A TRAUMA-INFORMED PEER SUPPORT RESPONSE TO COVID-19

An in-depth look into Personal Protective Equipment and Peer Support

COVID-19 is a collective experience of trauma impacting us all either directly or indirectly. Physical distance lowers chances of viral exposure and ultimately lowers the impact of this collective trauma on our society. Physical distance is a form of disability justice crucial to all communities of people.

OVERVIEW

It can be difficult to wear masks or frequently wash our hands, cough into a tissue or the crook of our arms, etc. The following steps can be taken to maintain person-to-person social connection while maintaining physical distance and by extension lowering viral exposure. (This is not a time of social distance we must try to avoid that narrative this is a time of social and intentional connection with physical distance.)

SOCIAL CONNECTION & ENGAGEMENT

1. Do not guilt or shame the people you are supporting if they intentionally or unintentionally not following the steps to lower viral exposure.
2. Identify which employee or team member has the best connection with the person you are offering support to. This employee/team member should be the primary person offering education and support.
3. The person you are supporting should be asked what their knowledge is around COVID-19 and the steps of protection. This is important so you can know how informed the person is when you are sharing this knowledge.
4. We will work with people we support and determine together what is the best way to remind each other of these steps.
   a. The person you are supporting should take the lead on as many possible aspects of determining the best way to remind each other of the steps to lower viral exposure.
   b. Consider doing some activities together. This includes art or reminders such as key words, phrases, visuals, and/or pamphlets. (describe visuals for or use other platforms for accessibility)

SUPPORTING AN INFORMED SPACE

1. USE OF VISUAL AIDS (POSTERS/PAMPHLETS)*OTHER METHODS OR PLATFORMS FOR ACCESSIBILITY* DEMONSTRATE HAND WASHING, HOW THE VIRUS IS TRANSMITTED, APPROACHES TO MINIMIZING VIRAL EXPOSURE BY BEING CAREFUL AROUND SNEEZING, COUGHING, AVOIDING SHARING DRINKS/FOOD.
2. REVIEW SOME ASPECT OF LOWERING VIRAL EXPOSURES BEFORE OR DURING MEETINGS. REVIEW THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 AND ASK THE PEOPLE YOU SUPPORT TO LET YOU KNOW IF THEY EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS.
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DISABILITY JUSTICE LENS DURING COVID-19

Physical distance is a form of disability justice

Some of the principles of disability justice are:

- Collective Access
- Intersectionality
- Leadership of those most impacted
- Recognizing Wholeness
- Interdependence
- Collective Liberation

COVID-19 is a collective trauma impacting our society it is directly and indirectly felt in every community. Access and accessibility is a priority response right now.

- Physical distance supports the communities most susceptible to COVID-19.
- Access and accessibility is needed in every community. (Food, PPE, household supplies, virtual support, and socializing etc.)

"All bodies are caught in the bindings of ability, race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. We are powerful not despite the complexities of our identities, but because of them. Only universal, collective access can lead to universal, collective liberation. This is disability justice."

-Aurora Levine Morales, Patty Berne and Micah Bzant

"Disability exists in every sector of society: in immigrant communities, in prisons, in religious and spiritual communities, among veterans and homeless folks, among children and elders and everyone in between, so every movement has to advance disability justice, and vice versa. A movement that sees some people as disposable or able to be sacrificed is not disability justice."

-Nomy Lamm.
This is disability justice

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