The COVID-19 outbreak has created uncertain times. Information is fast-moving. Policies are ever-changing. We want to provide you with a central document that gives you the tools and information you need.

You can find information at our website: www.partnership.vcu.edu

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) have partnered with The Arc of Virginia to make sure families and individuals with developmental disabilities have the information they need surrounding COVID-19 here: https://www.coronavirus-thearcofva.org

You can also find information and reflections on the Center for Family Involvement’s blog: https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.org
WHAT IS COVID-19?
COVID-19 stands for coronavirus disease 2019. It’s also known as new or novel coronavirus and SARS-CoV-2.

COVID-19 spreads like the common cold – through coughing, sneezing, and close contact. It can also spread on infected surfaces. The virus is so new, we do not know that much about it. Research suggests it can live on some surfaces for more than 2 weeks.

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

WHO CAN GET COVID-19?
Anyone can get it, but the virus hits older adults and people with other health issues harder.

HOW IS COVID-19 SPREAD?
While COVID-19 has been compared to the flu, it is far more dangerous. Because this is a brand-new virus to humans, no person has immunity yet. So it is spreading far and wide and at a rapid pace. Scientists are working hard to figure out how to slow the spread. The best way to do that right now is to stay at home!

WHAT IF I GET SICK?
- Stay home.
- Do not go to the doctor, clinic, or hospital.
- Call your clinic or hospital first and follow their instructions.
Most cases of COVID-19 are mild, with just a fever and dry cough. That is part of what makes this virus so dangerous. Many people might not even know they have it and the virus will continue to spread.

However, in many mild cases, people who are infected report feeling awful; it is far worse than the average cold or flu.

An unknown number of people have the virus but show no symptoms. You can be “asymptomatic” but still spread COVID-19.

**SYMPTOMS:**

- Dry cough (do not cough up mucus or snot).
- Fever (over 100.4).
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea/diarrhea.
- Loss of taste and smell.

**TREATMENT**

There is currently no treatment for this virus. Doctors are treating the symptoms of COVID-19 with fever-reducing medicine and other methods.

There is no vaccine yet; it typically takes at least a year to 18 months to develop one.
You can do the following to help protect yourself from getting COVID-19:

- Wash your hands, then wash them again. Sing the first few verses of a favorite song to make sure you’re washing for 20 seconds.
- Always wash before you eat.
- Wash when you come in from outside. Wash. Wash. Wash.
- Insist everyone coming into your home washes their hands immediately and remind them to keep washing their hands throughout the day.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Clean hands after pumping gas, using the ATM, exchanging money or credit cards, etc.
- Do not touch your face.
- For those leaving their homes, consider washing clothes after going out and wearing clean clothes to bed.

You can do the following to help prevent spreading COVID-19:

- Respect the stay at home orders and encourage others to do the same.
- Utilize delivery services whenever possible to reduce exposure.
- Keep your distance from others; 6 feet or more.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw your tissues away. Then, wash your hands.
- Clean frequently used surfaces such as door handles, faucets, phones, remotes, etc.
- If you are sick, stay home. If you might have been exposed, stay home.
- Don’t share drinks, dishes, desserts or water bottles.
- Label water bottles and cups if your family is accustomed to sharing.
- Keep toothbrushes separate. Consider personal toothpaste tubes.
- Replace toothbrushes after every illness.
- If you have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing call your doctor immediately. They can give you orders to get tested.
This is not time to panic, but it is time to prepare. Many of us are ready for slew “in case of emergency” scenarios. Below are areas you need to think and talk about with people that you live with or who you can trust to be prepared.

**Medication/Medical supplies:**
- Are your medications fully stocked?
- Do you have enough medical supplies for wound care (bandaids, peroxide, bandages, tape, etc.)?
- If you have asthma, do you have steroids and inhalers on hand?
- If you are diabetic, do you have insulin and other medications on hand?
- Is the humidifier working and cleaned? Do you have distilled water for it?
- If you wear hearing aids, do you have extra batteries or the battery charger?
- If you utilize a ventilator or oxygen, do you have enough supplies or back up power?
- Does your thermometer have fresh batteries?
- Is your pulse oximeter working?

**Create a call list and phone tree:**
- Make sure all the numbers you need are on speed dial – families, friends, direct support staff, doctors, neighbors who can help.
- Print the numbers on paper just in case!
- Make sure someone is checking on you every day and create a system of how they can get to you if you don’t return their call.

**Make your home comfortable, we’re going to be in them a while:**
- Make a checklist of things you need that you might have forgotten – toothpaste, laundry detergent, feminine hygiene products, extra chocolate, pet food, cleaning supplies.
- Call/contact people who can help you. People want to help!
Use delivery services:
- This is a great time to have things delivered to your home through places like Walmart, Amazon, Door Dash, Instacart and Grub Hub. You can go through your grocery store to see if they deliver also, many use these same services. Remember that everyone else is doing the same.
- Put your orders in early and be prepared to wait several days for groceries in some cases.
- Many people are doing the same thing as you, so don’t over order (hoard items) but get enough to last you a week or two at a time.

Entertainment
If we are stuck indoors for weeks, it can be a good time to:
- Watch favorite TV shows
- Catch up with family on the phone, email, and/or social media
- Finish a project
- Call neighbors about doing a board game or puzzle swap and leave items at doorsteps. Disinfect before bringing inside.
- Read, there are online options
- Take virtual tours of museums, zoos, parks, online
- Take online classes, they are offering free classes at this time.

Attendant and Respite care:
- This is a tough time for families like ours as well as respite workers, nurses, and personal care attendants.
- Because of the high risk for people with medical issues, we must be careful about who comes into our homes. In some cases, it might not be safe to have staff come to your home.
- Sometimes the attendant and respite care will not be familiar with you. You might want to consider developing a one-page document with your likes and dislikes and how you want to be helped. This might include medications, foods you like, times you take medication and eat. Add emergency numbers including doctors, family members, etc.

Take care of yourself:
- This is an uncertain and difficult time, it is normal to feel anxious.
- Do what you need to do to get through it.
- Reach out for help. We cannot stress enough, people want to help, now more than ever. Just ask.
What if someone in my family or my roommate gets COVID-19?

- If it is an emergency call 911.
- If it is not an emergency, call your doctor first. Do not go to the doctor without talking to their office.
- Use a separate room and bathroom for anyone who is sick.
- Keep shared rooms and bathrooms clean.
- Clean hands regularly.
- Avoid contact with the sick person.
- Avoid sharing items such as utensils, food, drinks, blankets, towels, etc.
- Contact your doctor about getting tested, as you have been exposed to COVID-19.

If my caregiver gets COVID-19 and needs to be quarantined or hospitalized, who will support me?

- If your caregiver works for an agency, call the agency about getting a new caregiver.
- Contact your emergency back-up in your plan.
- Call your case manager, support coordinator, or service facilitator immediately.
- If you cannot reach anyone for assistance call the non-emergency police number or Virginia 211.

I feel like I am in crisis. What mental health resources are there?

- If it is an emergency, call 911.
- You can call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800.273.825.
- Call your county’s crisis line.

Mental health coping strategies and supports:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Coronavirus: Mental Health Coping Strategies
- Crisis Text Line 741741: https://www.crisistextline.org/

HELP IN YOUR REGION:

- Find your local Community Services Board and reach out to them.
- Virginia Association Community Services Boards - Directory: https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory/
While these times are unique and everything feels like it is changing – you always have your rights.

- You have the right to be safe in your home.
- You have the right to be free from abuse and neglect.
- You have the right to services and supports.
- You have the right to change services or report issues.

If any of your rights have been taken or you are unable to be safe with the supports and services you have now, call or email your case manager or support coordinator immediately. If you do not have a case manager or support coordinator, or they have not returned your calls or emails, there are options.

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia is a great resource for these issues. https://www.dlcv.org Call: 1-800-552-3962 Email: info@dLCV.org

What does abuse and neglect look like?

- Physical Abuse – hitting, pushing, shoving.
- Emotional Abuse – Calling someone ugly, fat, or the R-word. Saying hurtful things or posting photos or items that are hurtful, taking your means of communication away from you.
- Sexual Abuse – Touching body and private areas when you do NOT want to be touched.
- Financial Abuse – Taking your money and using it for themselves.
- Neglect – Not caring for you, allowing you to struggle to care for yourself.
People with disabilities experience many types of abuse. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse.

If you are experiencing abuse:

- Tell one or more people who you trust and ask them to help.
- Call your police department or 911 if you’re in immediate danger.
- Tell a doctor, nurse, teacher, or therapist.
- Call Adult Protective Hotline (888) 832-3858 (or Child Abuse and Neglect In Virginia: (800) 552-7096, if the person abused, is under 18).
- Call the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Alliance statewide hotline at 1(800) 838-8238.

If you witness the abuse of someone with a disability:

- Tell one or more of the agencies that work with the person.
- Call the local police department or 911 if it is urgent/immediate.
- Call Adult Protective Hotline (888) 832-3858 (or Child Abuse and Neglect In Virginia: (800) 552-7096, if the person abused, is under 18).
What if I lose my job or am told not to come to work because of the coronavirus?

As soon as you finish your last shift of work, file for unemployment benefits through the Virginia Employment Commission at: http://www.vec.virginia.gov/

Or Call 1-866-832-2363 (Monday - Friday between 8:15 am and 4:30 pm or Saturday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm).

What if I lose my private health insurance because I have been laid off during the Coronavirus crisis?

Check if you are eligible for Medicaid through Cover Virginia Screening Tool: https://coverva.org/screening/

For more information about Virginia Medicaid eligibility during the COVID-19 outbreak: https://coverva.org/materials/One_Pager_3_24_FINAL.pdf
For the latest national information on COVID-19:

Supporting young children:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q7_ARNz33z9IYpoTXAntct3JMGjwOYhK74LRvjy0s/edit

Resources for Virginia families who have children who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mzrZdfwxcaFEBNUg36WyKjMP3E9Q6eq0SaPlHGqk9p0/edit

Virginia 211 - Social Services - a trained professional will assist you in locating resources in health and human services

Virginia Protective Services:
- Adult Protective Hotline (888) 832-3858
- Child Abuse and Neglect In Virginia: (800) 552-7096
- Hearing-impaired: (800) 828-1120

Medicaid Mentor Hotline: 1-866-323-1088

EMOTIONAL, INFORMATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS SUPPORT

If you need to talk to someone about ANYTHING at all, we have staff and volunteers working at this time.

Connect on our helpline! We have staff and volunteers ready to help. They will return your call or email within 48 hours.
- Email: cfihelpline@vcu.edu
- Call: (877) 567-1122