

# 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/](http://upstreamlab.org/covid19/)
- The CEP COVID-19: Social Care Guidance <https://link.cep.health/covidsdoh>
- [211.ca](http://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.

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

**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/>

# COVID-19 Social Care Guidance Supports

Below is a list of Ontario resources that are available to support your patient/client during the COVID pandemic.

 <b>Financial Supports</b>	
<b>Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (OW/ODSP) Extended Emergency Benefit (for those on social assistance)</b>	
Provides \$100 a month for single individuals and \$200 a month for families for COVID-related needs (e.g. food, cleaning supplies, transportation, clothing) for May-July. This is automatically granted to those who received the one-time Emergency Benefit in March/April	
<b>Remind</b> your patient/client to contact their OW/ODSP caseworker if they are not already receiving these funds.	
<b>✦ Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)</b>	<b>✦ Prosper Canada - Financial Relief Navigator</b>
Provides \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks for workers who have lost income due to COVID-19 (including self-employed and contract workers). <b>Apply here:</b> <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html</a> <b>Or call:</b> 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041	Provides up-to-date, personalized information about how one can raise their income or lower their expenses during COVID-19. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="https://financialreliefnav.prospercanada.org">https://financialreliefnav.prospercanada.org</a>
<b>For people caring for children</b>	
<b>✦ Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and Ontario Child Benefit (OCB)</b>	<b>Support for Families</b>
Provides extra monthly funding for each child in a family, up to a monthly maximum of \$553.25 for each child under 6 years of age or \$466.83 for older children (CCB) and additional \$120 for low- and moderate-income families (OCB). <b>Remind</b> your patient/client to complete their tax returns.	Provides one-time funds for families with children aged 0-12 (\$200) or 0-21 with special needs (\$250). <b>Apply here:</b> <a href="http://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/FamilyAppWeb/public/index.xhtml?fbclid=IwAR3lgPMd5C6oD1KKNqjktI1Zjefi1q%20KtSNxf4HerB-KCeDkn_W8LaP84jPM">www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/FamilyAppWeb/public/index.xhtml?fbclid=IwAR3lgPMd5C6oD1KKNqjktI1Zjefi1q%20KtSNxf4HerB-KCeDkn_W8LaP84jPM</a>
 <b>Legal Supports</b>	
<b>Community Legal Clinics</b>	<b>Steps to Justice Website</b>
Provide free legal advice for a variety of concerns (e.g. housing, family law, immigrant and refugee cases). <b>Find your community legal clinic:</b> <a href="http://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics">www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics</a>	Provides reliable and practical information online for common legal problems. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="https://stepstojustice.ca">https://stepstojustice.ca</a>
 <b>Mental Health Supports</b>	
<b>ConnexOntario</b>	
Provides free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental health and/or gambling. Also provides connections to local services/supports. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="http://www.connexontario.ca">www.connexontario.ca</a> <b>Or call:</b> 1-866-531-2600 (support in over 170 languages by phone)	
 <b>Safety Supports</b>	
<b>Assaulted Women's Helpline</b>	<b>Talk4Healing</b>
Provides 24/7 support to access Violence Against Women (VAW) shelters, counseling, and other resources for women, non-binary, and trans individuals. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="http://www.awhl.org">http://www.awhl.org</a> <b>Or call:</b> 1-866-863-0511 or Text: #SAFE (#7233) (support in over 200 languages by phone)	Free and culturally safe telephone help line for Indigenous women living in Ontario. Talk4Healing provides 24/7 services in English, Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Cree. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="http://www.talk4healing.com">http://www.talk4healing.com</a> <b>Or call:</b> 1-855-554-HEAL (4325)
<b>Seniors Safety Line</b>	<b>✦ 1 in 6 Men's Helpline Chat</b>
Provides counseling and safety planning support for older adults who are abused or at-risk of abuse. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="http://www.eapon.ca">http://www.eapon.ca</a> <b>Or call:</b> 1-866-299-1011	Provides 24/7 support to men, non-binary, and trans individuals experiencing sexual abuse or assault. <b>Visit:</b> <a href="https://1in6.org/helpline">https://1in6.org/helpline</a>



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