

Transcripts: Helping Individuals Make the Transition Back into the Community

SLIDE 1: Helping Individuals Make the Transition Back into the Community.

SLIDE 2: Hello, my name is Jodie Dale. I am a member of the KEPRO Southwestern PA Health Care Quality Unit and today I'm going to talk to you about the important role nurses play in helping people get back into the community. This webinar is specifically designed for nurses caring for individuals with ID and ASD but can be helpful to all members of our community. Now let's get started.

SLIDE 3: Our disclaimer is: information or education provided by the HCQU is not intended to replace medical advice from the individual's personal care physician, existing facility policy, or federal, state, and local regulations code within the agency jurisdiction. The information provided is not all inclusive of the topic presented.

SLIDE 4: How nurses can help: As a busy nurse at the provider agency, you're working hard to assure the health and welfare of people in your care. COVID-19 has brought many changes in how we live in our lives. Now it's time for the people you support to get back into the community and nurses playing an important role in this transition. And here are some things you can do. Educate both caregivers and self-advocates, everyone is overloaded with information about the virus and how to be safe. Sometimes the recommendations change quickly and sometimes information seems to be contradictory. You have the knowledge and expertise to help everyone understand the vast amount of information they're receiving about what to do. Make yourself available to caregivers and self-advocates to address their concerns. There is a lot to consider when transitioning back to the community and people you work with trust you and look to you for guidance, you probably already have a great working relationship with them. Let them know when you're available and the best way to reach you. Stay knowledgeable about the latest news and information about the virus in your area. And share the information with those you support. Suggested resources of information are ODP announcements, PA Department of Health website, and the CDC. And help your agency develop policies and procedures to maintain health and safety. There will be the need for policies about social distancing, the use of PPE, how to care for someone who has COVID-19 and personal concerns, to name a few. Your agency may look to you for guidance concerning policies related to medical areas.

SLIDE 5: Information specific to helping people make the transition to the community. The ODP developed an individual transition guide to provide SCs and care providers with guidance as they assist people to transition back into the community. There is a PowerPoint presentation on My ODP that provides more information and examples of what to assess for each person. The Individual Transition Guide can be found on My ODP, it is announcement 20-056. And six key areas were identified: the desire to return to the community activities and settings, physical health status, infection control measures, mental health and behavioral health needs, changes in routine, and conditions of supports and services. Let's talk about how nurses can assist with these key areas.

SLIDE 6: Assess the person's desire and readiness to return to community activities. Many people may be looking forward to returning to community activities, but there will be some who are not ready for a variety of reasons. The nurse can assist care team to assure they're developing a person centered plan that reflects the person's need. The first thing to think about is the individual's desire to go into the community. Ask the person how they would like to spend their day. And if they're able to enjoy the same things they did before the pandemic. It's important to discuss how an individual may feel about entering back into the community, as some people might have some level of anxiety. Or some may feel unwilling to return at all. The person's response to this question

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guides the next steps for the person. Nurses can contribute to the development of a person centered plan to ease concern or anxiety for the person if needed.

SLIDE 7: Physical health and health care needs: After determining if the person is ready to return to the community, it is a good idea to assess their overall health and well being with an emphasis on looking for COVID-19 symptoms. Use the assessment tools and techniques that you normally do to determine the presence of COVID-19 symptoms or the presence of pain. Remember, people with ID and A may communicate pain and symptoms of disease through behaviors. It's important for the nurse to consider behavioral signs of pain and or feeling ill. Some of these signs, may be refusing to eat or participate in activities, staying in bed, rubbing their head, throat, or chest, being irritable, not being themselves. Teach caregivers what to look for and direct them to report any unusual behaviors right away. And adequate management of chronic conditions. Individuals diagnosed with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and autoimmune disease are at higher risk for complications of COVID-19.

SLIDE 8: Infection Control Measures. The third key area involves infection control measures required for the return to the community. Washing hands, wearing a mask, getting temperature taken, practicing social distancing, and practice appropriate infection control measures. Consistency with the ability to perform infection control measures is important for the return to the community. Nurses can determine if people are capable of performing these skills independently, or what level of support is required. The person's willingness and ability to follow infection control practices is the next steps in the transition plan. Nurses can assist caregivers to work with the person to increase their independence or willingness. The HCQU has a variety of tools that may be helpful: rehearsal guides, COVID-19 resources and trainings, and desensitization training to assist caregivers to understand how to work with a person to increase their exposure to something they find distasteful such as wearing a mask or are afraid to do so.

SLIDE 9 Mental health and behavioral health needs and changes in routine: Suggested questions in the areas focus on the person skills and managing requirements related to COVID-19, As well as how COVID-19 has affected them personally. Consideration is given to the person's daily routine as well. Some individuals may feel grief or loss. Individuals may be grieving the loss of family and friends due to not being able to visit. The grief can be intensified if they know somebody who actually died from the virus. People may feel isolated from their normal routines and this may generate a sense of loss. So it's important to talk with them about these feelings. Some individuals may respond to their feelings with uncharacteristic behaviors or increase intensity of behaviors. An empathetic response that looks to understand the reasons behind these behaviors uses positive practices to support the person. Nurses can assist caregivers to understand how the experiences of COVID-19 pandemic have affected the person. Some individuals may have gained new skills or state they enjoyed being at home more. People who feel this way may have difficulty returning to the community and pre COVID-19 activities. Perhaps the individual learned how to cook or paint during the stay at home orders. They want the opportunity to continue these activities at home. Nurses can also help caregivers to understand this perspective and assist them to design a meaningful support plan that includes the person's newfound skills and desires.

SLIDE 10: Conditions of supports and services. This area looks at how the person has been receiving supports and services and how they want to get them moving forward. For example, they may have been using Telehealth and would like to continue that. Nurses may be asked to assist in coordinating services related to health and wellness.

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SLIDE 11: Resources for the nurse: the ODP offers a wealth of information to guide in the transition of individuals in your care. Some of their announcements are specifically about COVID-19. They provide both information and resources within the announcement, for example, announcement 20-07-6 diagnosis associated with increased risk of severe illness or death, contains important information with people who have had COVID-19; it also lists medical conditions associated with higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 infection. There are links within this document to learn more about the following items related to social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting frequently, introducing and maintaining remote support, staying active, relaxation, and mental health concerns. The My ODP is an excellent resource when you are looking for information about the system and regulatory guidance. And don't forget that HRST has a wealth of information that can be easily extracted for just one person in your agency to identify that person's health concerns or for all the people in your agency to track health trends and to create a list of those with higher health care needs. Custom Reports can be generated using the criteria that matter most to your agency. The HRST also contains a COVID-19 resource page titled COVID-19 and People with IDD Impact, Prevention, and Action. This page offers free special bulletins, webinars, and training videos, full of helpful information to aid in assessing those who are at risk for COVID-19 and the steps to take to reduce the severity and impact of this disease. And also ASERT, the Autism Services Education and Training collaborative website has a wealth of information related to COVID-19. These are three excellent resources for nurses.

SLIDE 12: As I wrap up today, I want to remind you that you can find an overview of this webinar on aidinpa.org and components of today's topics will be included in our organization's newsletters and across our social media platforms. We also welcome you to suggest new webinar topics, ask questions, or say hi via our Contact Us button which can also be found on Aid in Pa website. Please stay safe and healthy and know we will get through this together. Have a great day and thank you for watching.