

# Supporting People Remotely in Housing Programs During COVID19

*Considerations for practice  
NAEH Webinar April 9, 2020*

*Iain De Jong  
President & CEO  
OrgCode Consulting, Inc.  
@orgcode*



National Alliance to  
END HOMELESSNESS



# Housekeeping & Upcoming Alliance Webinars

- NAEH COVID-19 Webinar Series -  
<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/covid-19-webinar-series/>
- Follow-Along via #COVIDWebinar
- Ending Homelessness Forum -  
<https://forum.endhomelessness.org/login>

# Welcome!



# About OrgCode

OrgCode Consulting, Inc. are North American leaders in homeless system transformations, leadership development in homeless services, and technical assistance. OrgCode are merry misfits that disrupt the status quo to be catalysts for better outcomes. Thought leaders in ending homelessness, we advance ideas, create and share resources, and offer training that doesn't suck.

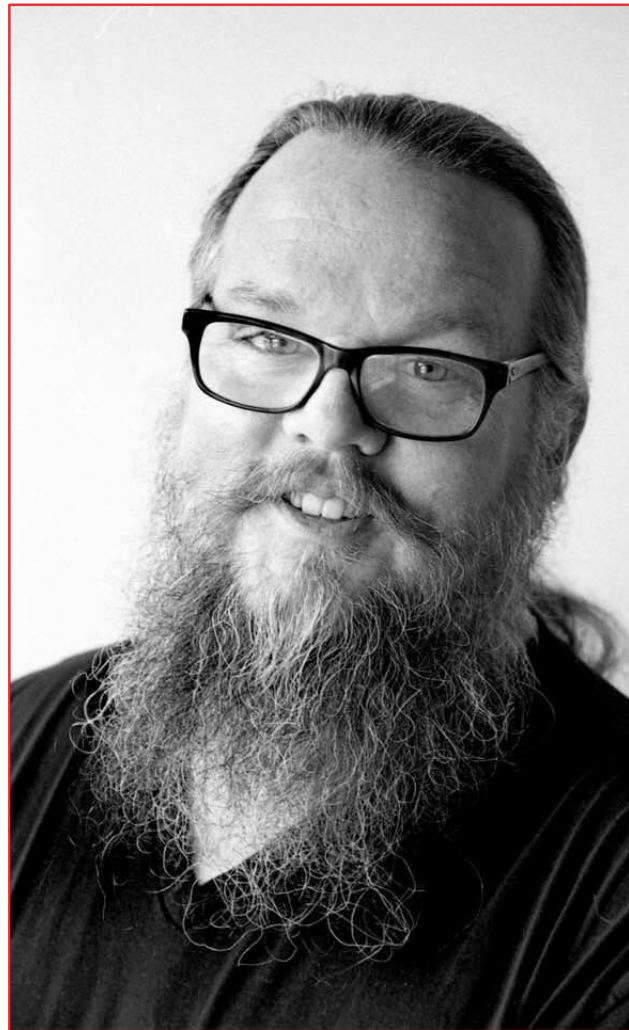
[www.orgcode.com](http://www.orgcode.com)

[@orgcode](https://www.facebook.com/orgcode)

[www.fb.com/orgcode](https://www.facebook.com/orgcode)



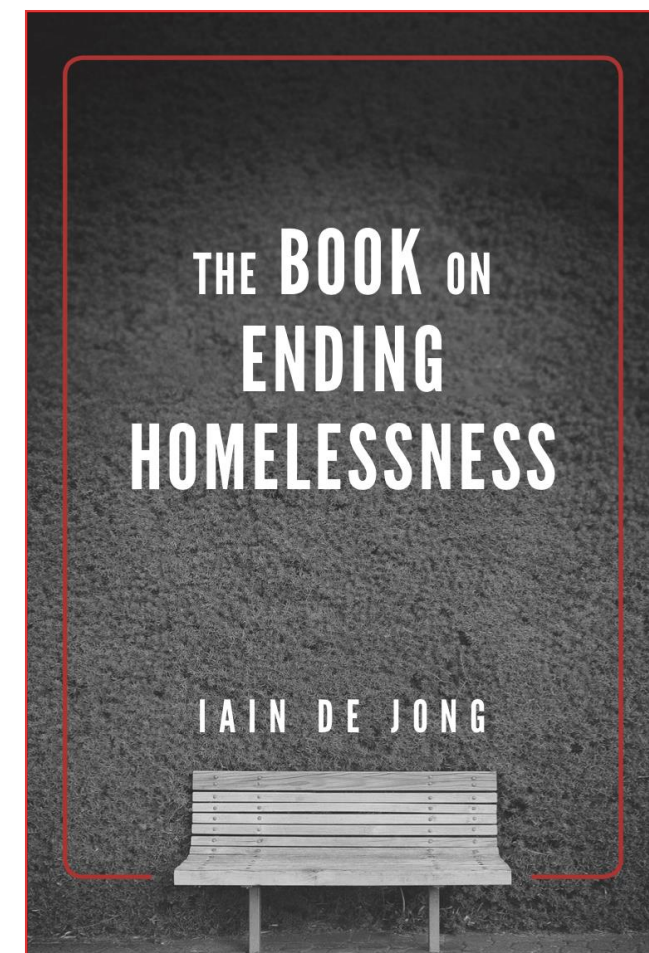
# About Me



**Iain De Jong** (he/him) is the President & CEO of OrgCode and the author of *The Book on Ending Homelessness*.

A fair to middling leader and trainer, Iain is known for his thought provoking insights, ideas and data related to his unwavering commitment to end homelessness, and his work on leadership development and training in the sector.

He is a frequent keynote and conference speaker and a media commentator and contributor on matters related to homelessness.



# Defining remote housing-supports



# Considerations

- This is an interim response\*
- Can include working over the phone or other technology, and in some instances through open windows or hallways with social distancing
- In the context of this webinar, pertains less to home visits done with physical distancing



# Risks to staff wellness





# Considerations

- Older staff, and those with some types of pre-existing conditions are at greater risk of death if they get the virus
- Considerable interaction with people in the community increases the likelihood of virus transmission



# Communication to program participants



# A Letter to All

- COVID-19 is...
- COVID-19 requires us to change the way we support you (remotely) and is effective immediately
- This change is in everyone's best interest at this time
- We need to use phone/text/FaceTime/WhatsApp - call us and *we will try to call you too!*



Prioritizing with whom  
to engage first



# **1st Consideration: At Higher Risk for Death from COVID-19**

- Age
- Pre-existing health condition(s)



# **2nd Consideration: At Higher Risk for Getting COVID-19**

- Challenged ability to self-isolate (roommates; job)
- Housed and remaining heavily street involved
- Very food insecure
- Ongoing guest management issues



# **3rd Consideration: At Greatest Risk of Losing Housing**

- Were facing eviction prior to suspension of evictions
- Have been spending what should have been rent money on other things since moratorium on evictions
- Ongoing guest management issues
- Higher acuity



# 4th Consideration: Those Closest to Program Exit

- Have demonstrated success in setting and achieving goals
- No reason to believe an eviction is imminent
- Has demonstrated self-sufficiency skills in a variety of areas (e.g., budgeting, food preparation, cleaning, etc.)





# Screening for wellness



# Screen for symptoms at the start of every encounter.

## Example Screening Questions (from Atlanta, GA)

Do you have a fever? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Do you have a cough? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Are you experiencing shortness of breath? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

*If client answers yes to Questions 1-3, they should be masked and isolated.*

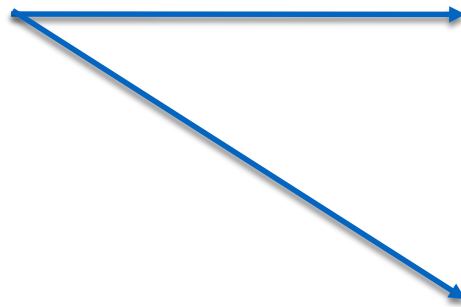
What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

*If client answers yes to Question 1-3 and are over 55, they should be transported to the hospital for testing.*

Do you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, lung disease or any immunosuppressant illnesses? Please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

*If client answers yes to 1-3 and has any illness listed for 5, they should be transported to the hospital for testing.*

We would be arranging for transport, likely through paramedics.



# Technology and staying connected



# Smart Phones

- Ensure all staff have a company phone.
- Leverage technology: FaceTime, WhatsApp, virtual meeting, etc.
- Some agencies are using unrestricted reserves or new donations to get program participants phones.



# Important considerations



# It May Be Important to Focus On...

- Food security
- Financial matters (budgets, benefits)
- Reinforcing apartment cleanliness and personal hygiene
- Harm reduction practices
- Guest management



# Making amendments to case plans



# Review Case Files

- Familiarize yourself with notes and progress
- Examine last goal sheet/case plan
- Review what is possible to still do, what needs to be delayed, and what is no longer possible
- Prioritize what can be done virtually





# Remotely Create Interim Case Plan with Program Participant

- Frame conversation around context of COVID-19
- Review key elements of existing case plan with program participant
- Determine what can continue and how
- Let people demonstrate their resiliency and progressively engage accordingly



# Landlord engagement and maintaining the relationship



# Don't Forget The Landlords!!!

- Reach out to each landlord, or invite collectively to an online meeting
- Explain how you are supporting some of their tenants at this time
- Problem-solve issues that may result in non-financial related evictions



# Virtual team meetings and case review



# Continuation of Connectivity

- If everyone is working from home, strengthens mission commitment
- Virtual
- Same time each week
- May consider different emphasis of information sharing



# Revisiting Policies and Protocols

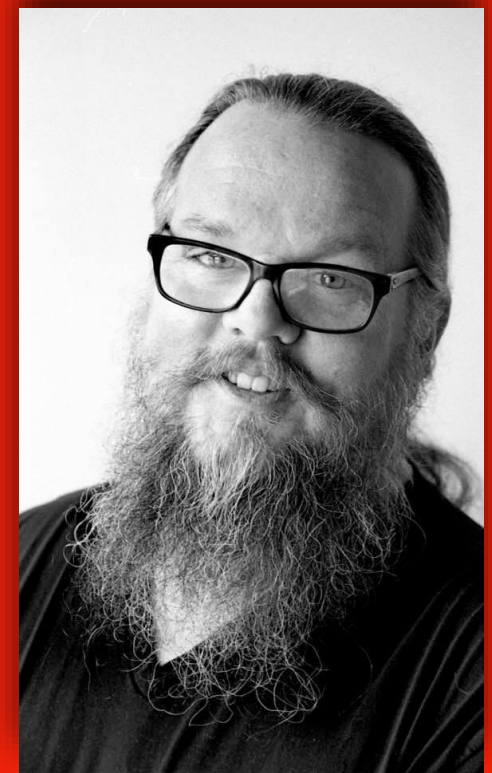


# Examples of Modifications

- Staff safety
- Verbal consents
- Staff back-up and continuity planning
- Responding to participant death



# Closing thoughts





EMAIL:	<a href="mailto:idejong@orgcode.com"><u>idejong@orgcode.com</u></a>
TWITTER:	<a href="#"><i>@orgcode</i></a>
WEBSITE:	<a href="http://www.orgcode.com"><i>www.orgcode.com</i></a>
FACEBOOK:	<a href="http://www.fb.com/orgcode"><i>www.fb.com/orgcode</i></a>
PHONE:	<i>416-432-0410</i>



