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Patience Is a Virtue

Especially in Condominium Management

My grandmother used to say, “patience is a virtue, possess it if you can.” The sentiment has never been more important in our lives right now. As property managers in these strange times, we have all had to learn patience with our clients, our residents, contractors, our families, and each other. Our patience has been tested in all of us this year. How can residents learn to manage their expectations for ‘quiet enjoyment’ of their unit when EVERYONE is home and making noise?

Here are a few areas we have had problems with and how we can manage our residents’ expectations. Although we are dealing with the ‘now,’ I believe the policies and procedures we implement today may very well evolve our industry and relationships into the future.

Renovations

With so many residents being at home staring at the walls, interest in renovations has gone up. People decide to upgrade their space, reconfigure for a home office, redecorate or repaint the walls. Lucky homeowners will have found a contractor who will work during these times and has the time available. Before renovations start, expectations should be set at the outset by management in consultation with the board of directors. Residents need to be reminded to keep management informed of pending renovations and notices issued, emailed or posted on community websites before renos start. Complaints should be addressed as soon as possible, with real-time information as they are received.

When complaints are received, we as managers must exercise patience - now is not the time for antagonism or apathy toward issues or residents. Investigate the severity of the noise, understand the challenges facing the owner undertaking a renovation, and manage the expectations of those complaining.

Loud Zoom Meetings/Music/TV

With so many working from home, the noise coming from within a suite may have increased. To avoid silence, the television is always on, or the music goes up a little higher. Raise your hand if you have yelled into the computer screen during a Zoom meeting in order to be heard.

We have found that advising residents of complaints in an under-



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standing and polite manner is usually met with mortification and profuse apologies. In an industry where we rely heavily on the written word and quoting rules to gain compliance, these times have taught us that sometimes a simple phone call goes so much further.

We have received many requests for alternative workspace from residents at home with their partners and have conflicting online meetings. Patience with a co-habitant can run thin too. In buildings having amenity rooms with Wi-Fi access, it may be possible to offer that space on a limited basis. The board should be consulted for their consent and strict guidelines put in place with regard to the number of people (only one at a time recommended) and cleaning protocols after use.

At Home

No doubt working from home will continue as a popular option post-lockdown, and adjustments and accommodations will evolve. Right now, kids are bouncing off the walls because they hate online learning and

haven't seen their friends. Your partner is pulling their hair out dealing with it and wishes they could leave the house more. You wish you could work from home more, but it is not conducive to productivity. There is no right answer or quick solution.

You will identify with at least one, if not all, of the scenarios above. The key to dealing with them is to step back and understand both parties in the conflict, whether personal or professional. Take time to reflect on possible solutions to the issue and respond with the best one. The lessons we learn now under the most difficult circumstances can only benefit us for the future of our personal and professional lives. ■

Lisa Wilson, RCM, is a second-generation Property Manager and has been in or around the condominium industry for nearly 30 years. She is currently the Senior Property Manager at CIE Property Management & Consulting Inc., overseeing a personal portfolio of over 500 units ranging from townhomes to high-rises and loft conversions. teamcie.ca

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