivery model that provides outreach care to clients in a variety of community settings, taking additional measures to promote safety is imperative. The PATHS pod will be responsible for the completion of all training delineated by their employer in addition to Regional Health Authority (RHA) policy and procedures that pertain to employee safety.

Host sites may have preference to specific communication platforms (Microsoft Teams, group messaging, etc.) in their workplace and can adopt the following measures within existing communication frameworks.

### Promoting safety

Implementing measures to promote safety of the PATHS pod while working in community settings is essential. In addition to these safety measures, staff are required to have a strong awareness of personal safety, understanding the importance and application of a point of care risk assessment, and be skillful in strategies that promote safety as it relates to client interactions and the environments they visit.

**If the PATHS pod has reason to believe that safety cannot be maintained during a client interaction or within an environment, the staff should remove themselves immediately. Staff can coordinate additional care provision from a safe location if clinically indicated.**

Safety measures are reliant on regular and relevant communication between the PATHS pod and their reporting manager where appropriate. Staff should have their employer issued cell phone on person during working hours. It is an ongoing expectation that the pod will be engaged in communication with one another throughout the shift, and the host site will articulate what platform the PATHS pod will be expected to use as it relates to regular safety checks in order to ensure consistency and availability of information.

As an additional measure to promote safety while working in the community, the PATHS pod can utilize technology (ex. "Find My" application) on their work cell phone to share locations. This is not required by the employer and is at the discretion of the team members. The information pertaining to locations



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should only be accessed and utilized in situations where significant safety concerns are present and local authorities may be required to respond.

The PATHS pod should not work alone in the following circumstances:

- Meeting any new client assigned to PATHS until thorough assessment and relationship is developed. The team may consider use of trusted partner agencies, referring providers, or site staff if a second PATHS pod member is unavailable
- With a client that has a recent history of violence toward health care providers until thorough assessment and care plan is established
- Responding to the care needs of clients experiencing acute mental health presentations
- Responding to the care needs of clients experiencing acute intoxication

Consideration should be made for a second team member present when visiting community sites where the environment may pose a safety concern due to the unpredictability of other community members. Based on risk assessment, these include but are not limited to:

- Single resident occupancy/short term rentals in hotels
- Emergency shelters
- Buildings or residences suspected of gang activity or affiliation

**Persistent safety concerns at community sites should be communicated to their host site lead and to the Clinical Education Coordinator during the weekly caseload review. These updates will be communicated by the Clinical Education Coordinator to other PATHS teams in the region.**

Start of shift

The PATHS pod is expected to start their shift at their workplace to allow the team to meet and review the day ahead. The team will utilize the daily meeting and team schedule to outline the care provision and tasks for the shift to support safe work.

- Review the day using the team schedule and assign tasks to the most appropriate team member
- All tasks on the team schedule will include the client name, associated locations and approximate time the task will be completed

**Should circumstances arise where a team member is required to begin their day in the community to support a client, the staff is expected to call in for the daily meeting to acquaint themselves with the team schedule.**

Safety check-ins

The PATHS pod will communicate with one another at scheduled times in addition to any unexpected circumstances in the community related to care provision.



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There are two scheduled safety check-ins each team member is responsible for, communicating to one another.

- The first scheduled safety check-in is between 12:00-12:15. The staff will communicate their safety status and location to one another.
- The second scheduled safety check-in is no later than 16:30. The staff will communicate their safety status and location to one another and the reporting manager or delegate.

In the event there are unexpected changes to the team schedule following the daily meeting, the PATHS pod is responsible for communicating updates to one another.

- Changes or additions to the daily team schedule should be communicated in real time and prior to the team member attending the task together to ensure the most appropriate team member is responding to the task
- PATHS pod to evaluate the need for a second team member to support the task

**In the absence of a scheduled safety-check in by a team member, a staff of the PATHS pod will communicate this to the PATHS reporting manager for additional support and guidance.**

It is encouraged that the reporting manager attempt contact through alternate methods: call the staff's work cell phone, personal cell phone, and emergency contact. If these attempts are unsuccessful, the manager should consider contacting the appropriate authorities, utilizing the most up to date information from the daily schedule and subsequent updates from the team.

End of shift

The PATHS pod is expected to end their shift at their workplace whenever possible, promoting safety, team cohesion, and timely documentation.

- Team members will have completed their second scheduled safety check-in by 16:30
- The team can debrief and support one another as needed