



**USER'S MANUAL  
RESIDENTIAL CENTRE**

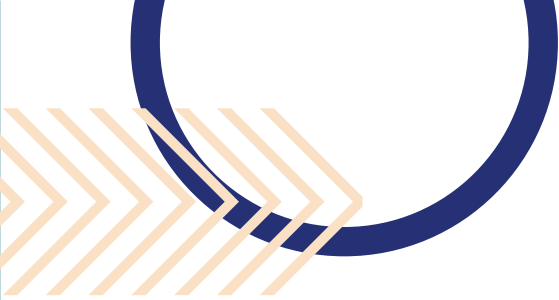
**QUEBEC**



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***The Portage Family wishes you the most cordial welcome.***

The Portage program was set up more than 50 years ago by and for people like you!

Since February 14, 1973, thousands of people suffering from substance abuse have chosen to take their lives into their own hands and, with the help of Portage, end their addiction.

At Portage, the person and their needs are the basis of the treatment plan. You will actively participate in the development of your own program.

This manual was written by a team of Portage residents and staff to serve as a guide for all new participants. You will find all the information relevant to the program there.

Portage is committed to providing quality services, by ensuring the establishment and proper functioning of a residents and users' committees. Their mandate is to inform residents of their rights and obligations, to measure their degree of satisfaction in regards to the services obtained at Portage, to also ensure the promotion and continuous improvement of the quality of the living conditions of residents, and respecting their rights. It is also a place of support if you want to file a complaint.

Remember that we are here to support you and that in your journey "Only you can succeed, but you cannot succeed alone!"

## It's a Story

The Portage center, in Prévost in the Laurentians, opened its doors on Valentine's Day in 1973. On that day, a group of Montrealers trained in the therapeutic community movement, in New York State, braved the harsh winter weather to start Portage's addiction treatment program.

Since then, February 14 has been part of Portage's tradition as Metamorphosis Day, during which all Portage centers celebrate the transformation that is taking place among residents. We sincerely hope that you can participate in this very special event.

And, since 1973, thousands of people seeking recovery and a better life, like you, have been welcomed to Portage centers across Canada.

## The Mission

Through comprehensive and effective interventions, inspired by the therapeutic community approach, Portage builds on the strengths and abilities of people battling with addiction to enable them to live sober lives filled with dignity, self-respect and success.

## The Approach

Portage's approach to treatment draws on the principles of therapeutic community and self-help in a case management practice. The Portage environment is designed to ensure the physical and psychological safety of residents.

This approach, reinforced by peer support, promotes personal development. Portage believes that the inherent strengths of the residents are the basis of their rehabilitation.

## The Staff

Portage's multidisciplinary team supports residents in their development and growth process in collaboration with the professionals involved. Compliance with the code of ethics by staff members is a guarantee of the quality of services and care offered to residents.

## Community Life

By joining the Portage family, you enter a therapeutic community. In other words, this means that you will share your daily life with people who are going through the same difficulties as you and whom, all together, have chosen to help each other.

You will live this experience with people of different ethnic origins, religions, gender identities and social classes. The same goes for the staff.

Living in a community also means having responsibilities and respecting certain rules. These rules have been established to ensure your safety and well-being, and to allow you to use your experience at Portage to deal with your problems. It is important that you feel safe, free from intimidation, harassment or exploitation in order to deploy your strengths.

The following three rules will allow you to live your program safely:

- No use of drugs, alcohol or any other non-prescribed substances or medications;
- No sexual relationship between program residents;
- No threats or acts of physical or verbal violence.

## Your Commitment

Because we believe you can succeed, we will encourage you to put in all the necessary effort. Our common goal is to provide the essential tools so that you can help yourself. You will also have the responsibility to help others do the same. At Portage, the motto "I am my brother's keeper" takes on its full meaning; you agree to offer your help and accept that which is offered to you. This is what Portage calls "mutual aid."



# Your Rights

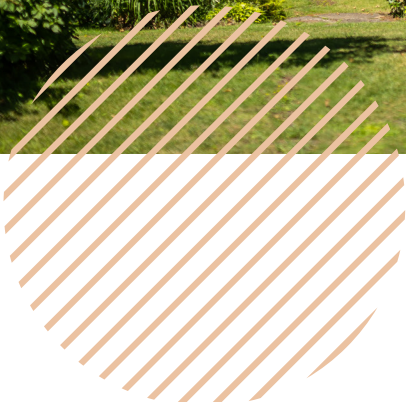
As a resident of the Portage Program, you have rights like residents of any other rehabilitation center, as well as all beneficiary of health services in Quebec. When you arrive, the residents' committee will meet you and explain each of your rights in more detail.

- The right to information: it is the right to be informed about the services available in one's environment, as well as the way in which one can obtain these services. It is also the right to be informed about one's state of health, physical and mental, about possible treatments with the risks and consequences.
- The right to choose one's professional. It is also the right to choose the establishment where you would like to receive the services your condition requires. If Portage does not offer these services, we will accommodate you as best as possible.
- The right to services: it is the right to receive adequate services on the scientific, human and social levels, with continuity, and in a personalized and safe manner.
- The right to participate in decisions that affect your state of health and well-being, mental and physical, including the right to participate in the development and review of your intervention plan.
- The right to give or refuse your consent to care.
- The right to receive the care that your state of health requires in the event of an emergency.
- The right to be accompanied, assisted, and to be represented by a person of your choice during appointments or when you receive care, if the situation allows it.
- The right to shelter/accommodation: this is the right to be accommodated in your center until the departure plan provided for on your arrival allows you to return home, or until a safe place for you has been found in another establishment.
- The right to receive services in either of the two official languages, according to your choice.
- The right to consult your file and to include any information you deem important, according to the procedures regulating access to files.
- The right to confidentiality of your resident file.
- The right to file a complaint when you are dissatisfied with the services. You can do this either through the users' committee, or through the Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner of your centre.

Other rights are recognized to you, those included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, among others:

- The right to life, to personal integrity;
- The right to have one's dignity safeguarded;
- The right to respect for one's private life;
- The right to respect for professional secrecy;
- The right to integrity and inviolability;
- The right to equality.

Fundamental rights apply everywhere, including in health and social services establishments. Fundamental human rights are defended by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, while the rights of residents are defended in particular by the users' and residents' committees of each health and social services establishment.



# Hygiene and Safety Standards

For your health and physical safety, Portage has a duty to provide you with a safe environment and must, by the same token, use the means allowing it to perform this duty adequately, which includes the safe checking of personal effects and, as needed, the antiparasitic shower.

If there is a reasonable doubt that you are violating the regulations, your personal belongings can be checked without notice, while respecting your physical integrity and guaranteeing you protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.

During your program, you will be called upon to participate in community life and the maintenance of a healthy environment (kitchen, household, etc.). Because Portage must comply with provincial standards in terms of hygiene, health and safety, it has established measures that everyone must comply with.

# Health Services

Each residential center offers an on-site health care service to the population of the center. At any time, you can make a consultation request to the nurse by following the procedures. They will assess your request and respond to it or, if necessary, refer you to the appropriate resource.

As you know, resident who pursues a pathway at Portage is treated for a dependency problem related to the excessive consumption of alcohol, drugs or medication.

Given the approach practised and for security reasons, you should be aware that drugs containing narcotics, barbiturates, benzodiazepines and opiates are prohibited at Portage. In any case, an equivalence or a substitute not belonging to these groups of drugs must be prescribed, if necessary, so that we can continue the treatment.

It is important that you know that residents are not permitted to bring food, drugs (including over-the-counter and prescription medications), dietary supplements or vitamins onto the site without the written approval of the nursing service. No medication will be authorized unless prescribed by a physician in addition to being on the centre's list of authorized medications. All of your medication will be kept in the nurses' office.

Consequently, residents whose state of health requires a long period of convalescence or the taking of a drug prohibited at Portage must, for the duration of this period, be referred to an external organization.

# The Intervention Program

Portage's treatment services are available to men and women, teens, pregnant women and mothers with young children, substance abusers with mental health issues, and court-referred individuals with mental health that have drug-related issues. Portage's program is inspired by the therapeutic community model and is designed to treat substance abuse and the behavioural disorders associated with it.

At Portage, drug addiction is seen as a symptom of a life in crisis, a crisis that makes relationships difficult and often pushes individuals to escape the stresses of life through drugs.

Staff members and your peers will support you in developing your confidence and your ability to cope with the stresses of life without resorting to drugs. You are the main author of your intervention plan; staff and your peers will support you in pursuing your goals.



# The Environment

In an environment where mutual aid and peer support prevail, the therapeutic community approach will allow you to highlight your strengths and face your difficulties.

Members of the community who, just like you, have chosen to adhere to a positive lifestyle, will support you in your efforts by providing you with the necessary guidance and encouragement, in order to prepare you for the demands of current society. The environment also becomes an agent of change that will help you take control of your life.

Your efforts and the support of your peers are the primary motivations for change at Portage. Portage employs several therapeutic techniques designed specifically to help you achieve your goals, including teaching by example (role modelling), the social climbing system, groups, one-on-one meetings and learning experiences.

# The Tools

Portage will provide you with various proven therapeutic tools that will be very useful to you. You will be encouraged to use them throughout your program. They will help you increase your self-esteem, give you a realistic perception of yourself and others, and adopt new strategies. The tools and their use will be presented to you during your orientation phase.

These tools are effective and promote learning when combined with the environment that Portage offers. You will learn about it during didactic groups and community activities. Here are some examples:

Exploration, Coaching, Workshops and Groups, outing privileges, Managing Feelings, Community Meetings, Learning Experiences, Reflection and Introspection, Intervention Plan, Skills, sharing, the workbook, etc.

# The Competencies

The intervention program that is applied at Portage and in which you will evolve will help you, through therapeutic activities, to identify the source of your problems related to your drug addiction and to acquire competencies that you will put into practice every day.

During your program, you will continue to develop and acquire new competencies that will allow you to meet new challenges. You will also find that you will be able to develop strategies to achieve your goals.

# The Intervention Plan

The intervention plan is one of the tools that will help you prioritize the difficulties or needs that you have identified and that you want to address throughout your program. This treatment process will require you to regularly review and update the goals you have set for yourself.

Among other things, your plan will address the themes of drug addiction, physical and mental health, personal development, social and parenting skills, interpersonal and family relationships, education and social reintegration. This plan, which you will make in collaboration with your case manager and your care team, will be developed at the start of your program and periodically reviewed during individual meetings with them.

## The Phases

The Portage program has distinct phases: the assessment phase (pre-admission), the residential treatment phase, and the social reintegration and external follow-up phase.

The residential treatment phase consists of several steps that you will go through during your program. At each step, you will belong to a group of peers and will have to meet specific expectations for each of them. You will move on to the next step after having reached these expectations, and having had the agreement of your peers, the counselors and your team of healthcare professionals.

Throughout your program, we will help you establish a positive support network and rebuild healthy relationships with those around you. Through meetings, teleconferences and telephone contact with significant and positive people for you, you will be able to establish or re-establish strong links with them at your own pace and with support.

Adult residents in the Montreal region may, if they meet the admission criteria, be referred to employability services such as the MIRE program. This program was developed in partnership with Portage. It uses an effective and innovative approach to integrate adults into the job market. Portage also offers a similar program at its employment training center in Quebec City.

Also for adult residents in the Montreal area (including adolescents aged 18 or over and mothers with children), it will be possible for you, once in aftercare, to integrate one of the apartments of the various Portage Community Housing. These subsidized apartments will allow you to benefit from support and a semi-structured environment for a smooth reintegration into society.

# The Supervision

You will notice that the daily program is well structured to encourage active participation. It is the members of the community who, through different responsibilities and supervised by the counselors, coordinate community life and manage the day's schedule.

Thus, in order to encourage within the community an environment free from favoritism, discrimination or intimidation of any kind, the following rules have been established; they are Portage's life code.

# The Life Code

By joining the Portage family, you will have to familiarize yourself with the life code of the community. As a member of the Portage family, you will have to develop healthy lifestyle habits, both personally and in group life. Daily life in the community requires respect for the life code, so as to promote:

- Respect for oneself and others;
- The feeling of belonging;
- Collaboration with staff members;
- Achievement of the objectives listed in your intervention plan;
- The quality and safety of the living environment;



## Appearance and Personal Hygiene

As your appearance and the way you present yourself are often a reflection of your inner self, with respect for yourself and others, you will be responsible for taking care of your personal hygiene and your appearance on a daily basis:

- Be clean and showered;
- Clean and combed hair;
- Have appropriate clothing (ex: buttoned shirt, laced shoes, pants worn at the waist, etc.)

The way you dress, like your appearance, should reflect the taught values of respect and sobriety.

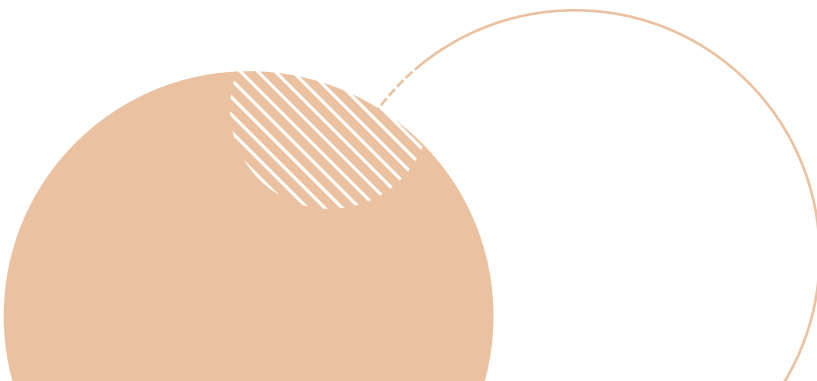
For these reasons, the following items are not permitted in the centres:

- Any clothing or items of clothing bearing logos, prints or patterns with negative connotations or referring to a clan or street gang;
- Flip-flops, sandals without heel attachment and high-heeled shoes are not permitted for safety reasons;
- Jewelry and make-up are discreet.

## Consent to Recording

For reasons of confidentiality, no one is authorized to take photos or film residents in a way where they are recognizable, without having obtained their written authorization.

If you agree to have it shared, you will be asked to sign a consent form. The signature of an adult is mandatory in the case of residents under the age of 18.



## Personal Effects

A list of authorized personal effects will be given to you before or when you arrive at the centre. It specifies what you will need during your stay. As storage space is limited, we ask that you respect this list. It is strongly recommended that you identify all your personal effects. For security, privacy and space reasons, the following items are not permitted:

- Cell phones, computers, laptops, tablets, iPod/MP3 or any other Internet compatible device, cameras, video camera, furniture, televisions or any other electronic equipment or valuables.

This will help foster a therapeutic climate conducive to discussion and prevent isolation.

However, depending on the terms and conditions of each center, the use of music players may be authorized during specific activities or listening periods. This decision is left to the discretion of the centres.

Prohibited, unauthorized or surplus items will be removed at the time of the security check. A person you have duly authorized can come and pick them up.

When you leave the center, you will be responsible for taking all your personal belongings with you. A period of 48 to 72 hours may be required to gain access to property entrusted to the administration.

If you were to leave without taking your personal belongings, you will have 90 days to claim them in writing or in person. These personal effects will not be entrusted to anyone other than you unless written authorization is duly completed and signed by you (except in the event of death).

After this period, personal effects left at the center will be considered a donation. No liability will be assumed by Portage for loss, damage or theft caused to any unclaimed property beyond this time.

## Disclaimer Policy

No responsibility will be assumed by Portage for the loss, destruction, accident or any other incident caused to any property placed on the premises of the center, other than those entrusted to the administration.

## Property Damage

If for any reason you intentionally cause property damage, you will be responsible for the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged equipment.

## Sports and Socio-cultural Activities

Various sports and socio-cultural activities are offered as part of the therapeutic process to encourage a healthy mind in a healthy body.

## Smoke-free Sites

Smoking is prohibited inside all Portage properties. You will be allowed to smoke according to the regulations in force in your center. It is also forbidden to share your cigarettes with other residents.

## School at Portage

Portage believes that learning is a lifelong process. Portage encourages the return to school for all residents who have not completed their secondary studies, according to the terms and conditions of each program and each center. School is an integral part of your rehabilitation and will allow you to grow and fulfill yourself.

For teenagers, schooling is compulsory. You will have access to the school as soon as you arrive at the centre. The school is taught in small adapted classes, which facilitates learning and the availability of school staff.

Adults can also, if they wish, benefit from school education and are strongly encouraged to do so.



# The Residents' Committee

Portage believes that an important voice must be given to the residents of its services. Thus, as provided for in the law on health and social services of Quebec, Portage has set up, in each of the centers, a group of residents responsible for carrying out the mandate assigned to them. This mandate, according to the law, is divided into four functions:

- Promote the rights and obligations of residents;
- Promote the improvement of the quality of the living conditions of residents;
- Evaluate resident satisfaction with the services obtained;
- Defend the collective rights and interests of residents.

Members of the residents' committee are elected by the residents of each center and their responsibilities are an integral part of the Portage program. This committee is in constant communication with the users' committee.

# The Users' Committee

As required by law, Portage has set up a users' committee made up of representatives from each center who receive, or who have received, internal services, as well as clients who receive external services. To them can also be added members of the entourage. This committee, which acts as the spokesperson for clients, is an advisory committee of the Portage Board of Directors, to which it must report on its activities on a quarterly basis.

The mandate of the users' committee includes six functions. In addition to the four functions already described for the residents' committee, two others are added:

- It must, upon request, accompany and assist any client who undertakes a process related to Portage services, including filing a complaint;
- It must ensure the proper functioning of the residents' committees and that they have the necessary resources to function properly.

These provisions are contained in the Health and Social Services Act, Section 212.

# Complaint Management

As you can see, the living environment at Portage is very structured. It is made up of a set of tools that allow residents like you to manage community activities and interpersonal relationships.

Like the society in which we live, this system is not infallible and it could happen that you consider that you have been unfairly treated or wronged in your rights.

If the tools made available to you by Portage to resolve your dissatisfaction do not work, the law provides that at any time you have the right and the possibility, if you wish, to file a complaint in a strictly confidential manner with the complaints and the quality of services in your region. It will be handled according to the complaint examination procedure.

In addition, you can at any time inform the person or organization that referred you to Portage of your process and the nature of your complaint, and put them in contact with the Commissioner, if necessary.

Finally, the Portage Users' Committee can also assist you in your complaint process.

You can also benefit from the help of the Complaints Assistance and Support Center (CAAP) in the region.

You will find the contact details of all these people in the leaflet that will be given to you at the start of your program. Contact details for the Complaints Commissioner are also available in the centers and on the website.

# Privacy Officer

We are here to listen to your inquiries and ensure that we respond appropriately, consistently, and diligently. Therefore, we ask that you contact us if you have any questions or any dissatisfaction regarding the processing of your personal information at the contact details below:

## **Privacy Officer**

865, square Richmond, Montréal (Québec) H3J 1V8, Canada

[responsable.protection@portage.ca](mailto:responsable.protection@portage.ca)

In the event of a disagreement, the Commission for the Access to Information will examine your complaint upon request and conduct a review of the disagreement.

# Access to information and documents

For any access request, please follow these steps:

- Make a written request stating the name of the document you wish to access and/or the destruction of the document and/or the removal of the document. Please communicate your first name, last name, address, email address, and telephone number, to the following address:

## **Access to Information and Documents**

865, square Richmond, Montréal, Québec, H3J 1V8, Canada

[acces.documents@portage.ca](mailto:acces.documents@portage.ca)

- The complaint will be processed within 20 business days.
- Only decisions rendered in response to requests for access to information received in writing may be the subject of a request for review by the Commission for the Access to Information
- Access is free. However, a fee may be charged to the requester for the transcription, reproduction or transmission of the information.
- Portage undertakes to delete personal information at the request of the requester if the collection is not required by law and Portage reserves the right not to accept such a request if it may result in serious and grave harm and for any other reason permitted by law.



# RESIDENT'S PHILOSOPHY

*I have come here in search of myself, confused and afraid, I have led my life in the shadow of drugs. I had rejected all those who cared for me and loved me. I had become a stranger to my family. Guilt, lies and hurt became my most intimate companions, drugs and alcohol my most cherished friends. I belonged nowhere and to no one. I have felt desperately alone.*

*Here at last, I have found true friends. I no longer need to be the giant of my dreams or the dwarf of my fears. I am allowed to be genuine, to express my emotions. My friends act as a mirror for me, our common quest heals me. The strengths, love and hope that live within me now become beacons for my life.*

*From here I will go forth, whole once more, self-knowing, confident and aware, never to live in the shadows again.*

