
Why Shelters as Public Health Sites?

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Feb 7, 2023



National Collaborating Centre
for Infectious Diseases

Centre de collaboration nationale
des maladies infectieuses



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The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID) is hosted at the University of Manitoba, situated on the ancestral lands of the Anishnabeeg, Anishniniwak, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowak/Inninwak Nations. It is also in the heart of the homeland of the Métis Nation. At NCCID, we strive to honour the lands and their original caretakers in our work. We also recognize that these lands were not willingly ceded as part of on-going processes of colonization that benefits some of us and harm others. Along with our partners, we are committed to work towards reconciliation.

Engagement with Shelters

- Identified 35 shelters in region to contact
- 20 shelter leaders participated in 6 panel discussions
- Panel discussions grouped by shelter “type”:
 - domestic violence,
 - homeless shelter,
 - transitional housing & drop-in, and
 - youth serving shelters.



Planetware.com

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you and your organization currently have any connections to public health? Can you tell us a little more about that?
 2. Which health issues do you feel are the most pressing for shelter clients? What are you seeing in your shelter? What is currently being done in terms of prevention, treatment and support?
 3. What recommendations might you have (e.g. supports, resources) for public health and shelter staff to work together?
 4. Acknowledging the disproportionately high rates of Indigenous people utilizing shelters or shelter services, what recommendations do you have to ensure culturally safe and appropriate programs that can improve health outcomes for shelter clients?
 5. What topics are missing from this discussion?
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Engagement with Public Health:

- Conversations with 17 public health professionals (Medical Officers of Health, Program Managers, Public Health Nurses, etc.) in the región
 - Discussed experiences working with shelters, gaps and opportunities for further partnerships, topics of interest for Institute
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Definition of Public Health Setting:

“the place or social context in which people engage in daily activities in which environmental, organizational, and personal factors interact to affect health and wellbeing”

-- World Health Organization

Bigger Picture....

“We used to have a client base of 400, now we serve over 1000”



Mental Health

“Like 99% of the global population needs support with mental health, right? And when you have a full tummy and a place to sleep these things are easier to deal with.”



Healthydebate.ca

Substance Use & Harm Reduction

“We do not have safe consumption sites but it’s already happening...it’s happening in a very disorganized way with people who are not trained, or prepared and not ready to do this”



**“How do I become a health organization?
Because it seems that we are the ones doing
the work”.**



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