



Community Resilience Initiative

Module 3

Continuing Independent Living Work During a Pandemic

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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 the Delaware Community Resilience Initiative

Six 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
- Vaccine Access
- Mitigating Disability Bias



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

Be aware that:

- Rationing based on disability is prohibited
- Disabled people who contracted COVID have been denied treatment and have received experimental treatment without consent



Module 2 Review:

Civil Rights Obligations During the Pandemic

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:

- **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.
- **National Emergency declaration** by the President on March 13 that was retroactive to March 1, 2020.



Module 2 Review:

COVID-19 and Declarations

- Every state and four territories requested and received a **Major Disaster declaration** by the President.
 - 94 tribes are working directly with FEMA under the emergency declaration.





Questions?

Today's Goals:

You will develop strategies for:

- Continuing IL work during a pandemic
- Continuing to inclusively provide core services as state reopens during the pandemic



COVID-19 Pandemic as of Spring 2021

- COVID-19 is still a public health emergency with a disaster declaration in place
- COVID-19 remains a threat to the community and especially the disability community
- Children are just beginning to vaccinated



COVID-19 Pandemic as of Spring 2021

- COVID-19 case rates and death rates have lowered
- Slightly over half the population has been vaccinated
- Slightly under half the population has not been vaccinated



COVID-19 Pandemic as of Spring 2021

In Delaware:

- Masks are required in indoor spaces
- CDC Guidance should be followed outdoors (no mask requirement)

Sources:

- Delaware.gov as of [May 21, 2021](#)
- CDC [Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- CDC [Guidance for Wearing Masks \(for unvaccinated people\)](#)



Opposition to CDC Guidelines

The Partnership and several disability-led organizations, allies, and individuals sign on: [Opposition to the Recent CDC Mask Guidelines for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

National Nurses United: [Nation's Largest RN Union Condemns CDC Rollback on COVID Protection Guidance](#)



COVID-19 Pandemic as of Spring 2021

CILs need to inclusively provide services.

- Continue to provide services remotely
- Provide in-person services when doing so is safe
- Provide hybrid events
- Be flexible: the situation is fluid and there could be new COVID-19 spikes later.





Question for you:

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

Keep Doing What CILs 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 During Reopening

- **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 inclusively as Delaware reopens.



Keep Consumers and the Public Updated

Office location/building: Clearly post accessible signage, identifying changes in hours or practices.

Emails and Newsletters: Send out timely and important messages regarding reopening.



Keep Consumers and the Public Updated

Website: Update your website to reflect any changes in hours of operation, virtual events, and in-person events.

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



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



Information and 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, including information on

- Vaccination and testing sites
- 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 precautions, such as using a face shield
- Sanitize! Sanitize! Sanitize!



Stay Inclusive

- There are immunocompromised people who can't get vaccine yet.
- Some disabled people are not safe in public spaces.

Make sure to stay inclusive!



Independent Living Skills Training

Need to continue IL skills training

- Do all your consumers who need services remotely 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

- Getting basic supplies, including PPE, during a pandemic
- Personal Assistance management, extra back-ups, and planning during pandemic
- Getting familiar with virtual platforms
 - Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, Skype
- Skills training on web-based supports
 - Using computer/smart devices, using Google Docs, email, social media



IL Skills Training During the Pandemic

- Financial literacy and managing stimulus funds
- Transportation
- Employment skills / requesting reasonable accommodations





Question for you:

How are you providing IL skills training?

How is it different?

Peer Support and Mentorship

Continue gathering together, virtually and in-person, when safe to do so

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



Peer Support and Mentorship

If consumer is experiencing a 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 for Consumers Experiencing Crisis

Domestic violence line:

1 (800) 799-7233

TTY: 1 (800) 787-3224

[Delaware Suicide and
Crisis Hotlines](#)

Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (MCIS):

N. Delaware Hotline:
(800) 652-2929

S. Delaware Hotline:
(800) 345-6785



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)
- Education



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 and public health departments.
- Are you in touch with your local city elected officials, state elected officials, 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

Be prepared to continue 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
- Employment



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Statement

[EEOC Issues Updated COVID-19 Technical Assistance | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

EEOC has issued technical assistance

- Employers can require vaccination unless reasonable accommodation
- Employers can ask if you have COVID-19
- Reasonable accommodation required





Question for you:

How have your systems and individual advocacy strategies changed?

What barriers are you encountering during the pandemic?

Youth Transition

- As schools reopen fully, they can't exclude students with disabilities
- 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.



Institutions are Dangerous

- Institutions continue to have disproportionately high COVID-19 rates and deaths
- Many people in institutions who want the vaccine still are not vaccinated
 - Many people have been admitted to institutions recently
- Large numbers of staff are not vaccinated



Institutions were **dangerous before** COVID-19.

Institutions are **dangerous during** COVID-19.

Institutions will continue to be **dangerous after**
the COVID-19 pandemic.



Transition to Community from Institutions

- Transition from long-term care facilities including:
 - Nursing facilities
 - Psychiatric institutions
 - Group homes



Transition to Community from Institutions

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





Question for you:

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

Transition and Diversion Strategies

Remote 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



Transition and Diversion Strategies

In-person strategies:

- CIL staff trading off responsibilities, when needed, along the lines of risk
- Relationships with hospital, nursing facility and other congregate facility, and homeless shelter social workers
- If staff choose to visit institutions in person, they must have adequate PPE even when they are vaccinated
- [Drug Court diversion program](#)



Getting Disabled People 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

- Money Follows the Person (MFP) list
- Other wait lists
- Disability Law Program (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?

Transitioning People from Congregate Facilities During a Pandemic

- Might take longer
- Is happening
- Needs to continue



Transitioning People from Congregate Facilities During a Pandemic

Restrictive visitor policies can be 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

Let people in institutions know that they have options!



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.
- CILs have 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 educate the 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-19 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 get a vaccine.

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-19 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-19 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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