

# BELONGING MATTERS CONVERSATIONS

## Our Priority Challenge #1 > How to Keep Safe at the Front Door (Session #2)

Roddan Lodge, Oasis | WESN

Tuesday, March 18th 2025

### A Home's Front Door has the potential to be

- ✗ Like being on a boat, you always ask permission to enter
- ✗ No uninvited guests are allowed
- ✗ An inviting threshold between the inside of a home and the outside world
- ✗ A welcome mat to safety and relaxation

### I Feel Unsafe at Roddan Lodge's Front Door because...

- ✗ People pee and poo in the garbage can, by the door and on the grass
- ✗ A stranger followed me in the front door with blood streaming down his face.
- ✗ Assaulting me
- ✗ Witnessing fights with weapons
- ✗ Strangers begging me for food, cigarettes, lighter and drugs
- ✗ Strangers taking photos of me
- ✗ People using substances
- ✗ People lining up for the shelter, from 5am to 9pm crowding the entrance
- ✗ People shooting up outside
- ✗ People from shelter crowd under the rain-roof
- ✗ Cigarettes & garbage
- ✗ Strangers asking for food, smokes, lighter & money
- ✗ Someone pooped on the roof of my car and broke my car mirror

“For us Roddan Lodge’s front door is like the wild west. It seems like no one takes responsibility for our safety. Building managers say they are responsible for the inside of the building; community policing don’t seem to enforce loitering laws and the Evelayne Security team only takes responsibility for the inside of their part of the building.”

#### Conversation Participants

### Ways feeling unsafe at front door impacts me

- ✗ It triggers my past traumas
- ✗ I have had to increase medications to feel more at ease
- ✗ I feel unsettled & scared
- ✗ I don’t attend gatherings in the evening because I don’t want to walk through front door alone
- ✗ It’s disgusting: to see people use the sidewalk as a bathroom
- ✗ I’m feeling restricted and limited in what time I can leave the building
- ✗ It makes me carry self-defence weapons to feel safe
- ✗ I’m always looking around me paranoid of strangers following me in the slow moving handicap door
- ✗ I have had to increase my medications to make me feel more at ease
- ✗ I feel uneasy and scared

“I feel relief once I get inside and no one is behind me.”

#### Conversation Participants



### What are some root causes of the front door being unsafe?

- ✗ Poor building design and unsanitary conditions around the entrance
- ✗ Presence of homelessness, mental health crises, and substance use nearby
- ✗ Lack of consistent enforcement of loitering and safety policies
- ✗ Insufficient security presence (police, enforcement, staff check-ins)
- ✗ Infrequent cleaning and maintenance around the front door area
- ✗ Building design; front door 3 feet from a shelter front door

### What makes me vulnerable/ at risk?

- ✗ Being a woman or an older adult
- ✗ Past traumas & being alone
- ✗ A slow closing door
- ✗ The demographics of this neighborhood

## OUR TIPS & STRATEGIES TO FEEL MORE SAFE AT THE FRONT DOOR

### As a Roddan Lodge tenant, I can...

- ✓ Know the safe and dangerous spots in the neighborhood
- ✓ Be aware of surroundings; stay present, avoid looking at my phone
- ✓ Scan the area, be observant
- ✓ Have my keys ready before approaching the door
- ✓ Trust my gut and ask for help
- ✓ Use self-protection techniques if needed
- ✓ Know safer times to be outside (e.g., cheque week)
- ✓ Avoid using the automatic door button if not necessary
- ✓ Ask for help or be with someone I trust
- ✓ Call the office if needed
- ✓ Connect with safe neighbours and support each other
- ✓ Have a safe contact to call before approaching the door
- ✓ After using the door button, wait until the door closes fully

### Some things we can do as a community of tenants to make the front door more safe...

- ✓ Organize volunteer walking buddies or walking groups
- ✓ Build stronger connections—knowing neighbours increases the feeling of safety
- ✓ Call each other when we need have someone meet us at the door to feel safe
- ✓ Use 211 to get referred to free services such as legal advice, counselling, and supports
- ✓ Create regular, tenant-led community activities such as monthly group to get groceries and outings

### Tips and Strategies for Building Managers

- ✓ Ensure strong communication & collaboration between city staff, shelter security, community policing and tenants
- ✓ Find creative solutions with tenants when a safety concern is out of scope for city staff
- ✓ Ensure accessibility measures such as emergency button at front door for tenants who feel unsafe and do not own a phone
- ✓ Consider best practices from similar buildings like Caregie who have a security position or concierge at the front door to ensure any loitering is assisted to move along
- ✓ Advocate with City Planners to include tenant voices in the planning, design, implementation and review process of any change to a building

### Tips and Strategies For Building & City Planners

- ✓ Include tenants in your building design planning & review process
- ✓ Ensure accessibility of safety measure for tenants that don’t own a phone
- ✓ Do not put shelters and services that attract substance use and violence in a building with vulnerable populations
- ✓ Redesign accessible entrance to provide more space (more than 3 feet) and better alignment with the main entrance.
- ✓ Install a ramp over the stairs on Alexander to create an alternative accessible route.
- ✓ Relocate line-ups and loitering away from the Dunlevy entrance to reduce safety concerns.
- ✓ Address loitering as a key issue affecting daily tenant safety, quality of life and emergency evacuations.
- ✓ Install a security/emergency button outside the door for those without a phone.
- ✓ Have volunteers distribute resource info (e.g., where to find free food, services, safe injection site) to people from the shelter outside our door as a way to redirect them
- ✓ Ask Carneighe about their practices: they have a security person moving people away from entrance all day long

### Tips & Strategies for Shelter staff

- ✓ Use the Rolle UP barrier every day on Alexandra street as this will create a barrier
- ✓ Ask your security team to ensure no one loiters on Dunlevy street
- ✓ Create a front door safe program
- ✓ to help people get through the front door
- ✓ Use Alexander street for entrance only
- ✓ Ensure no line up or access to shelter via Dunlevy entrance
- ✓ Create a communication channel for tenants for suggestions, complaints and feedback

### Tips for Community Police

- ✓ Increase parole and physically move people along

“I no longer go pray at the mosque because I’m afraid of coming back home through the front entrance at night.”

#### Conversation Participants