



# **RIGHTS OF PASSAGE (ROP) PROGRAM**

## **PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

**October 2014**

## Welcome to ROP!

**Rights of Passage (ROP)** is a supportive transitional living program that is designed to support you as you move toward a stable, independent life.

You have a fantastic opportunity ahead of you. Here, you will have a safe and secure place to be, structure, guidance, people who are committed enough to your success to hold you accountable to your plan, and access to services like counselling and life skills supports.

You will also have a place in our community and little extras like prepared dinners, which make life a little easier for a while. Your fees are minimal, which will allow you to concentrate on your goals without major financial stress.

If you choose to take it on, this will be your chance to take control of your life and come out with a solid foundation for your future.

We know that taking on this challenge will not be easy. In ROP, you will need to set high expectations for yourself and strive to meet those expectations day after day. Communal living will also require you to adapt to some guidelines and inconveniences.

However, you will find that as you work your plan and as you persist through the frustrating times and the setbacks, you will become increasingly stable and confident, and ready to face the world and achieve the things you set your mind to.

Everybody has “roadblocks” along their pathway to success. We do not expect you to be perfect. However, we will expect you to use the resources available and keep working with us openly and honestly, to the best of your ability. That is how you will reach your goals.

You have worked hard to get to where you are. Your acceptance into ROP means that you have been recognized as someone who has already made strides toward the life you want – someone who has potential to achieve independence.

Congratulations, and once again, welcome!

## ABOUT COVENANT HOUSE

The first Covenant House was started in New York in 1972 through the work of a Franciscan priest, who organized a group to offer care to homeless youth. Covenant House has grown and changed a lot since then, but all of the locations are still guided by the original idea of serving youth through relationships based on faith and principles. Below is the mission that is shared by the 21 locations of Covenant House International.

### ***Mission Statement***

"We who recognize God's providence and fidelity to His People are dedicated to living out His covenant among ourselves and those children we serve, with absolute respect and unconditional love. That commitment calls us to serve suffering children of the street, and to protect and safeguard all children. Just as Christ in His humanity is the visible sign of God's presence among His people, so our efforts together in the covenant community are a visible sign that affects the presence of God working through the Holy Spirit among ourselves and our kids.

We commit ourselves to recognizing each other as precious invaluable human beings. Covenant love is consistent, personal love, a love that challenges and confronts, but is never withdrawn."

### ***Covenant***

The name of the organization tells you a lot about the way we operate. The concept of a **covenant** comes all the way from Bible times. All through the Bible, the word covenant is used to describe God's promises in relationship with the people.

Covenants were also made between people, as two-way solemn agreements. The English word "covenant" literally means "a coming together".

Covenants involve a mutual agreement, a relationship in which each party lays out what they are committed to doing.

At Covenant House Vancouver (CHV), we know that every person needs and deserves care, respect, and the basics of life. We are dedicated to providing that. We also know that young people who want to escape street life need to learn and practice respect for self and others, positive social skills and values, and self-reliance. That is why we ask you to dedicate yourself to certain guidelines in your relationship with us. Like every relationship, **covenant** is a two-way street!

## THE FIVE COVENANT PRINCIPLES

**Immediacy** means that needs are addressed as quickly as possible. ROP is staffed 24 hours, so that you always have someone available to talk to or to ask for support.

Immediacy also means that communication about needs and other important issues should be timely. You will have regular meetings with your Key Youth Worker, but you should keep the staff on duty informed whenever you are dealing with something that staff might be able to help with. When staff recognize the need to address something with you (e.g., *about your behaviour or your plan*), you can expect that they will do so promptly.

**Sanctuary** means that ROP is meant to be a safe place for all. Our staff are committed to maintaining an environment where all the residents can feel secure, build trust, and be free of abuse and negative pressure. Everyone has to contribute to creating this environment. You should inform staff at once if you are feeling physically or emotionally unsafe. You will be expected to refrain from behaviours that threaten the sanctuary of others.

**Value Communication.** Moving away from street values and developing a healthy set of personal values is part of the work of ROP participants. Honesty, caring, accountability and mutual respect are values that we all strive to live and model.

**Structure.** If you have been staying at the CHV Crisis Program, you have experienced structure in the form of strict schedules and rules that are needed for establishing stability in that environment. At ROP, there are also some schedules and rules that must be followed by everyone, but structure is also meant to be individualized and internalized.

You will be involved in the process of setting expectations for yourself as you identify goals and as you take responsibility for working toward those goals. The aim is that by the time you leave, you will have practice in deciding and setting up the routines and self-discipline that are important to you so you can continue to do so independently.

For example, once on your own you will be able to live by a budget, get enough sleep, get to work on time, avoid triggers to destructive behaviours, decide when you will do your dishes, when you will study, etc. The gradual move to setting structure independently is facilitated by the five steps of the ROP program. As you move through the steps, more and more of the responsibility lies with you.

**Choice.** At CHV, we support your right and responsibility to make choices for your own life. You make choices every day, by doing certain things and by not doing other things. We will support you in exploring the options that are open to you, and recognizing all of the little choices that you have to make every day. We will also support you in forming a plan that fits you, based on your own preferences and dreams. Part of the work of staff is to help you evaluate the possible results of each choice that you make. Our goal is to empower you with information and skills for positive decision making.

## THE ROLE OF STAFF

ROP has staff on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. At first, it may seem like a lot of different people, but you will find that the full-time staff work fairly consistent schedules, and it does not take long to get to know everybody. We also have staff who work on a casual basis, filling in when others are ill or away.

**Youth Workers** are your main resource when you need practical help, information, or just to chat. They make sure that guidelines are being followed from day to day.

You will be assigned a **Key Youth Worker** as you enter ROP. This is the Youth Worker who will be watching out for you to make sure everything is on track. This Youth Worker will assist you to achieve all of your Case Plan and Life Skills goals. Keep in mind that all of the staff work with all of the residents, so for most things you do not have to wait for your Key Youth Worker.

The **Youth Support Worker** does a lot of the same work as the youth workers, but is also the person who is responsible for making sure that rooms are in order when you move in, everyone has the supplies that they need, keys and fobs, and so on. The Youth Support Worker is in charge of program fee administration, but you can pay your program fees to any youth worker as well. The Youth Support Worker provides such services as income taxes and arranging dentist appointments.

The **Case Manager** is responsible for developing all case plans and making sure that all of the case plans are done in a way that fits ROP's purpose and mission. Case Managers are here to support the youth in reaching all of their goals.

The **Life Skills Worker** is responsible for assessing your life skills needs with you and developing a plan to work on areas for development. They also coordinate and manage all life skills activities in ROP.

The **ROP Program Manager** is responsible for supervising and coordinating staff, ensuring that program policies and procedures are in place and followed, liaising with other CHV departments, and dealing with issues within the program as they emerge.

The Program Manager's role does not always involve direct daily contact with residents, but you feel free to drop by the office any time you have a concern or an idea you would like to discuss.

## **HOW THE PROGRAM IS STRUCTURED: THE STEPS**

Throughout your stay at ROP, you will progress through a set of steps which are designed so that you gradually take on more responsibility. That means that as you move forward, more is expected of you, and you make more of your own choices. By moving step by step, you have the best chance for success as you prepare to be on your own.

Your Key Youth Worker will track your progress with you every week. The success of each week will be evaluated based on the requirements of your current step. If you have met all of the requirements during the week, you "complete the week".

Once you have four (4) successful weeks on Step 1 or eight (8) successful weeks on the other steps, you are eligible to move to the next step.

### ***Length of Stay and Use of Program Fees***

It is expected that you are progressively moving toward independence the whole time you are staying at ROP program, you will be expected to complete all program requirements for the required number of weeks.

As mentioned above, there is a **minimum** of four (4) weeks required on Step 1 and eight (8) weeks required on each of Steps 2 – 5. You can stay on a step longer if you need to, but it will always be expected that you are working toward goals as outlined in your case plan.

For example, on Step 5, you might stay longer than eight (8) weeks even if you have eight (8) successful weeks, just as long as you have a plan and it is clear that your stay at ROP is helping you achieve some goals.

The Case Manager, Life Skills Worker, and Key Youth Worker will determine when a participant has successfully met the requirements to move to the next step.

Your team will also review your progress if it takes you more than three (3) extra weeks to meet the requirements for any step and determine the best way to support your success.

The program is designed to enable completion in one year. However, your length of stay is dependent on your personal goals and their fit with the mission and purpose of the ROP program.

### ***Extensions***

If you require more time to achieve further objectives, you can apply for an extension. The length of the time for an extension is based on how long you will need to achieve your specific goals. An extension can be up to six (6) months and you can apply more than once for an extension. Approval for extensions is made by the ROP Manager, in consultation with the ROP team.

Extensions are based on an agreement between you and staff, including what you will be working on and what supports ROP will provide. Your continued residence at ROP will depend on your follow-through with this agreement.

For those on an extension, late program fees may result in fines or move-out.

Requests for extensions are to be made by formal letter a minimum of 30 days prior to expected move date.

Program fees that you pay within one (1) year of your move-in are put aside for a potential bursary for you. This does not include program fees that are paid while you are on a youth agreement, income assistance (IA), or employment insurance (EI). It also does not include program fees that are paid late.

Unless you have a prior agreement approved by the Program Manager, program fees paid after the 1st day of the month are not reimbursable. You still have to pay them, but that amount will not count when your bursary is calculated. Please note that any program fees paid during an extension are not eligible for program bursary/refund.

If you move out while on Step 1 or Step 2, you are not eligible for a bursary.

If you move out while on Step 3, 4 or 5, a portion of your program fees will be offered to you in the form of a cheque, start-up items, or damage deposit for your new place and/or educational scholarship.

The form and timing of the bursary will be determined by ROP prior to your departure, or shortly after your departure if you leave suddenly.

The graduation bursary is designed to help you succeed in the next step of your plan for independence. As such, it is offered according to an individualized plan based on your situation and goals at the time.

In some cases, part or the entire amount will be held by CHV until it can be disbursed appropriately. For example, if it is agreed that money will go toward an educational program, it may be paid directly to the institution at the time of your registration.

It should not be assumed that the bursary will be offered in the form of cash or cheque, and some plans may involve conditional installments over time. Such plans will be made based on need and in consultation with you.

***The value of the bursary will be as follows –***

- 25% of fees paid if departing while on Step 3
- 50% of fees paid if departing while on Step 4
- 75% of fees paid if departing while on Step 5
- 100% of fees paid if departing according to plan after successfully completing Step 5 or 6

***Note:*** *If you leave ROP unexpectedly, ROP staff will attempt to contact you regarding your bursary/refund for a maximum of six (6) months. After six (6) months all remaining program fees will be deposited, and will become ineligible for refund.*

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

ROP staff work as a team. That means that information you share to any ROP staff member will be documented in your file, shared during shift change, and/or discussed during staff meetings. Information is shared with staff members of CHV on a need-to-know basis as related to their job.

Staff will not share information about you with anyone outside of Covenant House without your consent. There are certain exceptions.

Staff are obligated by ethics and by law to report any information suggesting neglect or abuse of a minor. When there is reason to believe that any person is at risk of harm, information must be shared as necessary to assure safety. Records may be subpoenaed by courts or staff members required to testify.

In general, when police are asking questions, CHV will confirm the identity of residents, but will not disclose further information unless required to do so by law.

When we share or receive information about you with other people or agencies in order to help with your plan or confirm what you have told us, you will be asked to sign an Exchange of Information (EOI) form.

If anyone calls CHV asking for you, staff will not confirm over the phone that you are a resident at ROP. Instead, the caller will be told that if you are present, you will receive the message.

Staff will not talk to other residents about your personal information, and will not discuss other residents' information with you. You have a role in protecting the confidentiality of your co-residents as well. It is expected that you do not disclose identities or other information about your co-residents to those outside the program.

Please refer to CHV's Privacy Policy for more information.

## **CASE PLANNING**

Making and following a case plan is part of every step. When you applied to ROP, you identified what you would like to do when you entered the program and what you could achieve by living at ROP. Your case plan is your ongoing plan to make it happen.

This plan will be developed with the Case Manager when you enter ROP and while you are working your way through the steps. Every week, you will review your case plan with your Case Manager (and Key Youth Worker whenever possible).

Every week, you will also meet with your Key Youth Worker to provide an update about how the plan is working and what is going on for you during that week.

At Step 4, you will create the case plan for yourself with a little help from the staff. At Steps 5 and 6, the plan is yours to create, set reviews, and ensure that you are succeeding. Steps 4, 5 and 6 must include a transition plan that identifies when you will leave ROP and what you need to achieve before your departure.

What happens if you lose your job or schooling?

The ROP Program is based on the premise that each resident is actively working toward goals that lead to independence. Apart from brief periods of transition or poor health, you are expected to be occupied full-time with work and/or school.

When this is not the case, you are required to address this with your Case Manager immediately. Not having employment or schooling compromises your eligibility for the program.

The details of the plan to maintain your eligibility for the program will be addressed in your case plan. While you are in this situation, Step 1 rules apply to you, including curfew and no overnights.

The twice-per-day check-in with staff that is part of Step 1 is intended for you to let staff know your plans each morning and report back on your activities upon your return. Once you are employed or attending school or program on a full-time basis, you will return to your previous step.

## MEALS

**Dinner** is served each day from 5:20 pm to 6:00 pm in the main floor dining room. Meals that are served in the dining room are to be eaten in the dining room. One of the primary reasons that meals are provided to ROP residents is for the sense of community that eating together brings.

After you have eaten, please scrape any unused food into the garbage and place your dishes into the tubs provided. ROP residents are expected to share the responsibility for wiping the tables and leaving the dining room clean and orderly.

As with all relationships within CHV, the expectation is that you treat the kitchen staff with respect. This should include greeting them, using "please" and "thank you", avoiding unnecessary mess, and showing appreciation for the food. Consider that these people spend their days preparing food for you, so insulting or wasting your meal communicates that you do not value their work.

If you have a complaint, suggestion, or special request in regard to the meals, you should bring it to a Youth Worker or the ROP Program Manager, who will relay it through the proper channels.

**Saved Dinners.** If you are scheduled for work or school at dinner time, you may request a "saved dinner". Your meal will be kept for you on a tray, which you may reheat in the kitchen on your floor. Trays and dishes are not to be taken to your room. You are responsible for leaving them in an orderly and clean manner to be returned to the dining room.

Saved dinners must be requested in advance by speaking to your Key Youth Worker or the Youth Support Worker. They are only provided if the reason for your absence is work, school, or health related. As noted in the Steps, saved dinners are not available for residents on Step 5 or 6.

**ROP Kitchens.** For breakfast and lunch, you are responsible for preparing your own food. You may do this individually, or you may arrange to make and share a meal with co-residents.

Limited supplies of groceries are available for the use of those who are on Steps 1, 2 or 3. These groceries are intended to supplement your own grocery budget, not provide all necessary food.

Once you are on Steps 4, 5 or 6, you provide your own breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Certain exceptions apply, such as communal meals that you participate in preparing on your floor. CHV may provide ingredients for Sunday brunch, cooking class meals, special events, etc.

Whenever you use the kitchen, you must clean up after yourself. Cleaning should be done immediately. Consider that others who want to use the kitchen would like to find a clean and tidy environment to cook in. Health hazards arise from counters that are not wiped and food that is left out.

You may store some of your food items in the refrigerator or freezer in the kitchen. Make sure your food items are not too large, and that they are clearly marked with your name. All residents are expected to respect one another's property, including food; however, staff cannot monitor your food items.

**Community Dinners.** While the dinner meal is provided every evening at ROP, Wednesdays are the one time that you are required to be present. We call these meals "Community Dinners" because they are one time that everyone can expect to share a meal together. Wednesdays are also a time that you can arrange to have a visitor for dinner if you wish.

If you need to be excused from community dinner because of work schedule or another important activity, you must make an arrangement with your Key Youth Worker in advance.

## **POLICIES AND BEHAVIOURAL GUIDELINES**

**House Meetings** take place once a month (*dates are posted in advance*). Like Community Dinners, House Meetings are mandatory. This means that you need to make prior arrangements with your Key Youth Worker if you are unable to attend because of work or another important activity.

House Meetings are your opportunity to communicate with co-residents and staff about ROP issues that affect you all. Whenever you have something that you would like to discuss at a House Meeting, ask a program staff to put it on the agenda.

**Phone Usage.** The phones in the common areas are for shared use. If you need to make long distance calls, we encourage you to purchase a calling card. Staff can help you make long distance calls paid by CHV in urgent situations only.

**Common Space.** Common sense courtesy should be used in the common spaces. Clean up after yourself, be considerate in sharing the computer and television, and keep noise levels appropriate.

Sleeping on the common space furniture is not allowed. Pornography and other offensive material are also not allowed.

**Noise.** Keep in mind that you are sharing ROP living space with people who have different work, sleep, and study schedules. All noise should be kept at a reasonable level so that others are not disturbed. Please refrain from slamming doors and talking loudly in the hallways.

**Smoking** is permitted on the rooftop garden only. It is not permitted anywhere inside the building.

**Visitors.** You are allowed to have up to two visitors at any one time. Your visitors must sign in at the Front Desk and may be asked to produce identification. Visiting hours are as follows:

- Sunday through Thursday – 10:00 am to 11:00 pm
- Friday and Saturday – 10:00 am to 1:00 am

However, staff may ask your visitors to leave at any time, including periods within visiting hours, when needs of residents or shortage of available staff make it an inappropriate time to have non-residents present.

You are responsible for your visitors. You must stay with them at all times. Other things to keep in mind –

- Visitors are not allowed in your room.
- When your visitors need to use the washroom, they should approach staff to obtain access.
- No physical contact is allowed between residents and visitors.
- Visitors are not allowed to use the computers.
- Visitors are not allowed to eat ROP food, with the exception of Community Dinner.
- Your visitors are expected to follow CHV rules. Staff are not expected to enforce rules with visitors. If you do not ensure that your visitors are adhering to CHV rules, staff may ask your visitors to leave and may prohibit their return depending on the seriousness and/or persistence of the behaviour.

- Crisis Program residents can be signed in as visitors, but only with prior approval from both ROP and Crisis Program staff.

**Visiting Between Floors.** You may invite a visitor from 3rd or 4th floor to your floor. When you do (*or when you visit the other floor*), you and the other resident you are visiting will share the responsibility of ensuring proper sign in.

You are not allowed to visit on another floor if you are home sick from school or work, or during specified times that you are to be on job search or school plan.

If you do not follow the guidelines regarding visitors, you may lose your visitor privileges, or you could face suspension or discharge.

When visitor privileges are suspended, you cannot sign in any visitors and you are not allowed to sign in as a visitor on another floor.

**Keys / Fobs.** The key and fob deposit that you pay when you move in will be refunded when you return your key and fob at the end of your stay. If you lose your fob at any time during your stay, there is a \$50 replacement fee. If your key / fob is lost or stolen, you must notify staff right away to ensure the security of the building. Your fob can be individually de-activated to prevent unauthorized use.

Lock the door to your apartment at all times. You are prohibited from lending out your key or fob to other residents or anyone else.

Your fob will give you access to the front door and elevator to your floor and to the roof. Resident fobs will not open the front door between 12:00 am and 8:00 am when front desk staff are not on duty. During that time, you may use the buzzer and staff will let you in.

**Room Inspections.** One of the skills for independent living that you are expected to practice at ROP is keeping a clean and orderly living environment.

This is important because the environment you live in affects both your physical and mental health. To keep track of whether each resident is keeping their apartment clean, ROP staff carry out room checks once a week.

An effort will be made to check your room while you are present, but if you are not available, two (2) staff may enter your room to do the room check.

During a room check, staff will look for the following –

- Tub and toilet cleaned
- Bathroom counter, sink, and mirror wiped
- Floor cleaned

- No leftover / spoiled food in room / fridge
- Fridge and microwave wiped
- Dishes washed; no dining room dishes in your room
- Kitchenette counter cleaned
- Beds clear of all items; clean under the bed
- Full garbage cans emptied
- No garbage lying around the room
- No excessive dirty laundry in room or on floor

Passing the room check is included in every step as one of the requirements for passing each week.

**No Pets.** ROP residents are not allowed to keep pets of any kind on the premises.

**Damages / Needed Repairs.** Routine maintenance to your apartment and to the common spaces is provided by CHV. When there is a need for maintenance, you should inform staff right away, especially as sometimes timely maintenance can prevent further damage.

You are responsible for any damage caused by you or your visitors within your apartment or anywhere else on the premises.

If necessary, a payment plan will be arranged for you to cover the cost of such damages. This includes damage caused by reckless act or by negligence in taking reasonable care of the property. You must let staff know as soon as possible when such damage occurs.

**Cable / Internet.** If you wish to have services installed in your room, you should first speak with your Key Youth Worker. You must be on a minimum of Step 2 to make this request.

Service technicians will not be allowed to enter ROP unless you have obtained prior written permission from your Key Youth Worker and Program Manager. When you request these services, the decision will depend on how it fits with your plan, including use of money and time.

Permission will be granted only for pay-as-you-go service. ROP residents should not enter into contracts for these services at any time. Residents must be present for cable / internet set-up and service appointments.

**Laundry** facilities are shared. Please show consideration for your co-residents by removing your items from the machines as soon as they are done.

**Sign In / Sign Out** every time you leave the building and every time you come back in. You must stop at the Front Desk to mark in the time and initial the form.

This is important when staff confirm whether you are in the building, particularly during emergency situations such as fire. If you have not signed in and staff are unsure whether you have returned, staff will check your room to see if you are in.

**Overnights.** Generally, whenever you would like to spend a night away from ROP, obtain prior approval from a staff member. No overnights are allowed on Step 1 because you are just settling in and it is important that you have the stability and routine of returning every night.

On the other steps, we limit the number of overnights you spend away each month. This is because your consistent participation in the program is dependent on you being here. If you are frequently away and sleeping somewhere else, your need for ROP comes into question.

Approval for overnights may be denied at any time if there are concerns about your behaviour, your well-being, or your progress within the program.

**Curfews** are outlined in the steps. If you want to request permission to come in for a later curfew on a particular night, make the request to your Key Youth Worker in advance. Any time that you return past 3:00 am (*approved or unapproved*), it counts as an overnight rather than a late curfew.

**Extended Absence.** Absence for more than one (1) night at a time is strongly discouraged.

Exceptions may be made if there is a reason you must be away. Any absence beyond one night must be pre-approved, regardless of Step level.

If you are absent without approval for more than 72 hours, this may be grounds for discharge from the program. If you do not make contact, a missing person's report will be filed, and discharge may be carried out in your absence. Your belongings would then be disposed of if you do not claim them within one (1) week.

**Medication.** Throughout your stay at ROP, you must keep staff informed of all medications that you are taking. All medications (*with the exception of vitamins, birth control, and fast-acting medication such as inhalers*), will be kept locked in the office.

You are responsible to take your medications according to instructions, and you will be asked to initial each time you take a dose. Later on in the Steps, you may keep your medication in your room. You can discuss this with your Key Youth Worker and Case Manager.

**Sexual Activity.** No sexual activity is permitted in the building. In fact, no physical contact is allowed. This way, there is no misunderstanding of when contact has crossed into sexual activity. This rule also protects against the occurrence of unwanted touch or accusation of unwanted touch.

**Drugs and Alcohol.** Consuming or possessing drugs or alcohol on Covenant House property or during Covenant House activities is prohibited. This includes prescription medication that is not legitimately prescribed for you. Selling substances is also prohibited.

Breaking these rules is cause for immediate suspension and possible discharge from the program.

ROP residents who are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are not allowed in the common spaces. Disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated. If you are perceived to be moderately or severely intoxicated, staff may deem it necessary to conduct safety checks. In this case, two staff will enter your room at intervals to ensure that you are safe. In addition, you may be asked to receive medical clearance to remain in the program if there are significant concerns for your health.

If it is recognized that substance use is creating or contributing to problems in your life, part of your case plan will involve addressing the use.

**Fighting, Aggression, Threats.** Physical and verbal aggression (*including threatening*) are causes for immediate suspension and possible discharge from ROP.

**Weapon.** If you have any weapon or any implement that can be used as a weapon (*e.g., hammer, knife, etc.*), you must turn it over to staff.

If the item is something that is legal to possess, staff will keep it for you until you leave ROP. You may request your work tools and the like when you leave the building. Your tools must be given to you at the front door, and returned to staff at the front door as soon as you get back. If you do not return it upon your return, it will not be given to you again for the remainder of your stay.

If you keep a weapon in your apartment and fail to turn it over to staff, you may be discharged from the program.

**Discriminatory Talk / Media.** All people are to be treated with respect in ROP. Derogatory talk toward anyone is not allowed. This includes generalizations, jokes, or insults based on skin colour, ethnic heritage, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability, or body type. You are responsible for refraining from listening to or viewing offensive talk or images on computer, television, or any other electronic device.

**Pornography** is not permitted within ROP. CHV views the pornography industry as part of human exploitation, which is directly opposed to Covenant House's values of love and respect.

Exploitation means using a person for profit or other selfish purposes. Many of the people appearing in pornography have been tricked or coerced at a very young age. Much of pornography is degrading or cruel. As a whole, it can promote a devalued view of people.

Pornography can be offensive to others who live at ROP. Your co-residents are entitled to enjoy their common space without being exposed to uninvited sexual imagery.

**Attire.** Shirts and footwear are to be worn at all times in the ROP common spaces. Clothing should not be inappropriately revealing or provocative. Clothing should be adequate for a public space (*not the beach*). Clothing that advertise alcohol or drugs and/or display offensive messages or imagery are not allowed.

**Room Searches.** If, at any time, staff have reason to believe that you have a visitor or contraband items in your room, they may conduct a room search. If possible, staff will tell you what is suspected and give you the opportunity to avoid the search by turning over what is in your room.

If a room search is necessary, two (2) staff will enter your apartment together and will conduct a thorough search with as little disruption to your belongings as possible.

**Chores.** Certain routine tasks are the shared responsibility of all residents on each floor. To organize the work and make sure everyone is participating, staff assign chores on a weekly basis. The chore schedule rotates so that an individual is not always assigned the same task. You are responsible to carry out your chore even if you spend very little time in the common area.

Cleaning up after yourself in the common area is separate from doing chores. In other words, just because somebody is assigned the task of cleaning counters does not mean you should walk away from the mess you just made on the counter.

**Program Fee Reduction.** The standard program fee is a minimum of 60% of your income to a maximum of \$300 per month. If at any time you are unable to pay this amount, speak with your Key Youth Worker and Case Manager in advance about the situation.

Your Key Youth Worker and Case Manager will inquire about the circumstance that caused your inability to pay your program fee, and may request verification of your explanation. Solutions may include late or reduced payment, depending on the situation. Your Key Youth Worker or Case Manager will forward the request to the Program Manager. All program fee adjustments must be approved by ROP Manager in advance.

These arrangements should be made as soon as you realize that there will be a problem. Do not wait until the payment is due or until your Key Youth Worker asks for your program fees.

Late payments or reductions are an exception. If you are continually unable to pay or if your reasons are inadequate, corrective action will be required within your plan in order for you to stay in the program.

**Suspension, Discharge, and Appeals.** Failure to comply with ROP rules and policies may result in suspension (*you must leave the program for a specified period but your room will be held for your return*) or discharge (*you are required to move out and may re-apply to ROP at a later date when you are ready to comply with the program*).

These steps are taken based on the seriousness and the persistence of the problem. Discharge may result from one very serious occurrence or from repeated occurrences that are less severe but demonstrate that you are not ready to avail of the program.

If you are suspended or discharged from the program, you have the option to appeal the decision with the Ombudsperson. You may arrange an appeal by talking with staff at front desk.

**Belongings Left Behind.** Covenant House does not have space to store belongings of discharged residents. Therefore, if you leave unexpectedly, or if you have a planned move and leave items behind, your unclaimed belongings will be disposed of after the agreed upon time of pick-up.

## **EXTRA SUPPORTS**

**Transportation.** For the most part, you are responsible for your own transportation.

At times, especially during the beginning steps, ROP may agree to provide you with bus tickets for work, school, or health-related appointments.

**Pastoral Services.** Pastoral care is available to any resident who would like to speak confidentially about personal or spiritual matters.

**Activities.** From time to time, there will be group activities planned for ROP residents. Sometimes these are planned by staff or a volunteer, but they can also be initiated by ROP residents. If you have an idea for an activity, speak with a staff member about it.

Some activities may involve outings, while others may be held within CHV premises. If you have a game or a skill that you would like to share with others, bring it up as well.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

**To protect yourself and everyone in the building against the possibility of fire, take the following precautions –**

- Do not collect too much stuff in your room, or pile things up. Be especially aware of combustible or flammable materials, and store them safely.
- Get rid of worn cords on small appliances.
- If you notice equipment overheating, stop using it; and if it is CHV property, inform staff immediately so that it can be serviced.
- Keep your doorway unobstructed at all times.
- Smoke only in designated areas; make sure that your cigarette butts are thoroughly put out and left in an appropriate container. Never put a smouldering cigarette butt or match in a garbage can.
- Do not walk away from a microwave when it is in use or a hot stovetop.
- Remove clutter around hot surfaces when you are cooking and be cautious about loose clothing, towels, etc. that may come in contact with the stove element.
- Never throw water on a kitchen grease fire. That can make it flare up. Instead, use the kitchen fire extinguisher or use baking soda for a very small flame.

**If the fire alarm rings –**

- Remain calm.
- Leave the building immediately by the nearest safe exit. You must leave even if you believe that it is a false alarm (*unless you have been specifically told by staff that the alarm is being tested and you do not have to leave*).
- Close doors behind you.
- Use the stairs, not the elevator.

- Once outside, move away from the building. Go to the designated assembly area, which is northeast of the building, on the sidewalk along West Pender Street.
- Do not leave the assembly area without checking in with ROP staff. They must account for every person who they believe is in the building to inform firefighters of any residents possibly left inside the building.
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason until the Fire Department has advised that it is safe to do so.

### **If you are the first to discover a fire –**

- Leave the fire area.
- Immediately sound the fire alarm by activating the nearest red alarm pull station.
- Leave the building as above.
- Call the Fire Department (*dial 911*) from a safe location. Tell them you are reporting a fire at 326 West Pender Street, Vancouver.

## **LIFE SKILLS IN ROP**

During your time at ROP, you have the opportunity to build on the life skills you currently have and move towards a more stable and independent life. The ROP life skills program will become part of your case plan. You will collaborate with ROP staff to develop a life skills plan that builds on your strengths and helps you grow in the areas with which you need support.

### ***What are Life Skills?***

Life Skills are the skills and abilities that help you deal with challenges you face in life. They are skills needed to carry out the day-to-day operations of independent living and what help us live the lives we want to lead.

### ***Life Skills may include, but are not limited to –***

1. Money management
2. Education
3. Job training
4. Employment
5. Housing after ROP
6. Education and training
7. Employment
8. Health and well-being
9. Daily living skills
10. Personal and social development

## 11. Legal rights and responsibilities

We will work on skills that address your needs while living at ROP and skills you will need when living on your own.

Life Skills help facilitate healthy, positive, and productive growth.

### ***The Life Skills Plan***

Within your first step, you will complete an assessment to help you find out what you can do already and what would be helpful to learn more about.

During your stay at ROP, you will develop a life skills plan with your Life Skills Worker and revise it as you move through the steps of the program.

The life skills plan may include, but is not limited to: attending workshops, preparing a budget, exploring career options, and other creative activities. These are all designed to enhance your skills. Remember, these are skills that will serve you well for a lifetime. This also means that you have a lifetime to work on them.