



Lost Lives Community Protocol  
Date Drafted: August 15, 2022  
Date Approved by Committee: January 11, 2023  
Date Amended by Committee:

## Lost Lives Community Protocol

### PURPOSE:

People experiencing homelessness may often be at an increased risk of compromised safety and well-being including occurrences of lost lives. The loss of someone experiencing homelessness is often felt by people who are a part of the homelessness community including service providers and family and friends. In some instances, in the absence of family, a lost life may not be communicated or commemorated. This protocol seeks to establish opportunities to acknowledge, communicate and commemorate lives lost of people experiencing homelessness in our community.

### PROTOCOL:

In St. Thomas-Elgin, when a life is lost in our homelessness community, people and service providers may be made aware of the loss through channels such as, and not limited to: family and/or friends of the deceased, local service providers, social media or word on the street. This may include members of the St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Stability Alliance which consists of members and service providers of St. Thomas-Elgin and London, ON.

Verifying the passing of a person before communicating the loss is recommended. There are many ways to verify the loss including and not limited to: police, hospital, family, friends, and obituaries.

In order to enhance efforts to ensure people are made aware of the loss, once the loss has been verified, a death email notification may be shared by the lead agency who has learned of the loss with the St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Stability Alliance (HSA). Members of the HSA will then share this information with their organization or others as appropriate.

As an example, a death email notification may read:

***To the Housing Stability Alliance,***

***Regretfully, I wish to inform you of the passing of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.***

*Note: It is recommended that all participating HSA members of this protocol consider the grieving community and the sensitivity of this information when communicating a loss or making arrangements to hold space.*



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***We ask that you respectfully share this information with others who may be impacted by this loss. If possible, we also encourage you to ensure that support is made available to anyone who may be grieving.***

***In the event that any information is made available regarding plans to commemorate the loss of \_\_\_\_\_ we will pass it along.***

***If you or your organization wishes to hold space for \_\_\_\_\_ and require a place to do so please email Danielle Neilson, Homelessness Prevention & Housing Programs Manager with St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services and Chair of the HSA: [dneilson@stthomas.ca](mailto:dneilson@stthomas.ca).***

***Respectfully,  
Name  
Organization***

It is recommended that the death email notification not include any additional details related to the persons passing or personal circumstances out of consideration for their privacy.

Any requests to hold space for a lost life will be responded to ideally within 1 business day, and at a maximum in no more than 2 business days. The HSA Chair, or designate, will then reach out to community partners who have volunteered space and/or other resources to confirm the availability of space within a 72-hour period from receiving the initial request.

Current locations for holding space includes: The Horton Market and The Old St. Thomas Church. St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services (STESS), through the HSA Chair, acts as the contact for both locations. In the event that the HSA Chair is away, Ellen Hickey: [ehickey@stthomas.ca](mailto:ehickey@stthomas.ca) or another STESS delegate will act as the contact.

The HSA Chair will save all death email notifications as a way to track our community's losses and to include them in any efforts to commemorate their lives.

Following the communication of a lost life, it is recognized that each organization may have its own policies and/or resources that are made available to support people through difficult times. It is recommended to make these resources available be considered when communicating about a lost life.

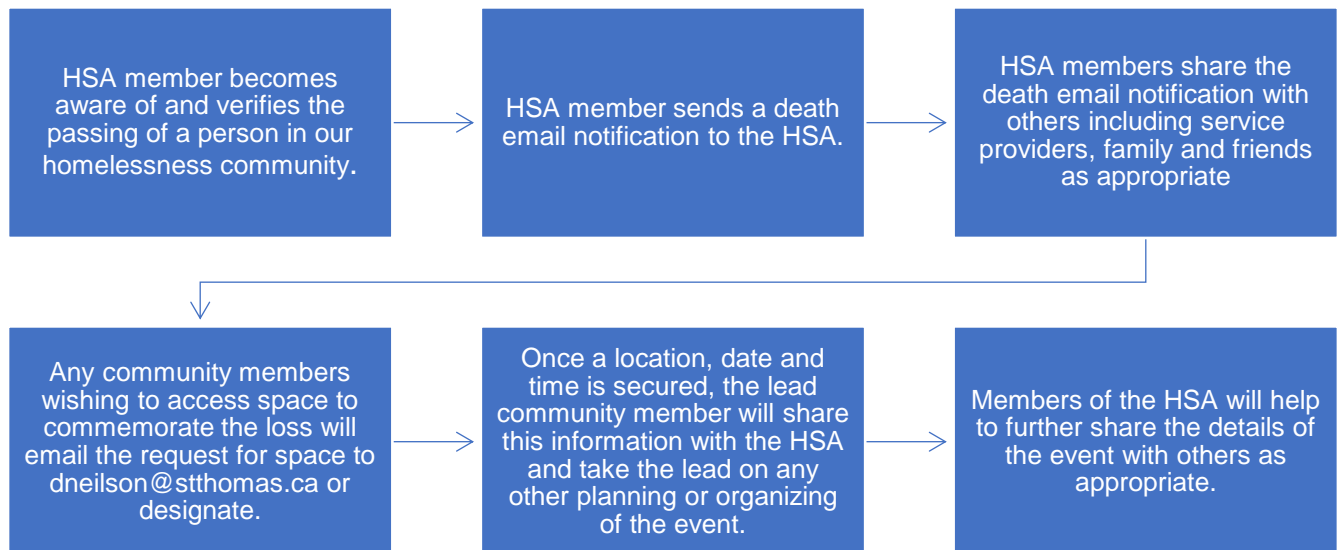
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Lead agencies requesting to hold space are encouraged to provide oversight of the event itself and may request the assistance of the HSA and its members as needed. This includes sharing the details including the day, time and location with the HSA who will then share with their organizations or others including service providers, family and friends as appropriate.

### Flow Chart:



**This protocol will be reviewed regularly and at a minimum bi-annually by the St. Thomas-Elgin Housing Stability Alliance.**

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