

GGRC Guidance on Talking about COVID-19 with Individuals

The Covid-19 virus has set unprecedented times to us all and has created societal change with the Shelter in Place guidelines. This can cause uncertainty and anxiety to everyone, and it is important that all individuals understand how these restrictions impact them and how to manage in the coming days. Below is guidance on speaking with the individuals we serve about Covid-19, shelter in place, and other changes that may occur in the individual's natural environment. These are GGRC suggestions and not standards or requirements.

Conveying information:

With potentially drastic changes to their everyday lives, it is important to make sure all efforts are made to convey information about Covid-19 and Shelter in Place. Information should be shared with individuals about all aspects of the current situation, in a timely, yet sensitive manner, so that individuals are prepared for what is to come. Some of the information to share include, but are not limited to:

- What the Covid-19 is and how it spreads
- What is Shelter in Place and why we have to practice it
- Why we need to work together and why our day to day schedule may change, including seeing family and friends
- Why we need to wash our hands a specific way and how
- What will be done if someone in the home has been in contact with or contrive Covid-19 (individual quarantined and how it will impact their living arrangement)
- What will be done if you have been in contact with or contrive Covid-19 (self-quarantine and how it will work in their living arrangement)

When sharing information with individuals, please continue to be mindful of how each person communicates and ensure that the information is delivered so that the individual understands to the best of their ability.

Home arrangements:

Along with sharing information, individuals in the homes may need extra support or changes in the typical home arrangement to meet their needs. Below are suggestions of how a home may provide necessary supports for individuals:

- Provide/display pictures to explain the rules of Shelter in Place.
 - Can be a helpful daily reminder of what is going on and what the home and individuals need to practice.
- Display hand washing procedure with pictures near all sinks.
 - Can be helpful for practicing safe hand washing practices.
- Create a weekly schedule with activities that incorporate learning and enjoying.
 - The routine aspect can help ease anxiety and having a variety of activities planned throughout the week can help in increasing engagement.
- Utilize online resources to share information about Covid-19, SIP, hand washing, etc. (see below for resources).
- Have times throughout the day where individuals can get outside and get fresh air while following the 6 foot distance recommendation for Shelter in Place.
 - Individuals can sit on their front or back yard, go for neighborhood walks, etc.
- Set up time weekly for individuals to video conference people they know that they cannot see, if possible. This can include family, friends, staff from their day program they cannot see, etc.
- Complete mental health check-in's with individuals daily to make sure they are emotionally doing ok and their needs are being met.
- Create a "cheat sheet" for each individual person's "triggers" so all staff are aware of signs to look for prior to escalating behaviors.
- Review behavior support plans, if applicable.
- Work with home consultants remotely, if applicable.

Explaining Covid-19 Resources:

- [National Association of School Psychologists Guide to Talking to Children](#)
 - Use this link to find tips and suggestions about how to share information about COVID 19.
- [ODDS YouTube Covid-19 Information](#)
 - Short video about the Covid-19 and what precautions to take.
- [BrainPOP Educational Video](#)
 - A 4-minute, cartoon, educational video regarding the virus.
- [Easter Seals Social Story](#)
 - A social story to help explain what the Coronavirus is.
- [Self Determination YouTube Clip](#)
 - Short clip that speaks about prevention strategies.
- [General Resources for Dealing with Covid-19](#)
 - A series of resources to use for people with developmental disorders.
- [Autism Speaks Covid-19 Events](#)
 - Online events hosted by Autism Speaks on various topics around Covid-19.

Hand washing Resources:

Below are some resources to help explain, teach, and remind individuals on how to properly wash their hands.

- [Printable Hand Washing List](#)
 - A task analysis that can be placed near the sinks to help remind people how to properly wash their hands.
- [Video on teaching hand washing \(for staff\)](#)
 - This ~13 minute video can help teach how to teach proper hand washing.
- [YouTube Hand Washing Video](#)
 - Video on how to wash your hands properly.