



# Health and Welfare Alert

## Coping with COVID-19

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people over the age over 65 and those with lung disorders, heart disease, immune deficiencies, or who are severely obese have a greater risk for contracting coronavirus (COVID-19). People with developmental disabilities may be at a higher risks for getting COVID-19 because of underlying risks factors, such as respiratory issues, asthma, frequent pneumonias, and silent aspiration.

Direct support professionals (DSPs) play a vital role in supporting people during this health crisis. It important to know the facts to protect yourself and those you serve.

### Handwashing

You can help yourself and others stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:



- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food or helping someone else eat
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After assisting someone in the restroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching garbage

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also clean hands after you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers or screens, etc.

Wash hands before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, because that's how germs enter the body.

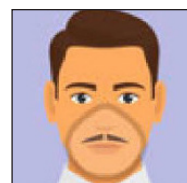
### Personal Protective Equipment

The type of personal protective equipment (PPE) you wear will be dependent on the people you are working with and their health status. Your employer will let you know what PPE is required based on current CDC guidance.

[This guide](#) from the CDC explains how to properly wear and remove PPE.



Things such as makeup and facial hair, and improper use and removal, can place you at risk for infection. Learn how to wear a mask with [facial hair](#).



Additionally, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) has worked with other state agencies to create a Long-Term Services and Supports Pre-Surge Planning [Toolkit](#) to assist providers to be better prepared to act rather than react to future COVID-19 outbreaks.

### Know the Terms

“Social distancing” means avoiding close interaction with other people, which helps reduce the spread of COVID-19. Stay 6 feet apart from others, and stay home when you can.

“Quarantine” means restricting movement of people that have been exposed. “Isolation” means separating people who are ill from those who are not.

“No exposure” means a person appears well and is able to receive care as they would under normal circumstances. Support staff interacting with non-exposed people should still create a culture of safety and wear face masks when supporting this person.

“Exposed” means a person will have had known direct contact for an extended period of time with someone who has contracted COVID-19. People should be carefully monitored for 14 days, and additional PPE should be used with interacting with this person.

“COVID-19 Positive -- Confirmed or Suspected” means the person has tested positive for the virus or has respiratory symptoms and should be monitored for escalating symptoms. Additional required PPE should be used when supporting this person.

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## Supporting People through Crisis

Talking about COVID-19 can be difficult, but it helps to keep an open dialogue with anyone you support. Learn how these self-advocates [are talking](#) about the virus.

This is also a time to support others with [positive thinking tools](#) and [tips to regulate stress](#).

Ohio has a toll-free 'COVID CareLine' to provide emotional support for you and the people you serve.

- Call **1-800-720-9616** to connect with trained counselors.
- Call from 8 AM to 8 PM, seven days per week. After 8 PM, the CareLine will forward to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You can also text **"4HOPE" to 741741**.

## Self-Care for DSPs

While DSPs work to support other Ohioans, it's important that they take care of themselves and their own mental health needs. The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals has created a [toolkit](#) of self-care resources and ideas for DSPs. Review [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#).

## Staying Connected

Just because people are not together in-person doesn't mean there aren't many ways to keep in touch.

Learn ways to stay connected with family and friends and how to have a [meaningful day](#) at home. Also, explore staying connected with your health care providers (counselors, physicians, and psychiatrists) through [telemedicine](#).



## Google Hangouts

Connect with people from anywhere. With easy-to-join video calls, you can connect face-to-face. [View instructions](#).

## Facebook Messenger

Instantly reach the people in your life for free. Messenger is just like texting, but you don't have to pay for every message. Chat and share photos through this service offered by Facebook. [View instructions](#).

## Zoom

Visually see people and hear their voices through this app. [View instructions](#).

## Houseparty

This app brings people together to connect and play games. [View instructions](#).

## More Information

For more information about COVID-19, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

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