



Community Resilience Initiative

Module 3

Continuing Independent Living Work During a Pandemic

www.disasterstrategies.org

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Welcome & About Us

Ground Rules

- Maintain confidentiality
- Ask questions
- Have fun!!!



Disclaimer

Material presented does not constitute legal advice and is for informational purposes only. If you are seeking legal advice, please contact a qualified attorney.



This Presentation is an Overview

This presentation is only a thumbnail sketch of the myriad of ways that CILs can continue your vital work during the pandemic.



Overview of Community Resilience Initiative

Four 90-minute trainings:

- Emergency management basics
- Emergency management during a pandemic
- **Continuing IL work during a pandemic**
- The hard truth staff need to know to prepare



Module 1 Review:

Inclusive Emergency Management in a Pandemic

- Equal access to concurrent disaster services while maintaining physical distance
 - Including notification, evacuation, shelter, housing, transportation, employment, personal assistance, and durable medical equipment
- Civil rights obligations and protections during the pandemic and concurrent disasters



Module 2 Review:

Civil Rights Obligations During the Pandemic

Equal access to healthcare

Be aware that:

- Rationing based on disability is prohibited
- People with disabilities, who have had COVID, have been denied treatment and have received experimental treatment without consent

Be prepared to:

- Advocate against rationing/withholding treatment
- Educate consumers and health care providers about rights of people with disabilities



Module 2 Review:

COVID-19 and Declarations

COVID-19 has three declarations:

1. **Public Health Emergency declaration** by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Jan 30, 2020 retroactive to Jan 27, 2020.
2. **National Emergency declaration** by the President on March 13 that was retroactive to March 1, 2020.
3. Every state and 4 territories requested and received a **Major Disaster declaration** by the President. Additionally, 32 tribes are working directly with FEMA under the emergency declaration.





Questions?

Today's Goals:

Strategies for:

- Continuing IL work during a pandemic
- Doing IL work remotely
- CIL Core Services





Question for you:

How does your CIL continue to provide your core services during this pandemic?

Keep Doing What You Always Do

- Information and Referral
- Independent Living skills training
- Advocacy
- Peer Support and mentoring
- Transition - required only for federally-funded CILs
 - Youth
 - Community



Providing IL Remotely

- **Good news!** You have all been doing providing these services remotely since early 2020.
- **Today:** we will focus on best practices and how to continue doing it.



Keep Consumers and the Public Updated

Website: Update your website to reflect any changes in hours and virtual events.

Social Media: Engage consumers and the public and share information about COVID-19, disabilities, and local resources.

Emails and Newsletters: Send out timely and important messages.

Office location/building: accessible signage clearly posted identifying changes in hours or practices



Keep Consumers and the Public Updated

Media Advisory or Press Release

- Focus on CIL stories showing continuing services
 - Good to highlight personal story
- Utilize this opportunity for the community to learn about your CIL
- Post the release on your social media
- Pitch to local media
 - [5280 Denver Mile High Magazine](#)



Information & Referral

FEMA: Provide the latest information about FEMA services available

CIL information: Update hours of operation or scope of services of places that you refer callers

Update database: Include services in high demand during the pandemic

- Mutual aid services
- Free grocery delivery (if available)
- PPE



Model Good Practices for Infection Control

- Do not get complacent
- Maintain social distance
- Wear masks, unless you can't because of your disability
 - If you can't wear a mask take other persuasions including face shields, staying remote
- Sanitize! Sanitize! Sanitize!



Independent Living Skills Training

Need to continue IL skills training

- Do all your consumers have access to smart devices/internet?
 - If not, are you modifying policies and procedures to address this?
- Modify Independent Living Plans (ILP)
- Revisit ILP - are there new or different goals?



IL Skills Training During the Pandemic

- Financial literacy
- Transportation during the pandemic
- Getting basic supplies including PPE during pandemic
- Personal assistance management, extra back-ups, and planning during pandemic



IL Skills Training During the Pandemic

- Employment skills/ requesting reasonable accommodations
- Getting familiar with virtual platforms
 - Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, Skype
- Skills training on web-based support
 - Using computer/smart devices, using google docs, email, social media





Question for you:

How are you providing IL skills training?

How is it different?

Peer Support and Mentorship

Gather Together **Virtually!**

- Social / peer support calls
- Interactive recreational gatherings
- Systems / legislative advocacy calls
- Peer mentoring calls



Peer Support & Mentorship

If consumer is experiencing crisis:

- Engage them.
- Have they developed support plans for who and when to reach out to?

Prepare ahead of time:

- Consider encouraging consumers to develop plans to tell you WHO to reach out to and WHEN they would like you to reach out to them.



Resources if Consumer is in Crisis

Colorado Crisis Services:

Call: 1 (844) 493-8255

Text "TALK" to 38255

Domestic violence line:

1 (800) 799-7233

TTY: 1 (800) 787-3224



Advocacy: Systems

Systems Advocacy issues that we talk about in IL and are exacerbated in disasters:

- Institutional bias
- Housing
- Transportation
- Workforce (personal assistance services, direct support providers)



Advocacy: Systems

Systems Advocacy issues that we talk about in IL and are exacerbated in disasters, cont.:

- Healthcare maintenance, including durable medical equipment (DME); consumable medical supplies (CMS); and assistive technology (AT)
- Healthcare and services rationing
- Voting



Advocacy: Systems

- Make sure you're talking with your local emergency management
- Are you in touch with your local city elected officials and policy makers, state elected officials and policy makers, federal elected offices and policy makers
- Collaborate with other organizations, share resources and ideas



Advocacy: Systems

Accessible vaccination distribution includes compliant:

- Appointment registration
- Check-in
- Waiting area
- Vaccination area



Advocacy: Individual

Remote individual advocacy

- Maintaining confidentiality when there is not privacy
 - Text, chat, etc.
- Testing and vaccination access
- Health maintenance / health care access
- Evictions



Advocacy: Individual

- PPE distribution
 - Masks - access to masks, not being able to wear masks
- Stimulus checks





Question for you:

How have your systems and individual advocacy strategies changed?

What barriers are you encountering during the pandemic?

Youth Transition

- Students must still receive transition support even when school is operating remotely
 - Transition to post secondary education and transition to work
- Compensatory education
- Compensating for lost learning in special education



34% of all COVID deaths
are from the **0.6%** of the population who live in
nursing facilities and assisted living facilities.



Transition to Community from Institutions During COVID-19

- This is a matter of life and death.
- **You have the power to save lives by diverting people from going into nursing facilities in the first place, and getting people out of nursing facilities.**





Question for you:

What barriers do you encounter while diverting people from, and transitioning people out of, institutions?

Strategies for getting people out and diverting people from institutions

Transition strategies:

- CIL staff doing video tours to show consumers in nursing facilities potential homes to transition into
- Designated hours on Zoom with consumers for check-in and support
- Electronic signatures



Strategies for getting people out and diverting people from institutions

Transition and Diversion strategies:

- CIL staff trading off responsibilities (when needed) along the lines of risk
- Relationships with hospital social workers, nursing facility social workers, and homeless shelter social workers



Diversion from Nursing Facilities and Other Institutions

- From psychiatric institutions/ techniques during COVID-19
- Mental Health Diversion Program



Getting People with Disabilities Out Of Nursing Facilities

All people in nursing facilities have disabilities.

- You don't go to a nursing facility because you are old.
- You go because you couldn't access services in the community.



Identifying People Who Want to Transition

- MFP list
- Other wait lists
- Partner with Disability Law Colorado (Protection & Advocacy)
- Relationships with local ombudsman's
- Coalesce with other disability and aging related organizations





Question for you:

What are other ways to identify people who want to transition?

Getting People Out of Nursing Homes During a Pandemic

- Might take longer
- Is happening
- Needs to continue



Let people in institutions know that they have options.

Restrictive visitor policies are currently a barrier. It is up to us to come up with creative solutions to reach people in institutions and inform them of their options.

- Be creative
- Use and build relationships/connections



Transition

Relocation:

- Adapting your Nursing Home Transition (NHT) program to relocate people temporarily into hotel/motel/dormitory while finding long-term housing solutions in order to mitigate COVID-19 spread and save lives.
- Atlantis has been showing the nation by leading by example



Transition

Diversion:

- Shut the front door!
- Be a referral hub for hospitals, facilities, etc





Question for you:

How are you letting other advocates know about your ground-breaking work?

Providing IL During Recovery

- CILs need to be at the table, ensuring that people with disabilities are a part of the recovery process.
- CILs need to be educating community that resilience is not possible without people with disabilities.
- Returning to school
- Getting child care back
- Returning to work



Recovery

The good news is that CILs are flexible and can provide programming within their core services that will support people with disabilities during recovery.





Scenarios

Scenario

You are working with a 19 year-old highschool student, transitioning the student into an employment program. The student's parents are concerned because employment is “too hard,” and many businesses are taking COVID precautions. The parents say the student will need to wait until “after the pandemic is over” to continue services.

What do you tell the parents?

What do you tell the student?



Scenario

An elected official is quoted as saying that since “most lives lost are of people in nursing homes we should go on with our lives, and while this is unfortunate these people would have died soon anyway.”

What can your CIL do now?



Scenario

A consumer, who is regarded as a leader in the disability community, claims that COVID-19 is “no big deal” and proclaims that no one should wear a mask.

How can your CIL respond?



Scenario

A leader in the Disability Community has expressed to other advocates and the press that vaccines are dangerous for people with disabilities and that people should not get the COVID vaccine.

Does your CIL respond? If so, how?



Scenario

An active consumer in peer support activities has stopped coming to events.

What questions do you ask them?

How do you respond when they say that they feel very isolated and that they are probably just going to get COVID and die anyway?

What do you do when consumers stop showing up for remote activities?



Check-in

- List 5 things your CIL staff can do to support consumers during COVID-19.
- List actions your CIL can do to keep people out of congregate settings.
- Name actions your CIL can take to get people out of congregate settings.





Thank you!

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