



CLIENTS' HANDBOOK

This handbook has been prepared to ease your entry into the Vitanova community and the programs it offers. The information it contains will help you to adjust to your new environment.

*Guidelines, rules and regulations are to be followed by everyone, so that all can attain the maximum benefit from these programs. **Failure to do so can disrupt your treatment program, interfere with another client's progress, or even result in your being expelled from the program.***

This guide is in seven parts; (1) admission; (2) orientation; (3) treatment; (4) aftercare; (5) outreach; (6) rules and regulations to be observed by all clients; and (7) other useful information.

Please read each section carefully, sign the acknowledgement on the last page (along with your next of kin, if requested), and bring the signed handbook with you when you next attend at Vitanova.

This handbook belongs to _____

Date of Admission: _____

1. Admission

Admission can be effected by yourself, or through a referral source (e.g., your doctor, lawyer, or a family member). Admission begins with an interview with an intake counselor, with whom you will discuss Vitanova's mission, philosophy, and treatment program, and who will be able to answer any questions you may have. If you are seeking admission to our domiciliary shelter, this interview will be followed by one with the Executive Director

In order to design a treatment plan to meet your individual needs, it is essential that you be assessed in the areas of physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, behavioural and lifestyle functioning. This assessment may involve the completion of one or more tests. Your initial treatment plan will be formulated at this time based on this assessment, subject to appropriate amendments by the primary counselor assigned to you, in consultation with other staff members.

At this time you will be asked to sign a drug-testing agreement. You will also be given a medical report form to be completed by your family physician prior to admission. If you do not have a family physician, let us know, as we may be able to refer you to a medical doctor familiar with Vitanova and its admission procedures.

You will also receive your own copy of this handbook. It is a requirement of admission that you (and your next of kin, if requested by the intake counselor) read this handbook in its entirety prior to admission, and sign the acknowledgement on the last page---indicating that you have read this handbook, that you are aware of the rules and regulations it details, that you agree to abide by them, and that you will accept any consequences for your failure to do so. Upon admission you must present the handbook, so that a photocopy can be taken of the signed acknowledgement, for inclusion in your case file.

2. Orientation

Orientation begins with a tour of the premises and introductions to the staff, to other clients, and to any volunteers or placement students who may be on site. (Note: if there are other new clients joining the program at the same time, you may be part of an orientation group.) Within a reasonable period of time, a primary counselor will be assigned to you. This person will be your principal source of information about how Vitanova operates. Your "primary" will familiarize you with the structure of Vitanova and help you to understand its policies and procedures---including our policy on clients' rights and responsibilities, the daily schedule, general housekeeping procedures, and your assigned chores---all the things you need to know in order to be comfortable within this new environment.

3. Treatment

Daily Group Therapy: Group meetings take place every day, Monday through Friday, and are attended by all clients who must arrive no later than 9 a.m. The group process is a powerful and effective form of therapy, a learning and growing experience for everyone. The basic rule of group therapy is to put into words all the feelings and thoughts that come to consciousness during group sessions, regardless of how ridiculous, frightening, or embarrassing they may seem to you. It will be necessary to continually remind yourself of this basic rule, and that this is not a customary social situation. You are not in group therapy to meet new friends nor even to have enjoyable discussions. You are here to help yourself, by learning how and why other people react to you in the way they do

and how you react to them. Any opinion or impression you have is valid and should be aired freely, providing it is not disruptive of the overall process.

NOTE: In joining the group, you assume the responsibility of holding in the strictest confidence any knowledge gained during group sessions about any other member of the group. Nothing that is said during a session may be repeated to anyone outside the group, nor to any member of the group outside the actual meeting. If there is something you left unsaid to another member of the group at one session, wait until the next session to bring it forward, or discuss it in private with a counselor present.

Individual Counseling Sessions: You will meet regularly with your primary counselor, to discuss any issues or concerns of which you are unable to speak freely in group. In addition, and if necessary, your primary will help you deal with any issues arising out of your treatment plan, to help you achieve your desired goals in a timely fashion. To ensure this, your initial treatment plan will be re-evaluated once you have been at Vitanova for three months, and subsequently, on an as needed basis.

Maintenance Responsibilities: In order to keep our facility tidy, sanitary, and beautiful, it is necessary that each client participate in its maintenance and upkeep. To that end, chores will be assigned to every client, to be completed at specified times during the day. These may include the vacuuming of carpets, the cleaning of bathrooms (including floors, faucets, sinks, showers, toilets---bowls, bases, and handles, the emptying of trash cans and the replacing of clean liners). Additional chores may be assigned from time to time, on an as needed basis.

Participation in Activities: Monday through Friday there are scheduled activities in which all clients are expected to participate. These may include lectures, films, guest speakers, workshops, or recreational activities---all designed to give you an opportunity to learn more about yourself and your situation.

Family Participation: Substance use is considered a family illness, since loved ones are always affected by the situation, and for that reason a family support program is provided. It includes a meeting once every week (usually on Tuesday evenings). Encourage your loved ones to attend, so that they can learn how best to support you in your recovery and to work through their own feelings about the family situation. (see Outreach below)

Discharge: There is no set date for discharge. We ask you to keep an open mind and continue to work through the issues that arise in the course of treatment. This can mean from three months or up to a year and more. Nevertheless, preparation for discharge is discussed regularly in group and individual sessions, in keeping with our shared goal---your returning to society as a healthy and productive person. When you and your primary believe that you have successfully addressed these issues, both of you will prepare a discharge plan---a program of actions you will commit to, to sustain your recovery after discharge. Sticking to this plan is what we term "aftercare".

4. Aftercare

Aftercare can include many things: weekly attendance at the Tuesday evening and/or Saturday morning aftercare group; occasional attendance at a morning group on days when you are not

working at your job; or attendance at an AA or NA meeting near where you live (if that is some distance from Vitanova). Aftercare can mean a commitment to call your primary counselor when you feel vulnerable; a session with him/her when you are tempted to relapse; even a few group sessions when you are going through a “rough patch”. All discharged clients are strongly encouraged to keep in touch, by keeping us up to date with your contact information, attending Vitanova events, or just dropping in when you are in the area.

5. Outreach

Our evening outreach program is primarily for family members of current, potential, or (if they so choose) past clients who wish to know more about substance use. By participating in the program, family members learn how to deal with individuals who continue to use drugs, how to help those who are involved in Vitanova programs, and how to help those who have completed their recovery at Vitanova and need the support of family members to sustain their recovery. All are welcome to join.

6. Rules and Regulations

1. All clients are absolutely forbidden to engage in the distribution and/or use of alcohol, drugs, or any other mood-altering substances. Should any client become aware of such actions by other clients, staff is to be informed immediately. When requested by staff, all clients will submit to a drug test (e.g., provide a urine sample) without argument or appeal.
2. All clients are absolutely forbidden to lay hands on another client in a manner that may reasonably be interpreted as intimidating. Physical violence, verbal abuse, and threats of violence are also forbidden. Should any client become aware of such actions by other clients, staff is to be informed immediately.
3. Client shall be respectful of staff at all times. Remarks of a sexual nature, or actions that would reasonably be viewed as threatening or harassing in any way will not be tolerated.
4. All clients are absolutely forbidden to engage in sexual or intimate contact of any nature with one another, or with any other person or persons, anywhere on the premises. Nor are pornographic materials of any sort to be brought onto the premises. Should any client become aware of such actions by other clients, staff is to be informed immediately. Furthermore, exclusive or cliquish relationships between two or more clients are forbidden.
5. Clients are not to bring cash, credit cards, convenience cards, cheques, car keys, cell phones, pagers (or any other type of private communication device) onto the premises; if any of these items are brought to Vitanova by a day client, they are to be surrendered to a staff member for safekeeping upon arrival, to be returned at the end of the day.

Domiciliary clients who bring such items onto the premises at admission will surrender them to a staff member who will log the item(s) and hold them securely until discharge. In advance of admission, domiciliary clients will be advised of the quantity of clothing and personal items allowed (see section 7). At domiciliary admission, each client's person, baggage, and baggage contents are subject to search by staff before baggage is permitted on the residential floor. At the discretion of staff, the laundering of the contents of baggage (clothing and/or bedding) may be required prior to use on site. During day program hours, domiciliary clients are not permitted on the residential floor (which will be locked) without staff permission.

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6. All clients will note the posted schedule of activities. Participation is mandatory, unless excused by staff for appropriate reasons (e.g., briefly, to use the bathroom, or for an extended period of time due to illness). For day clients, this means from 9 am to 5 pm. Transportation to Vitanova is the responsibility of the day client, either personally, or via next of kin or another responsible individual known to and approved by staff.
 7. Meal preparation, service, and cleanup are done by clients, with the assistance or under the direction of staff or volunteers. Unless you are detailed to one of these tasks, the kitchen and food storage areas are off limits. Food is to be consumed only in the ground floor dining room area, or on the rear patio when set up for that purpose with staff permission. All domiciliary clients are expected to be present at all meals; and day clients at lunch Monday to Friday.
 8. Access to the grounds beyond the area of the fountain or the rear and side patios is limited to scheduled activities. Day clients are not to leave the premises during day program hours, nor are visitors allowed during those hours, except with the permission of staff.

Domiciliary clients are not permitted to leave the grounds for the first three months after admission, except for medical or legal reasons and on approval by staff of a specific request in writing (using an "Outing Request Form"). Such requests must be submitted well enough in advance of the date of the outing to permit staff time for their appropriate consideration. Domiciliary clients are not permitted to invite guests to the premises in the first month after admission, and then only with the prior approval of staff; such guest shall be limited to family members (parents, spouse, children).

9. Smoking is restricted to designated outdoor areas where containers are placed for the disposal of cigarette butts. The disposal of cigarettes in any other manner is strictly forbidden.

Domiciliary clients are absolutely forbidden to smoke on the residential floor, nor indeed in any indoor location. Extra packages of cigarettes belonging to domiciliary clients are to be given to staff for safekeeping in a locked storage area.

10. Clients are not allowed the use of a telephone except for genuinely important reasons, and at the discretion and under the supervision of staff.

Domiciliary clients are not allowed the use of a telephone for one month after admission.

11. Clients must not have any medication in their possession. Day clients who must take prescribed medications during program hours will arrange for a sufficient supply to be turned over to staff in advance, for self-dispensation observed by staff.

Domiciliary clients will turn over all medications to staff and be allowed supervised access according to prescription specifications.

12. Fire escapes and balconies are not be used as smoking areas, nor to access other levels.
13. Bathrooms must be kept clean and disinfected at all times. Within the time provided in the daily schedule, clients must clean all bathroom fixtures (door handles, tubs, showers, sinks, and toilets, including bowls, bases, and handles) and mop all floors using the cleaning agents supplied.

Domiciliary clients are responsible for the care of all bathrooms on the residential floor. Beds are to be made and rooms left in a clean and tidy state every morning. Soiled laundry should be kept separately in a laundry bag, or in one of the storage boxes in the laundry room.

Domiciliary clients will be ready for bed at “lights out” (11:30 pm Sunday night through Thursday night, and 12:30 am Friday night and Saturday night) and rise promptly at the appointed time each day.

Disciplinary Consequences

Vitanova’s mission is a matter of public record: it is “...helping put lives back together again”. That suggests that those who come to Vitanova for help believe that, at a minimum, their lives are in some degree of disarray or disorder, therefore, to put such lives back together again requires the imposition of a certain measure of order and control over clients by staff, and conversely, the acceptance by clients of certain limitations on their personal freedom (see Rules and Regulations above). It is only within such a context that the individual client can begin to develop a more orderly lifestyle, ultimately subject to the self-discipline that guarantees personal autonomy---another name for recovery.

To maintain the momentum of recovery for all of our clients, infractions of the rules cannot be ignored. To that end, discipline in respect to such infractions is progressive, depending on two factors: the severity of the individual infraction, and the frequency with which infractions occur. Thus, the more serious the infraction, the graver---and more immediate---the consequence. At the same time, persistent infractions in respect to more minor issues will result in progressively more serious consequences.

Those consequences, in descending order of seriousness, are as follows:

1. Negative penalty (e.g., refusal of permission to visit home)
2. Positive penalty (e.g., exclusion from a group outing)
3. Temporary suspension (e.g., three days)
4. Temporary suspension, with readmission dependent on attendance at a detox centre.
5. Extended suspension, at the discretion of the executive director
6. Expulsion for a specific period of time at the discretion of the executive director.
7. Expulsion for an unspecified period of time, at the discretion of the executive director
8. Permanent expulsion, at the discretion of the executive director

7. Other Useful Information

- Vitamins: supplements, like prescribed medications, are to be handed over to staff for safekeeping, and made available under staff supervision. Protein powders are not allowed on site.
- Electronics: music devices (e.g., mp3 players) are allowed on site. Use of headphones is not permitted during program hours. Devices requiring wi-fi connections are not permitted at any time.
- Clothing: Sleeveless shirts/halter tops are not to be worn during program hours (i.e., 9-5, Mon-Fri). Hats may only be worn outdoors. Clothing with alcohol or drug-related insignia are not permitted at any time

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- Fire alarms: in the event of a fire alarm at any time, all clients and staff are to assemble outside, in the vicinity of the fountain
 - Food items are not permitted on the residential floor
 - Coffee is available at set times only
 - The use of music devices is not permitted while doing assigned chores
 - To cover the cost of supplies needed to enhance your participation in our day treatment program, we ask for a voluntary contribution of \$150.00, in the form of a cheque or money order payable to "The Vitanova Foundation". If you cannot afford to make this contribution, it will not prevent your full participation in the program.

Acknowledgement and Undertaking

I, the undersigned client, acknowledge having read the entire contents of The Vitanova Foundation's Clients' Handbook, most especially section 6 on Rules and Regulations, and I undertake to abide by what is prescribed herein, and to accept any disciplinary consequences for my failure to do so. I also understand that I have the right to discharge myself from Vitanova at any time.

Client's signature and name in print DATE: _____

(If applicable) Next of kin's signature and name in print DATE: _____

Staff member's signature and name in print DATE: _____

Tel: 905-850-3690/ext _____ / Fax: 905-850-3836 / Email: _____@vitanova.ca

Note: A photocopy of this page
will be retained in the your case file.

CLIENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Developed by Vitanova clients at a workshop that took place in March 2014.

When you first come to Vitanova:

Remember that everyone has the right to be accepted, yourself included
Treat everyone with the respect with which you want to be treated
Put your trust in the process that lies ahead
Be honest with yourself and others
Work with other clients
Do not bully anyone
Respect this house
Be open to change
Be attentive
Be punctual
Be positive
Participate
Be patient

As you continue at Vitanova:

Respect other people's property
Respect the space you occupy
Act with integrity and humility
Demonstrate self-discipline
Be genuine and authentic
Cooperate with others
Don't be a hypocrite
Listen and respond
Maintain balance
Be a team player
Be empathetic
Be forgiving
Be polite
Be tidy

As your time at Vitanova nears its end:

Demonstrate compassion and understanding every day
Resolve differences with maturity and assertiveness
Be positive and affirm your spirituality
Practice what you preach
Be non-judgmental
Take responsibility
Lead by example
Show initiative
Help others