

Volunteers'

GUIDE

COVID-19 SAFETY

PUT SAFETY FIRST

If you're unsure if something is safe, contact your pod leader or the mutual aid team and ask **first**. Keep up-to-date with Toronto Public Health advice ([here](#)) and follow it.

WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds frequently. Or, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Clean your hands before and after touching items you drop off to a neighbour, before you enter and after you exit a building, and after touching common surfaces like money, receipts and door handles. Don't touch your face with unwashed hands. Cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw it away and clean your hands.

KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE

Keep interactions brief. Stay at least two metres away from others — that's about the width of a car. Use only touchless greetings, like waves.

CLEAN COMMON SURFACES

Disinfect high-touch surfaces like steering wheels, door handles and your phone frequently. Don't put flyers in mailboxes; use posters and messages. Avoid touching common surfaces.

SCREEN, ISOLATE, REPORT, TRACK

Screen yourself, your neighbours in need, and your fellow volunteers every day. *"Are you feeling well? Do you any symptoms, especially cough, fever, or difficulty breathing?"* If anyone develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, they must stay home and self-isolate right away. Inform your pod leader and the mutual aid team immediately. You cannot volunteer in person if you have symptoms or have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, or if you've been in contact with someone who has. Use your pod's tracking system to make a note of the date, time and location of in-person interactions like deliveries. This information is vital if someone gets sick.

CONSIDER A MASK

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) now suggests non-medical masks where physical distancing is difficult, such as on public transit and at grocery stores. Unless otherwise directed, only use a homemade mask or surgical mask, not an N95 or other mask meant for healthcare workers. Wash or sanitize your hands before and after putting on and taking off your mask. Make sure you don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands while adjusting your mask. Try not to touch it once it's on. The PHAC website ([here](#)) has more information about removing, handling, sanitizing and disposing of used masks.



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OUTREACH & POSTERS

HOW TO USE OUR POSTERS

We have made lots of slightly different posters to suit different pods' needs. Some are general, while others are aimed at recruiting volunteers or reaching out to neighbours in need. Some already have a phone number on them — this directs to West Neighbourhood House reception.

To put your pod's contact information on a poster, you can either print the poster, write the information in by hand, and then photocopy it, OR you can use one of the Microsoft Word versions to add your pod information, and then print the poster. If you need help printing or photocopying, contact the mutual aid team.

POSTERING SAFELY

To minimize contamination, do not put posters in mailboxes or slide them under doors. Don't add pull tabs to posters. Instead, put posters on poster kiosks, hydro poles, and common bulletin boards in apartment buildings. Go to convenience stores, grocers, hardware stores, and other local essential businesses that are open. **Talk to the person working there** about what we're up to, so they can share with the people they see, then ask to put a poster up.

HOW TO REACH OUT

Call people! Many seniors use landlines. Go to the Canada 411 [postal code lookup](#) and enter the postal codes used in your neighbourhood. Then start calling. Try using our conversation guide to get started. Find out if there is already a group for your neighbourhood or building on Facebook, WhatsApp, Nextdoor, etc., and post there. Get in touch with local community groups, businesses and places of worship to see if they would be interested in volunteering or getting the message out that mutual aid is available.



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PRIVACY AND RESPECT

KEEP PRIVATE INFORMATION PRIVATE

Keep personal information like phone numbers, street addresses and email addresses in a safe place, and only share them with consent. For example, a pod leader will need to tell you a neighbour's address so you can drop off groceries, and you'll need to give them your phone number. But you both need to give permission in advance. Don't share more personal information than necessary. Apply the same care to all personal information you learn in the course of your work — for example, information about someone's health.

RESPECT DIVERSITY

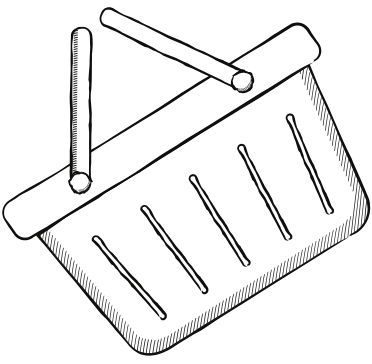
Toronto is a diverse place! Sometimes you'll have to communicate with someone with whom you don't share a common language. Speak slowly and respectfully. Repeat yourself if necessary, or try communicating by text, note, or voice memo. Respectful gestures can communicate a lot! You may be able to use an informal interpreter, like a friend or family member of the neighbour you're working with — just maintain a safe social distance. If you still need an interpreter, contact the mutual aid team.

BE ACCOMMODATING AND CREATIVE

Some of your neighbours have visual, hearing, cognitive, physical or other disabilities. People may take a while to communicate or to answer your call or knock. Be considerate and patient. Don't assume what accommodation or support someone needs — ask them! If someone has a support person with them, still make a point of speaking directly to the person you're serving, not over their head.

RECOGNIZE YOUR SCOPE

Some people you encounter may have unmet needs or requests that are beyond what you can do as a mutual aid volunteer. Ask your pod leader or a member of the mutual aid team to help you make a referral.



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PAYMENTS AND DELIVERIES

Make sure to show the utmost care when handling money matters. If you have any questions, or feel uncomfortable about how any volunteer or neighbour is handling payments and deliveries, contact your pod leader or the mutual aid team. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out financial scammers. Never ask for, or share, personal financial information like credit/debit card numbers or passwords/PINs.

- **Keep records.** Make sure you have a way to track requests and offers within your pod. Keep a log of the date and details of any supports being given. This is essential in case we have a case of COVID-19 in our community — we need to be able to keep track of who someone has been in contact with. You can find a template [here](#).
- As much as possible, have recipients order and pay for requests ahead of time. If you can, have the person pre-order their groceries or prescriptions and pay by credit card, so you just need to pick up and drop off. **Have the person give their card information to the store directly. Do not take down their credit card number, and do not take their debit or credit card with you to the store.**
- Alternatively, you can pay for the groceries and have the person reimburse you, ideally with an electronic payment like an e-transfer. If you must use cash, have them put it in a small sandwich bag. **Do not ask for, or accept, any extra charges or tips.**
- Most pharmacies offer delivery, but you might be asked to pick up medications. Some pharmacies might require your name, address, photo ID and signature. If any issue arises, have the participant speak to the pharmacy directly. If you are asked to pick up restricted drugs such as prescription painkillers, the participant will need to confirm their identity with the pharmacy, and you will need to show ID. See [here](#) for information about picking up controlled drugs.
- If you the person cannot pre-order items, have them set a budget limit and send you to the store with a list. If you can't buy everything on list within the limit, leave off the last item on the list, then the second last item, etc. Make sure you explain this process ahead of time.
- After purchasing the items, sure to **get a receipt and take a photo of the receipt.**
- Use the buzzer code/doorbell or call to inform the person of your arrival. **Do not enter anyone's suite or home.**
- **Practice contactless delivery.** For example, put the items down on the porch or in the building lobby and exchange them from a safe distance. Use hand sanitizers or clean gloves before and after meeting people. Keep two metres away while speaking with them.
- **Make sure the recipient has the original receipt.** Send the photo of the receipt to your pod leader for tracking, or add the information into your pod's tracking system.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WORKING WELL TOGETHER

Equity, inclusion and respect are key values driving all aspects of our work, in which everyone is treated fairly, and with dignity. We have a responsibility within our networks and the community to prevent actions and practices of discrimination, whether intentional or not.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Anyone engaging in oppressive and threatening communications and/or behavior will be immediately blocked from the mutual aid network. If you witness or experience harassment within the activities of the Neighbourhood Pod inform your Pod Leader and the Network Coordinator. The Pod Leaders and the Network Coordinator will work together to document your experience and discuss if further action is required.

HOW MEDIATION WORKS

The neighbourhood pod is self-organizing and may require engaging in a mediation process where appropriate. Disputants work together to develop an agreement that resolves the issue. All disputants must compromise in order for agreement to be reached. In many mediations, all parties exit feeling satisfied about both the process and the outcome.

[Social Justice Mediation](#), Office of Student Conflict Resolution, University Of Michigan.

Adapted from: Grievance Process, Parkdale People's Economy. Thank you!

WESTNH.ORG/MUTUALAID
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