Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Planning for COVID-19

A GUIDE TO ASSIST YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN FOR COVID-19

Queensland Government

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Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Planning for COVID-19

This is a guide to help people with disability to get the facts about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and make a plan for how they will manage the impact of this situation. People with disability need a plan that is tailored to their unique support needs.

Who developed this guide?

Queenslanders with Disability Network is working with a team at The University of Sydney who lead research on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction. We work together to make sure people with disability are aware and prepared for all emergencies. This resource is funded with support from the Queensland Government Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

We work in partnership with people with disability to make sure they are included in all decisions about emergency management and disaster risk. We are working together during this public health emergency because we know that people with disability are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and may develop more severe symptoms.

What is in this guide?

This guide provides links to trusted sources of information about COVID-19 that have been made available in different formats to help people with disability get the information they need. It includes information about:

- understanding COVID-19 and how to protect yourself;
- making a plan for how you will manage during this public health emergency;
- knowing what to do if you or someone who supports you experience symptoms of COVID-19.

In this guide, we are using the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP) Toolkit (Villeneuve et al., 2019). The PCEP helps people with disability to tailor emergency preparedness planning to their capabilities and function-based support needs. The PCEP was developed by researchers at The University of Sydney through a co-design process involving people with disability and the services that support them.

Why is this guide important?

People with disability, their family and carers need the facts about COVID-19.Once they have the facts, they need to make a plan for how they will act together with their support network.

Some people with disability:

- have trouble getting the facts about emergencies and making a plan because information is not always accessible.
- need to adapt public health prevention strategies for COVID-19 to their abilities and living situation.

Until recently, there were no tools for people with disability to make emergency preparedness plans tailored to their support needs.

The PCEP (Villeneuve et al., 2019) is an Australian-designed toolkit that helps people with disability to make a plan for how they will act together with their support network during emergencies.
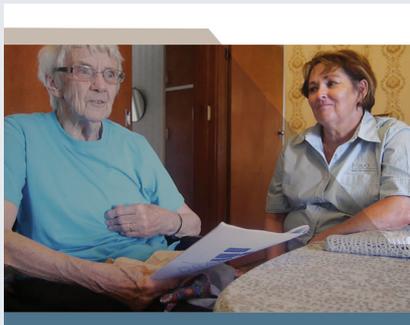
Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP)

A Process Tool and Framework for Enabling Disaster Preparedness with People with Chronic Health Conditions and Disability

USER GUIDE

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

The PCEP Toolkit has a series of three videos to show the PCEP in action.

The PCEP Toolkit can be accessed here: www.collaborating4inclusion. org/prepare-nsw/

What should I do?

There are two things you can do now to keep yourself safe:

1. **Get the facts** about COVID-19 so you understand your risks and can take steps to protect yourself;

2. **Make a plan** for how you will manage the risks to your health and well-being during this period of uncertainty. This includes knowing what you will do if you or someone who supports you experience symptoms of COVID-19.

We all need to be prepared and know what to do before, during, and after an emergency. People with disability may need additional support, resources, or advocacy during this health emergency.

Public health emergencies are unpredictable. Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that has no treatment at this time. This can make people feel worried or anxious.

Having a plan means knowing how you will:

- manage your own needs;
- stay in touch with family, friends and workers in different ways to help stop the spread of the virus;
- know where to get help; and
- support others during this period of uncertainty.

Having a plan helps:

- people to manage their mental health and well-being;
- build individual and community resilience.

Get COVID-19 Facts
Let's start with the facts:

You might catch novel coronavirus (COVID-19) if:

Someone with the virus sneezes or coughs onto you

Someone with the virus coughed or sneezed onto a surface (like a door handle) that you touched, and you get infected droplets on your hands and then transfer them to your mouth, nose, or eyes when you touch your face or eat.

There are 5 ways that we can all help stop the spread of viruses:

1. Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.

2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing.

3. Avoid touching your face, nose and mouth. Do not shake hands.
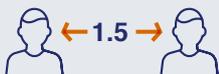
4. Stay home if you are unwell.

5. Practice social distancing, which includes staying 1.5 meters away from others as much as you can. 1.5 m is like two big steps or two arms length.

Household cleaning is also important:

Germs can live outside of the body, on surfaces, after a person coughs or sneezes.

Regular cleaning is important for:

- reducing the spread of germs and
- minimising the number of germs surviving on surfaces.

How do I get information about COVID-19?

Get the facts from trusted sites.

Queensland Health	https://www.health.qld.gov.au/
Australian Government Department of Health	https://www.health.gov.au/
National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)	https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-and-other-government-services/ndis-and-disaster-response
Health Direct Coronavirus Hub	https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus

Get accessible information:

QDN is keeping up to date resources in different accessible formats and links to trusted sites at https://qdn.org.au/home/what-you-need-to-know-about-covid-19/
You can read more about what COVID-19 is in this easy read document here: (https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/What-is-Coronavirus-COVID-19-1.pdf)
'What is in-home quarantine' resource: https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/What-does-self-quarantine-mean.pdf

Have a conversation:

Find people who can help you to get started - this may be your house mates, family or friends. These are the people you should talk with.

You do not have to plan alone, and it is important to reach out to others for support.

> **Communication is key. Talk with the people who support you, including your paid staff about how you will keep each other safe from COVID-19.**

" I've had a lot of questions about re-arranging support workers. When thinking about arranging things for maximum safety, I found it helpful to know that I have to make arrangements that could work for at least 6 months and potentially 18 or more. There's a big difference between a change I can maybe cope with for 2 weeks or 2 months, and a change I can cope with for many months. Knowing I may need to manage these changes to my support services for a long time helped me to make a better plan. "

Disability Advocate

Make a Plan

What am I planning for?

1. **Plan to stay at home for a long period of time**

2. **Plan what you will do if you or someone who supports you gets COVID-19 symptoms**

How do I make a plan?

STEP 1.   Identify your strengths and support needs

The PCEP helps you break down planning into eight areas:

LIVING SITUATION

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

TRANSPORTATION

ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

what I do
where I do it
who I do it with

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

COMMUNICATION

PERSONAL SUPPORT

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH
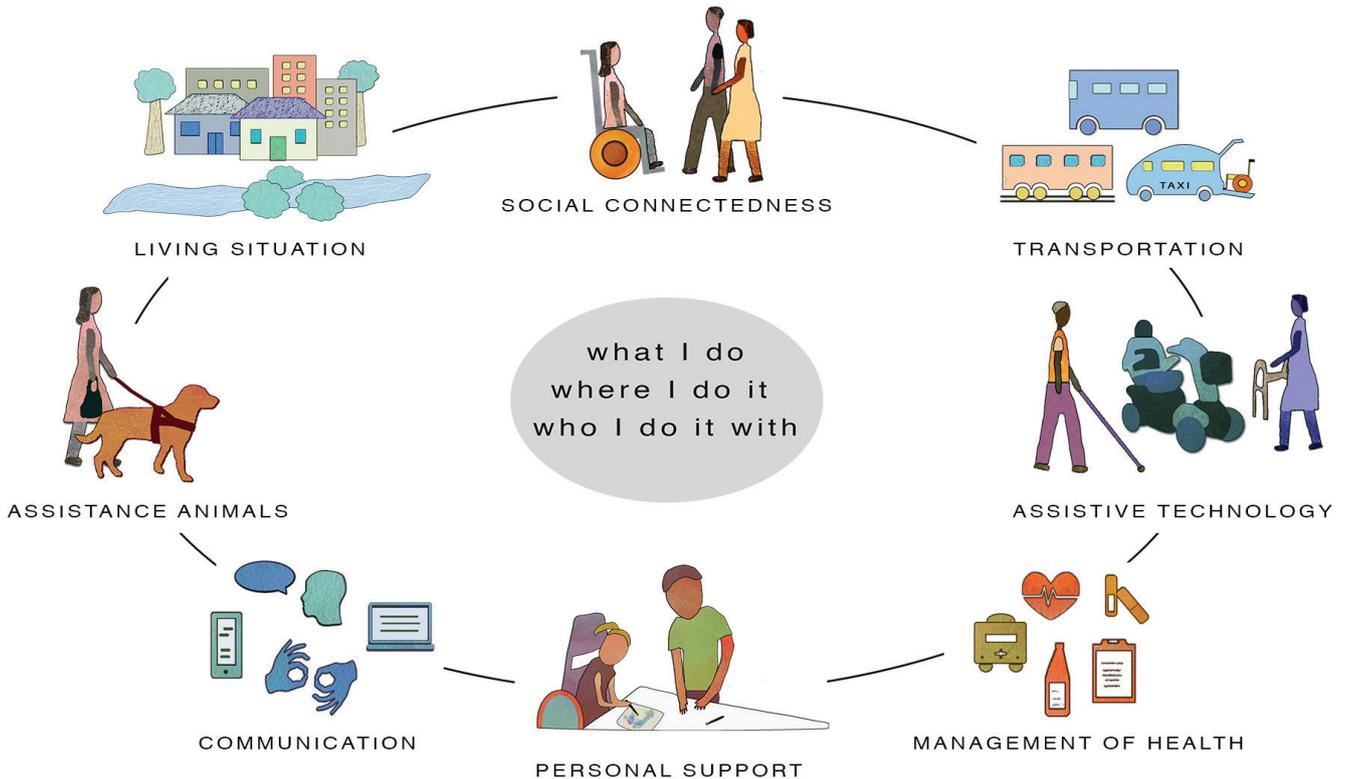
Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Capability Wheel (Re-printed with permission)

- Think about what you do, where you do it and who you do it with.
- Consider your roles and responsibilities to others (e..g, partner, children, parents) that you support.
- Make a list of the things you need support for in each of the 8 areas.

My Support Needs:

Element		Things I need support for
Communication	Getting, giving and understanding information.	
Management of Health	Taking care of your health.	
Assistive Technology	The help you get from equipment, but not people.	
Personal Support	Help you get from other people.	
Assistance Animals	Help from animals. How you care for them.	
Transportation	How you travel where you want or need to go (e.g., car, bus, train, taxi, walking).	
Living Situation	Where you live and who you live with.	
Social Connectedness	The people you do things with. Your relationships with friends, family and other people. Help you give to other people.	

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Make a Plan

What am I planning for?

1. **Plan to stay at home for a long period of time**

2. **Plan what you will do if you or someone who supports you gets COVID-19 symptoms**

How do I make a plan?

STEP 2. Use the following information starting from page 12 to plan how you will do things differently during COVID-19.

The questions and tips help you to plan for:
- how you will manage your support needs while isolating at home
- ways to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19
- what you will do if you or someone who supports you gets COVID-19

Share your plan with the people who support you – family, friends and your support service and workers

There are several resources that you can download, print, and use to help you to be safe. Links to resources are also provided.

Please be aware that some information and links provided in this workbook are specific to Queensland, Australia. If you reside in a different state, look for equivalent links and resources on COVID-19 in your state.

Communication

Things to consider

- **What devices do I use to keep in touch with people? (e.g., landline, mobile, computer, tablet etc.)**
- **How do I pay my bills?**
- **Do I have a pre-paid or mobile on a plan?**
- **How will I keep in touch with others?**

Tips

☑ If you normally go to the shop to top up your phone, or the post-office to pay your bills, contact your provider about other options (phone or online).

☑ Check that you have enough data and credit to keep in touch with people.

☑ Ask someone to show you how to use technology if you don't know. This could be things like Facetime, WhatsApp, Messenger etc.

☑ Think about what back-up devices you could organise now. If you only have a landline is there someone who could loan you a device?

☑ Make a plan for how you will receive mail and packages to reduce the spread of germs.
  - Wipe packages and clean hands
  - Information on Australia Post and mail deliveries are on this website.

Management of Health

Things to consider

- **What critical health information do I need to share in an emergency?**
- **What are the options in my area for having my prescriptions delivered?**
- **What supplies do I need? How will I get them?**
- **What other things will I need to maintain my health and wellbeing for two weeks?**
- **How will I take care of my mental health?**
- **How will I take care of my physical health?**

Tips

☑ It is important you can continue to get the support you need and **have your essential daily needs met.**
  - The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) are changing how you can get supports and access funding due to COVID-19. Contact NDIA on 1800 800 110 or visit this page for up to date information.
  - If you run out of essentials (food; medication) and there is nobody to help you, call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349

Management of Health (continued)

Tips

☑ Do a stocktake of what you have. Check you have enough for 14 days or more of:
- your prescription medication
- non-prescription medication like Aspirin, Panadol, ibuprofen
- continence aids, gloves, catheters, PEG feeding equipment and formulas, dressings, any other supplies relating to your disability.

☑ Make a list of your important health information, current medication, essential supplies, and share with those who support you.

☑ Check you have any special foods you might need on hand.

☑ Think about what you can do from home to keep up your exercise routine. You could link into an online class or get some dumbbells to use at home.

☑ Talk to your service provider about different ways that they can support you with your therapy or services to help you maintain your health and well-being – some are starting to offer phone or video appointments.

☑ Have the contact numbers of who to call if you start to feel sick with COVID-19 symptoms, including your service provider and the NDIA.

Assistive Technology (AT)
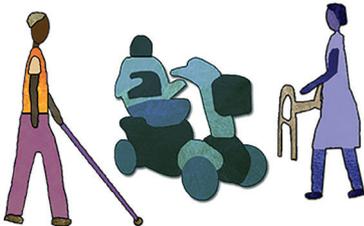
Things to consider

- **What AT do I use?**
- **How will I clean my assistive technology to prevent the spread of germs?**
- **If my wheelchair or other AT breaks down, who do I call?**
- **What back up equipment do I need?**

Tips

☑ Have telephone or computer power cords or spare batteries/re-charging stations for your hearing aids.

☑ Make a list of items you other items you would need to take with you if you needed to leave your home (e.g., specific utensils, shower chair)

☑ Check your power sources and back-up power supplies.

☑ Review your current AT maintenance schedule and check it is up to date

☑ If your AT breaks down and it is an emergency urgent repair, you can call the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Visit the website here.

☑ Think about how everyday technology could help you to manage by yourself. For example, home technology (like Google home) could assist you with voice commands for turning off lights, listening to music, getting news updates etc.

Personal Support
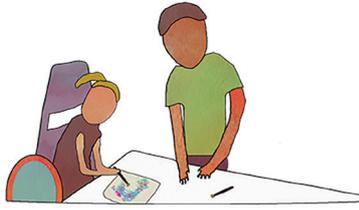
Things to consider

- **What are my essential supports that I need everyday?**
- **What can I live without?**
- **What supports must I have?**

Tips

☑ Place a sign on your front door, asking visitors to stop and consider if their visit is essential. **A printable version is available at the end of this resource.**

☑ Have clear COVID-19 personal support instructions for your current and new support staff.
- Write COVID-19 care instructions down and put them where people can see them.
- Talk to your support staff about the 5 steps to keep you all safe from spreading the virus – you can download and print this infographic to put up in your home.

☑ For NDIS participant the NDIA has put a range of flexible processes in place. If you need to, you can get your worker to do your shopping or get essential medications.

☑ For people with high support needs – the NDIA will contact people to check in to ensure you have the supports you need and will make sure people in your state or territory know if they need to check in with you.

☑ **Visit this website for frequent updates on NDIS disaster response and FAQs.**

☑ For older persons with disability – the Commonwealth Government has measures in place for older persons receiving aged care supports to continue to receive the essential services they need.

☑ Have a back-up list of support workers. There are some agencies that may provide back-up staff like: Hireup, Mable, Careseekers.

☑ Keep phone numbers of your service providers handy.

☑ Know who you will call in an emergency and discuss your plan with your emergency contacts.

☑ Have a printed or digital back up copy of:
- My NDIS plan
- COVID-19 care instructions and passwords for support staff
- Any training materials that you may need to share so new staff know how to support you the best

☑ **Community Recovery Hotline**
If it is **not** a medical emergency but you need **urgent assistance** or **urgent supplies** and don't have anyone to help you, you can call the Community Recovery Hotline on **1800 173 349**.

Assistance Animals and Pets

Things to consider

- **What care does my assistance animal or pet need?**
- **What will I do if my animal needs to see the veterinarian?**
- **Am I stocked up on supplies, food, medicines for my animal?**

Tips

☑ If your assistance animal becomes unwell and needs to go to the veterinarian, call your vet first before visiting.

☑ Check food and medication supplies and stock up on what you need for your assistance animal for 14 days. Find information on preparedness planning for your assistance animal or pet here: https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/prepare-for-disasters/prepare-pets).
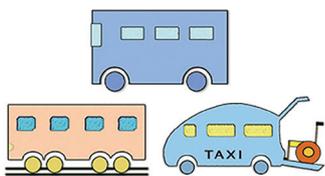
Transportation

Things to consider

- **What are my options if I need to travel safely during COVID-19?**
- **If public transport service isn't an option, how can I get to my essential services if I need to go to the doctors or shopping?**
- **Can I call my doctor, family or friends instead of going in person?**

Tips

☑ Stop and think about whether you need to leave the house.
  - Can someone else go for you?
  - Can you call instead?
  - If you need to go, consider the safest way to travel there.

☑ If you need to see the doctor or other medical health specialist telehealth may be available.
  - Telehealth happens by video or telephone attendance instead of face-to-face appointments and may be bulk-billed. Check with your doctor or health professional.

☑ Ensure you have your taxi subsidy card somewhere with your other health information.

Living Situation

Things to consider

- **Think about where you live and the context of your home situation. Think about who you live with and arrangements you can make now to ensure your safety at home.**
- **Where do I spend most of my time?**
- **Who lives nearby that can help me when needed?**

Tips

☑ Make a plan if you have to stay in your home with those that you live with and how you could keep safe distances from each other.

☑ Plan now for how you can keep surfaces clean and how you will manage to support each other with meal preparation, laundry, house cleaning, and other home maintenance.

☑ Think about if someone you lived with had to self-isolate somewhere else, and how you can support each other during this period.

☑ **Read and print these** three steps for household cleaning (Queensland Government).

☑ Take time to review your fire safety at home. Information and preparedness tips can be found here.

Social Connectedness

Things to consider

- **How can I stay in touch with people?**
- **Who is in my circles of support both in person and virtually – who do I count on, and who counts on me?**
- **Who else is nearby that maybe I could call on? Think broadly about this, not only who you see in person, but who else do you have social connections with (e.g. online groups)**
- **What other ways could I feel connected to others?**
- **If I get sick, are there people who rely on me that I should contact? Who can I connect with to support them if I have to go to hospital?**

Tips

☑ Make a list of people who are important to notify of your whereabouts, including phone numbers, addresses and email addresses.

Social Connectedness (continued)

Tips

☑ Make a plan for staying connected and in touch with people. Some ideas include:
- speaking to someone you know at the same time each day (a check-in phone call)
- using Facetime or other applications to speak with people
- join or start a group with friends or family through social media (Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp)
- speaking with friends or neighbours over the fence or balcony
- calling friends and family regularly
- starting a movie or book club over the phone or computer
- writing letters to people that you haven't seen in a while
- making video calls and text friends and family.

☑ Find tips for looking after your health and well-being here.

☑ Reach out and get help for social and emotional support when you need it. See below for some helpful contact numbers.

- **Community Recovery Hotline (free)**
  Phone: 1800 173 349

- **Lifeline (free)**
  Phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days)
  Text: 0477 131 114 (6pm – midnight AEDT 7 nights)
  Chat online: www.lifeline.org.au/crisischat
  (7pm - midnight AEDT 7 nights)
  Website: https://www.lifeline.org.au/

- **Beyond Blue (free)**
  Phone: 1300 224 636 (24 hours/7 days)
  Chat online: https://online.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/start
  (3pm – 12pm AEDT 7 days)
  Website: https://beyondblue.org.au

  The BeyondBlue online forum 'coping during the coronavirus outbreak' is accessible here.

Complete the following My COVID-19 Plan and put in an accessible location at your home.
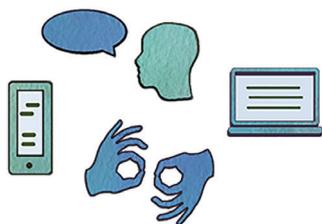
My COVID-19 Plan	
Communication ☐ I have my phone and computer/tablet to be able to stay in touch with people or call people in emergency ☐ I have enough data and credit to keep in touch ☐ Other things I need to do:	My phone company is: My data for my computer is with: Other important information about my communication:
Management of Health ☐ If there is a medical emergency, I will call 000 ☐ I have a list of my current medications ☐ I have a list of essential supplies ☐ I have my contact list of who to call in an emergency *(continued over)*	My list of emergency contacts: My support person for making health decisions: My list of current medications:

My COVID-19 Plan	
Management of Health *(continued)*	My list of essential supplies I need:

☐ I have my important health information printed and accessible including my medications, blister packs, essential supplies and contact information if I have someone who helps me with my health decisions

☐ I have a plan for looking after my mental and physical health and well-being if I have to stay home for a long time

If I develop COVID-19 symptoms, I will:

☐ Call my doctor or call 13 HEALTH on 13 43 25 84

☐ let my support workers know that I have COVID-19 symptoms

☐ call 000 if it is a life threatening emergency

If someone who supports me gets sick, I will:

☐ call my service provider

Notes:

I know if I run out of essentials (food; medication) and there is nobody to help me:

☐ I can call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349

☐ NDIA participants, can call the NDIA on 1800 800 110.

Things I am going to do to look after my mental and physical health and wellbeing:
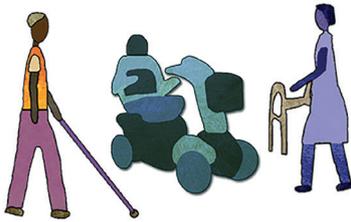
My COVID-19 Plan	
Assistive Technology (AT) ☐ I have my power sources and back-up power supplies ☐ Other: **Notes:** Repairs to AT in an emergency are considered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) as urgent repairs. More information: https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/4142-urgent-assistive-technology-repairs	My current AT maintenance schedule is: My contacts for repairs or fixing my AT:
Personal Support ☐ I have clear COVID-19 personal support instructions for my support staff, including any new support staff ☐ I have communicated my COVID-19 care instructions to all of my support staff ☐ I have written COVID-19 care instructions down and posted them in an accessible location at home ☐ I have discussed my plan with my emergency contact ☐ I have a copy of my NDIS plan or My Aged Care support plan	My copies of my important documents are in safe place that is: My back up list of support workers are: Phone numbers of my service providers, NDIA and other supports can be found here:
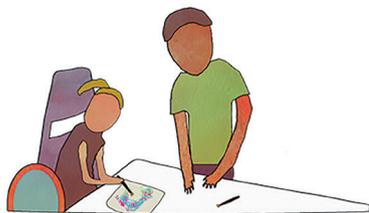
| My COVID-19 Plan	
Personal Support *(continued)* **Notes:** If it is not a medical emergency but I need urgent assistance or urgent supplies (e.g., I have no accessible support or help for critical personal support needs), I will call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349.	In an emergency, I will call:
Assistance animals and pets ☐ I have a plan for who will look after my animal if I become unwell. I can develop a detailed preparedness plan for my assistance animal or pet using this information.	My vet is: Medications my animal needs are: Person who will help me if needed with my animals is:
Transportation ☐ I will call ahead to plan appointments ☐ I will make different plans to avoid the need to leave home ☐ I have a plan for different ways to travel if I need to go out ☐ I have someone who can help me make decisions about transport	My transport options are: Contacts who can assist me with transport are:
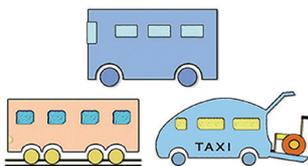
My COVID-19 Plan	
Living Situation	Notes:
☐ I have made/reviewed my home fire safety plan	
☐ I have considered ways to protect me/others at home if we need to isolate from each other if someone gets sick	
☐ I have a plan to increase household cleaning so that surfaces are wiped down regularly to decrease spread of germs	
Social Connectedness	My emergency contact list is in safe place that is:
☐ I have an emergency contact list	
☐ I shared my emergency contact list with my support network	My plan for staying connected and in touch with people is:
☐ I have a plan for staying connected and in touch with people	

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

I can't isolate myself from other people because I need help with personal care including things like transfers, toileting, and bathing. What should I do to reduce my risk?

Answer:

Be proactive. Keep lines of communication open with the people who support you. It is your right!

Make sure that all the people who support you follow the 5 steps to stop the spread of viruses.

The 5 steps are:

1. Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.

2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing.

3. Avoid touching your face, nose and mouth. And avoid shaking hands.

4. Stay home if you are unwell.

5. Practice social distancing, which includes staying 1.5m away from others as much as you can.

"I've discussed with support workers who have other high-risk jobs (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes) about how we might need to change things in future. They are already good at letting me know if they're sick or have been knowingly exposed to illnesses. I have also had conversations with all my support workers about if anything changes for them they will let me know. They all know I may have to change things up at any minute because everything changes. I have committed to being as open with everybody as possible."

Question:

I rely on others to get my groceries, to prepare meals and to clean my house. How do I minimise my contact with germs?

Answer:

Negotiate new routines to minimise your contact with germs to reduce their spread.

"I've changed some of my support worker routines - more hand washing and gloves for some things, wiping down surfaces with soapy water daily, they will open mail/parcels carefully and wash afterwards. We will keep re-evaluating if more changes are needed."

"For my shopping person we've arranged he will leave the shopping on the front porch instead of bringing them in and putting things away - he brings it at a time there's already another support worker here. So, that support worker will bring things in, rinse them down, and put them away."

Question:

I have health/medical appointments and selfcare activities that require attendance in person (e.g. blood tests, scans, manual therapy sessions, hydrotherapy, home-based assessments for the NDIS). How do I weigh-up the risks versus benefits of appointments? What measures can I take if I need to attend things in the community?

Answer:

Some people will need to attend medical or other specialist appointments in person. Always call ahead to make a plan for your visit. Learn what to expect on arrival and follow the requested procedures.

Ask your provider if they can provide alternative formats such as telehealth or video conference as a substitute for face-to-face visits. Many service providers are increasing their capacity to deliver in different formats that are helpful accommodations for people with disability. Check in with your provider about options they are developing for receiving services and supports.

Always take precautions to keep yourself safe before, during, and after appointments. This includes washing hands and cleaning surfaces (e.g. wheelchair).

Some providers may cancel services and this may impact your physical or mental health and well-being. Talk with your service provider about what alternatives you could put in place to maintain your health and well-being. For example, Can your physiotherapist provide home exercises and check in with you by telephone? Will your counsellor provide online sessions?

Question:

How do I look after my mental health and well-being during this time?

Answer:

There are many ways we can support ourselves and others to look after our mental health and well-being at this time.

Some of these suggestions are to:

- Structure your day and keep routines where possible
- Do things that you enjoy and that are good for you
- Keep socially connected
- Keep things in perspective
- Find a healthy balance with media coverage
- Remind yourself that this is temporary
- Reach out to others

Call support and help lines if you need to reach out. There is a list of free support hotlines in the social connectedness section on page 17.

STOP

Someone in this house is at higher risk of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please consider if your visit is essential

If you are showing any of these symptoms DO NOT VISIT

cough | sore throat | runny nose | fever | shortness of breath

**If your visit is _essential_ please wash your hands
immediately for 20 seconds upon entering**

You can contact us on: _____

Leave any packages at the door

_____

_____

_____

_____

This is a sign that you can use to place on your front door to help people stop and think before they knock.
There is space at the bottom of the sign so that you can write any further
instructions to visitors, or support workers.