

WebChat #56 Cohousing and Coronavirus
Chat

=== What are you doing that's new? ===

- Changing meal times to take advantage of being outdoors when it is "warm" (in Santa Fe NM)
- We've played some online games. Some really like that.
- Leaving little games/puzzles/supplies for the littles in the community
- We've tried to buy outdoor heaters and they are all sold out.
- There's some experimenting with socially distanced outdoor events
- 20' x 40' retractable tarp to carport to extend space under cover.
- We're having porch happy hour on Friday evenings
- Our social/rec team is currently planning a neighborhood arts event, all outdoors, with artists from the community displaying in our carports and on porches.
- Door-to-door Thanksgiving potluck...to take food back home-- individual portions
- Finding other ways to have common dinner (Oakland CA)
- Holding our "uncommon cafe open mic" events on zoom
- Buying 'fire pits, puffy pants and wool lap blankets
- I am now a zoom host for others
- We are taking advantage of good weather to gather with masks and social distance.
- I am not living in cohousing but I now have a 6' x 6' table on my patio for sharing meals with friends.
- We have purchased infrared heaters for our screen porch for small group meetings.
- Small pods to connect
- I'm in a developing community expecting to move in in September. We had this great expectation of moving in and being interactive with our community. We don't expect that to happen now and are experiencing some anguish about it. I am looking for suggestions as to how we might make the experience of moving in a community experience.
- we have a bunch of warm, comfy blankets that folks can wrap up in for meetings.
- tiki torches
- Discovered our town does not allow fire pits. :-}
- Socially distanced "art walk"
- We are hoping to have small common meal cook-for-each other meals.
- This is Avi and I live in Bristol Village Cohousing in Bristol Vermont. We have tried to some extent to keep the social aspect of the community going. We have had to cancel community meals in person obviously, but yesterday for example we had a Thanksgiving buffet where each person fixed their plate and took it home for a Zoom dinner. We also have had Friday evening Zoom social hours.
- We did a turkey trot on Thanksgiving all trotting around while social distancing and then went our home to eat.

=== What would you like to learn from others today? ===

- How safely do indoor meals? Or can we?
- how to gather in winter weather
- to know we're not alone!
- strategies for staying warm
- just curious how others are coping and what is happening in other co housing communities
- Are you able to get buy in from your other community members around COVID protocols?
- What is the Board of Director's responsibility from a legal standpoint regarding changing public health orders?
- More ideas for celebrating the holidays at a distance
- how do others envision post pandemic?
- How to welcome/support those new to this well established community
- Any creative strategies
- How to deal better with folks who, er, push the limits we agreed on last spring.
- I am interested in learning what cohousing communities are doing in terms of social distancing during pandemic and if it has been successful.
- wondering how anyone is actually doing common meals
- we haven't had any since the lockdown started
- how to trust or not trust the cautiousness of others in community.
- Tips on 'palatable' ways to convey proposed guidelines--a bit of a double bind with folks wanting to know yet resisting
- Gentle ways to remind each other to put a masks back on when we gather for eating.
- What any communities needed to assist members in quarantine or isolation? How was it handled or managed?
- Question: Has anyone had cases of Covid in their community?

=== Indoor Meals - are they possible? ===

- we are not having indoor meals, except that individual homes may have other commoners in
- Indoor meals may be possible if the air is correctly filtered.
- No indoor meals in a group setting but individual households have had meals within their 3-4 person 'pod'
- no shared indoor meals
- Families who have consciously "podded" will eat together *safely* in someone's unit.
- In Vermont indoor meals are not allowed right now unless you already live together - multiple households are strongly discouraged due to our current surge.
- I don't think we can do that in Vermont. But we can do meals by Zoom. Our communal space is not large enough to accommodate us all and also allow social distancing.
- We are not doing indoor meals. We are planning on having households cook for one another, leaving main dish on a porch, and at least not having to cook every night.

=== What legal responsibility does the Board or HOA have? ===

- Our board has mostly stayed out of it, except at the start when they declared common meals suspended and guest room closed. There are city and state regulations regarding "residential buildings" and "common areas" that more than one household has access to -- we make sure those are posted and emailed around.
- We are reminded by our HOA that we CARE about our neighbors; wear a mask not for yourself, but because you CARE about your community neighbor, wear it for THEM!
- I _do_ think our Board feels responsible for people obeying the government regulations, reminding them, etc.

=== Caring for members who are sick ===

- We have been lucky not to have any Covid infections, but have had people need surgery or other illnesses. We have a Mitzvah Squad that organizes meals, transportation to dr. appts, take care of pets, etc. Not putting your self at risk.
 - None of our members have gotten Covid, but we have voluntarily created pairs to check up on each other every day.
 - We've helped by taking care of their pets, had a group of volunteers who daily helped.
 - There are no publicly known cases here but we do things like shop for each other, particularly members who are more at risk - adding items to a delivery, etc. So helping each other - not specifically someone who is having Covid.
 - Have any of the cohousing communities had an actual case of COVID?
 - We have taken members to their medical visits.
 - One member can not go shopping so we/ I ask her what she needs and she gives me her list and leave it on her porch with the receipt and then she puts change in an envelope and puts it outside for me.
 - We had a spreadsheet an a bulletin board where you could request an item(s) and someone else going shopping would pick it up for you. Sometimes just if you only need one item - you don't have to be at tis or anything.
 - at risk
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- Thank you!
 - Thanks everyone!
 - Thank you all!!!
 - Greetings from the UK. Thank you for hosting Karen.
 - Thanks, everyone!