

Protecting Workers from Smoke in Home Environments

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Program Training and
Consultation Centre
*A resource centre of the
Smoke Free Ontario Strategy*

Centre de formation
et de consultation
*Un centre de ressources de la
Stratégie ontarienne sans fumée*



By the end of our session, you will have learned how:

- **Training & policies can help protect home-care workers from SHS**
- **Smoke-free homes can be promoted as part of home visits**
- **Ontario legislation provides protection for home health care workers**



What Does PTCC Do?

We support those who deliver tobacco use reduction interventions by:

- **Providing training, consultation, information, networking opportunities & referral services to Ontario health promoters**



Who attends these workshops?

- Health unit staff
- Canadian Mental Health Association staff
- Local community health services representatives (Red Cross, V.O.N., etc.)
- Personal Support Workers
- Children's Aid
- Local housing representatives
- Midwives



Workshop Agenda

- **Health effects of SHS**
- **Facilitated discussion to identify trouble spots and develop scenarios**
- **Client and worker rights & preferences**
 - **Manager, home staff & consumer**
- **Group work on scenarios**
- **Protection and support through programs and policies**
- **Cessation referrals**
- **Summary and key learnings**





Workshop Highlights



How far can we go?

- From a health perspective, legal protection should be extended to home environments
 - Governments are increasingly passing laws to ban smoking in public places and workplaces.

however

The “state” is reluctant to intrude into private homes



How far should we go?

Request/
require
smoke-
free
during
visit



Require
smoke-free
during
+
Airing out
prior to visit



Require smoke-
free during
+
Airing out
+
Promote smoke-
free at all times



Require smoke-free
+
Airing out
+
Promote smoke-free at all
times
+
Encourage and support
quitting

You can

...promote your own health by:

- requesting (requiring) smoke-free during your time there

...promote the family's health by:

- helping them make their home smoke-free at all times
- helping smokers quit



What We Heard About Client Rights

- **Receive care**
- **Hear 'health' message re: SHS and quitting**
- **Have nicotine needs met**
- **Reject a visit if they want**
- **Provide safe environment to receive care**
(shovel snow, no dogs)
- **Smoke and live 'at risk'**
- **Empathy and respect**



What We Heard About Worker Rights

- **Healthy and safe workplace**
- **Obligated to give 'health' message & protect those who are vulnerable**
- **Explore NRT options**
- **Be protected from SHS and other work hazards**
- **Not to smell like other people's smoke**



Participants Agree...

- **Staff have a right to a smoke-free environment while at work**
- **Written policies help**
- **Case managers & workers both need to educate all clients**
- **Build climate of mutual respect and confidence that smokers can change**
- **Shorten visits, or smoke-breaks can be taken outside**



(cont'd)

- **Nurses assume certain risks (HIV-AIDs or Hep C pts.) – but try to reduce those risks**
- **Be prepared -- know before visit if house allows smoking**
- **Be clear with clients that requesting smoke-free is not a criticism, but a request for a safe environment**



Typical Scenarios

- Heavy smoker, poor ventilation, small apartment
- Palliative care smoker wants cigarettes lit
- Teen N/S mom lives with parents who smoke, baby has asthma and ear infections
- Stale smoke lingers on clothes from one visit to the next N/S visit
- Hostile child welfare client – not receptive
- Client on oxygen in apartment continues to smoke – puts others at immediate risk



Suggested Strategies to Protect Worker's Health

- **Open windows, shorten visits**
- **Negotiate solutions**
- **Offer NRT to client for before and at visit**
- **Emphasize health message**
- **Support cessation efforts (Helpline, web, etc.)**
- **Schedule any smoking client for end of day**
- **Keep coat in car, wear lab coat over clothes**
- **Seek alternative location, walk outdoors for visit**



(cont'd)

- Approach *Health and Safety Committee* for support, document job-related SHS exposure
- Adapt SF policies used elsewhere, and ensure all clients are advised of policy at initial in-take visit – plus all staff!
- Visit with clients at N/S, fun events -- like watching a hockey game in arena together
- Engage all family members in problem-solving (baby's asthma, ear infections, etc.)



Suggested Strategies to *Promote Smoke-Free at All Times*

- **Distribute SFHs brochure, decals (provide education and information)**
- **Post SF signs, remove ashtrays**
- **Emphasize health benefits for entire family**
- **Counter misconceptions about smoking in one room or ‘just at night’ etc.**
- **Engage co-workers & management to endorse and support SF policy**



(cont'd)

- **Focus on health and safety issues**
- **Not smoking is an expectation to receive care... like having walkways cleared of snow, tying up barking dogs, and not drinking alcohol during visit**



What You Can Do

Advocates and Health Promoters:

- Be aware of laws
- Enhance community awareness and support
- Dispel myths (ventilation, home is my castle, etc.)
- Encourage individuals to take action (not smoke near children, make home SF etc.)



What You Can Do in Ontario

Workers Who Visit Homes:

- Follow 'right to leave' steps if smoking is occurring, & inform employer within 30 mins:
 - That worker has left
 - If someone is present to care for person
 - If person will require care in next 24 hours
 - Describe situation of person needing care
 - Any unusual circumstances?
- Follow employer guidelines to keep person safe and with reasonable level of care



Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and Policies to Protect Workers from Smoke in Home Environments

Smoke-Free Ontario Act

- **Requires all enclosed workplaces be 100% smoke-free (restaurants, bars, bingo halls, etc.)**
- **The Act phases out the display of tobacco products, with a complete ban beginning May 31, 2008.**
- **Came into force May 31, 2006**



Home Health Care Workers

- Home health care workers (funded by MOH) are able to ask a person not to smoke in their presence while they are providing health care services, and *are permitted to leave if the person refuses to comply*
- Regulations prescribe steps for the health care worker to take upon leaving the home





**Legislation
provides the
framework...**

**...but a policy
sustains the
change.**



Policies

- CCACs in early 2006 started developing policies
- All service providers contracted by each CCAC are expected to develop consistent policies
- Clients and/or families must sign agreement to not smoke while staff person is present
- Sample policies: www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca for ***SHS in Home Environments Info Pack***

