Resources for Adult Protective Services During Physical Distancing

To support adult protective services (APS) agencies and workers during the COVID-19 outbreak, NCCD offers the following resources and best practices. These resources are not intended to replace local or agency policy, practice, or guidance.

**Background**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that older adults are at highest risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. Other people at high risk include those with underlying health conditions such as chronic lung disease or asthma, serious heart conditions, or other medical conditions, especially if not well controlled, such as diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease, or people who are severely obese or immunocompromised. Many of the adults served by APS have one or more of these risk factors. In 2018, 70% of APS clients served nationally were over age 60.

During this public health crisis, it’s important that both APS workers and clients stay safe. NCCD wants to help by ensuring that APS agencies, workers, and clients have as much information as possible.

While state and local health authorities are APS agencies’ best resource for local and up-to-date information, federal guidance is available for protecting yourself and those you serve at the following websites.


**Basic Measures**

The CDC recommends the following basic protective measures for all individuals.

- **Stay home.**
- **Wash your hands often.**
- **Avoid close contact** (distancing yourself from others by at least six feet, which is about two arm lengths) with other people.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched services.
• Avoid all cruise travel and non-essential air travel.

• Call your healthcare professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

Provide COVID-19 Resources to Your Clients

Provide your clients with the most up-to-date information through CDC updates; resources for clients with disabilities (similar to this state’s tool kit); resources for older clients, including this helpful video; and information on managing life at home during social isolation.

Assess and Maintain Connections

Connection with and assessment of your clients and their well-being is more important now than ever.

Consider practices that reduce client contact by triaging in-person responses to those who warrant the most urgent response, are at risk of imminent danger, or otherwise warrant an emergency response. Even if you can’t do home visits the way you used to, seek alternative ways to check on clients, ensure they’re informed, and assess their safety and needs.

• Make contact, even if just by phone. Virtual contact such as FaceTime, if available, is a valuable tool.

• If possible, talk/meet outside with appropriate physical distancing. Outdoor, in-person contact offers some access to the client without putting them or yourself at risk of exposure.

• Ensure that clients have their medical information, phone numbers, and information on who to call if they have symptoms.

• Ask clients about the supplies they have or need, including medications, medical supplies, and food.

• Inform clients on guidelines for preventing spread of the virus. This is especially important if they have service providers or home health aides in their home.

If making an in-person response, connect with the client ahead of time.

• Before going out, make sure the client understands the purpose of your visit and that you will, if possible, talk outside with appropriate physical distancing.

• If you will be wearing personal protective equipment, like a mask or face shield, explain why you have this safety gear on to help calm fears or discomfort.

Plan for safety and utilize network.

• Ask the client about their emergency contacts, family, and friends. The client’s network can be an especially valuable resource for communication, unexpected or changing caregiving needs, and planning.

• Inquire about who the client already has regular contact with and consider reaching out to them (if you have permission) to see what they need to continue to stay connected with the older adults and adults with disabilities you are working with.
The Changing Federal Landscape

While more information will be available in coming weeks related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, or the COVID-19 stimulus package, below are some tips and resources related to what this assistance could entail for APS clients.

- Most people who receive monthly Social Security retirement and disability payments will also get a stimulus payment.

  People who receive Social Security benefits but don’t file a tax return are still eligible. Their checks will be based on information provided by the Social Security Administration.

- Waivers will be available to ease restrictions on home-delivered meal programs and other programs that add flexibility and extend funding to services provided under Medicaid and Medicare.

- Required minimum distributions (RMDs) from retirement accounts are suspended for 2020.

- Additional funding for SNAP is included in the CARES Act to help cover the expected cost of new applications to the program in addition to $450 million for food banks and other community food distribution programs.

- Existing grantees in the aging and disability networks, including tribes and tribal organizations, will receive $955 million from the package.

- For more information on what the stimulus package means for states and APS agencies, see the following.

  » ACL bulletin: https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USAACL/bulletins/283d816