



CLIENTS' HANDBOOK

This handbook belongs to _____

Date of Admission: _____

About this 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. Please read each section carefully, sign the acknowledgement on the back cover (along with your next of kin, if requested), and **bring the signed handbook with you when you return to Vitanova on your admission date.***

Table of Contents

Admission	3
Orientation	3
Treatment	3
About Confidentiality/About Privacy	4
Aftercare	5
Outreach	5
Rules and Regulations	5
Disciplinary Consequences	7
Miscellaneous Information	7
Clients' Rights	8
Client's Code of Conduct	9
More About Your Privacy & the Privacy of Others	10
A few last things	11
Acknowledgement & Undertaking	12

Third edition, May 2019, © The Board of Directors of The Vitanova Corporation

For internal use only

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 counsellor, 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 first interview will be followed by one with the executive director

In order to design a treatment plan to meet your individual needs, you will complete the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN), a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment that explores physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, behavioural and lifestyle functioning. Your initial treatment plan will be formulated at this time based on this assessment, subject to appropriate amendments by the primary counsellor assigned to you, in consultation with other staff members.

At this time you will be asked to complete and sign a number of consent forms that are designed to ensure your privacy and safety (e.g., consent to submit to urine toxicology testing). You will also be given a medical report form to be completed by your family physician prior to admission.

Lastly, 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 counsellor) read this handbook in its entirety prior to admission, and sign the acknowledgement on the back cover---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.

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. You will also attend a group orientation session where you and other new clients will review important parts of this handbook and related subjects, so that you will feel comfortable in this new environment. Within a reasonable time following orientation, you will be assigned a primary counsellor, with whom you will work in individual counselling sessions.

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

ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY: *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 counsellor present.*

ABOUT PRIVACY: *The truth is that all clients, yourself included, are entitled to your privacy. That privacy must be respected. Indeed, while what you say in a group should not be repeated outside of the group, THE VERY FACT THAT YOU OR ANYONE ELSE IS A CLIENT AT VITANOVA IS NOT INFORMATION TO BE SHARED BY YOU WITH PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF VITANOVA.*

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.

Individual Counselling Sessions: You will meet regularly with your primary counsellor, 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”.

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 counsellor 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.

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.

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, every client will submit to a drug test (e.g., provide a urine sample) without argument or appeal.
2. All clients shall be respectful of staff at all times. Remarks of a sexual or suggestive nature, or actions that would reasonably be viewed as threatening or harassing will not be tolerated.
4. Clients are absolutely forbidden to engage in sexual or otherwise intimate contact of any nature with one another, or with any other person or persons, anywhere on the premises. Pornographic materials of any sort are not to be brought onto the premises. Furthermore, exclusive or cliquish relationships between two or more clients are forbidden. Should any client become aware of such actions by other clients, staff is to be informed immediately.
5. Clients are not to bring cash, credit cards, debit 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. Day clients who drive to Vitanova are not to access their vehicles during day program hours without staff permission.

Domiciliary clients are advised not to bring cell phones on site at admission. Those who do will surrender them (and any other items as listed above---cash, credit cards, etc.) 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 A

Few Last Things, p. 11). 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.

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.

Neither food nor drink is permitted on the domiciliary level. All domiciliary clients are expected to be present at all meals; and day clients at lunch Monday to Friday. New domiciliary clients are not to bring food with them at admission.

8. Access to the grounds beyond the fountain area 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 and vaping are 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 or vape 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.
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-administration observed by staff.

Prior to admission, domiciliary clients will consent to their medication being overseen by Vitanova's consulting pharmacist for the duration of their stay. Such clients are to bring all

prescribed medications at admission so that a medication review can be conducted. After such review, prescriptions will be provided by the consulting pharmacist and delivered in blister packs. No prescriptions acquired after admission are to be filled by any other pharmacist. Clients will be allowed supervised access to their medications according to prescription specifications.

12. Fire escapes and balconies are not to 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.

Miscellaneous 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, iPods, etc.) are allowed on site, provided they do not contain videos or other images, or have camera or WiFi capability. Music devices are not to be used during program hours or while doing chores. The wearing or use of headphones is not permitted during program hours, and if worn will be confiscated.
- 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.

- 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
- Coffee is available at set times only
- 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.

CLIENTS' RIGHTS

Every client of The Vitanova Foundation has the right:

- 1. To be treated with dignity and respect as a unique person---with strengths, weaknesses, natural talents and learned skills; as the person whose welfare is at the heart of Vitanova**
- 2. To receive services in an environment that is safe and secure**
- 3. To make a complaint, without fear or threat of retaliation, and to have the complaint dealt with appropriately in a timely manner**
- 4. To be recognized as a member of a family, a circle of friends, a community---with diverse social, cultural and spiritual needs, preferences, and aspirations**
- 5. To be accepted no matter what his/her values and beliefs, treated without discrimination or harassment, and accommodated to the maximum extent possible consistent with Vitanova's resources**
- 6. To be informed about and oriented to Vitanova's approach to treatment**
- 7. To be assigned a primary counsellor with whom the client will develop, monitor, and adjust, as appropriate, an individualized treatment plan**
- 8. To be involved in decisions about the services offered and received, including the right to refuse or discontinue receiving services**
- 9. To be engaged in shaping the programs and services we offer now or in future**
- 10. To personal privacy, and to have information shared with staff and other clients treated as confidential, except as may be required by law, or for purposes that do not involve client-specific indicators**

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 punctual
Be attentive
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

MORE ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY & THE PRIVACY OF OTHERS

1. Protecting Our Clients' Right to Privacy

At Vitanova, we respect our clients' right to privacy and for that reason we make use of information you provide only for the reason that we collect it. Read the following to understand how we protect your privacy, and always feel free to ask your primary counsellor or any other counsellor any questions or concerns you may have pertaining to your right to privacy.

2. Clients keeping information about other clients confidential

Clients should also be aware that communication by them at any time by any means (whether in person, by text, instant messaging, e-mail, etc.) with other people outside of Vitanova has the potential to reveal confidential information about other clients involved with Vitanova. Such disclosure, even when accidental, violates the privacy of those other clients.

3. Obtaining the consent of a client to disclose information:

When a client comes to Vitanova, the intake worker or a primary counsellor may ask the client to sign consent forms that will allow the counsellor to speak with people that are part of the clients' support circle. Each client has the right to choose for whom the client wishes to give such consent. It is your right to refuse to provide consent that would allow your primary to share your personal health information in some cases. You also have the right to revoke consent. There may be times when you are uncomfortable sharing all details to those that you have given consent for your primary counsellor to speak to. You can choose to `lock` certain parts of your personal health information.

4. Responding to police request of information:

There may be a time when police request personal health information about you. In the event that a warrant or subpoena is issued for your records, Vitanova is legally bound to provide information to the police. Vitanova may seek legal advice on this matter if there is uncertainty about the request.

5. Other uses of private information

Information about clients, taken as a group---such as a description of the typical Vitanova client "in general", which uses gathered or aggregate data about our clients, without any information that would identify you as an individual---is often collected for purposes of improving the management of the agency; or to make changes in its professional operation, including improving the quality of services; or for research purposes.

6. Social Media

We make every effort to connect to our local community, to raise awareness about substance use and demystify its associated stigma. To that end we employ social media platforms. While at Vitanova you may be offered a chance to take part in such efforts if you so consent in writing. You may, of course, refuse to participate, which is your right.

7. Substitute decision makers

In some case, the power to make decisions regarding a client's private information may be vested in another person---a parent or a guardian for instance. In such cases, the substitute decision maker will be consulted when such information is requested, with the expectation that the protection of the privacy of the client will remain paramount, to the full extent of the law.

8. System to track clients' withdrawal of consent:

In the event that you revoke or rescind consent, your primary counsellor will make a note in your record and void the relevant consent form(s).

9. Preventing unauthorized access to all types of client information:

Vitanova uses closed servers and protected databases for storing client information. Vitanova also keeps all "hard copies" of client information in double locked areas.

10. Notifying clients of unauthorized theft, loss, access, use or disclosure of client information:

You will be notified either by mail or at your next appointment in the case of unauthorized theft, loss, access, use or disclosure of client information.

11. Accessing your records:

Clients are able to access a copy of their record for review within 30 days (or 60 days in the case of complex searches). Clients can request a correction of information or obtain a copy of their record. Clients must be aware that Vitanova is unable to release any third party information held in the file. Clients can request assistance in interpreting their record. The privacy contact person for client records is the program director (currently Cindy Cepparo whose telephone number is 905-850-3690, extension 231; her email address is: cindy.cepparo@vitanova.ca.)

A Few Last Things

Check-list for ALL CLIENTS (to be done before admission)

- Have your family doctor complete, sign, and stamp the Vitanova medical report form
- Be prepared to submit to a toxicology (i.e., urine) test

Check-list for DOMICILIARY CLIENTS ONLY (to be done before admission)

- Meet with the executive director
- Pack your bags (see list below for details)
- If applying for Ontario Works, bring the following items: birth certificate, Ontario Health card, Canada Social Insurance card, and all bank account statements for the last three months
- If on the waiting list, call the intake counsellor (905 850 3690, x224) once a week to ensure bed availability

Items to be brought by new DOMICILIARY clients:

- *Bedding:* one pillow and pillow case, sheets for a single bed, mattress cover
- *Toiletries:* soap, shampoo/conditioner, shaving supplies, deodorant, toilet kit/bag, facecloths (2), towels (2).
- All alcohol-based products (e.g., cologne, mouthwash, etc.) are *prohibited*
- *Clothing:* as appropriate to the season (can be exchanged depending on the length of your stay), work clothes, including shoes/boots for indoor or outdoor chores, hangers
- *Cash:* for toiletry purchases, cigarettes, laundry (\$1 for each load)
- *Prescribed medications:* (see Rule #11)
- *Over the counter medications:* certain ones are permitted (e.g., Advil, Tylenol, Reactine, Buckley's); be aware that others may not be.
- *Miscellaneous:* a laundry bag, pencils, long-distance calling card

Acknowledgement and Undertaking

I, the undersigned client, acknowledge having read the entire contents of The Vitanova Foundation's *Clients' Handbook*, most especially the section on Rules and Regulations, and I promise 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.

_____ DATE: _____
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

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.*