



The COVID-19 pandemic has created many hardships for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the staff who care for them. Changes in routines, activities, and communication with loved ones, layered with concern for the health and well-being of self and others may have a significant impact on our emotional, social, and psychological well-being. OPWDD's Statewide Committee on Incident Review (SCIR) recognizes that when individuals and employees experience stress and anxiety, situations that result in reportable incidents and notable occurrences are more likely to occur. It is important for all of us to attend to our mental health and the well-being of our co-workers and the people we support, to ensure positive service environments.

To support the emotional health needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), direct support professionals (DSPs), and other agency staff, the following materials are being shared as potential resources. You are encouraged to share this information throughout your agency. Encourage employees to use the resources for themselves. We also encourage that agency administration and clinicians determine the best actions to facilitate the productive use of the resources in your programs according to the specific circumstances of the individuals, staff, and their COVID-19 experience.

Please note that the resources/links identified below are provided for general informational purposes and do not reflect official policy or practice guidance or requirements by OPWDD.

OPWDD Training Resource

- An online recorded training entitled ***Supporting the Emotional Needs of Individuals with I/DD and Direct Support Professionals during the COVID-19 Pandemic*** is available on SLMS. To enroll visit <https://nyslearn.ny.gov/> you can also search *OPWDD-EmotionalHealth* on the 'Find Learning' page.

Resources for Managing Stress, Anxiety and Depression

- ***New York State COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline: 1-844-863-9314***
This helpline is available 8:00 a.m. -10 p.m., 7 days a week.
- ***NY Project Hope-Coping with COVID:*** <https://nyprojecthope.org/>
- ***Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook: A Tool to Help You Build Resilience During Difficult Times***
www.depauw.edu/files/resources/coronavirus-anxiety-workbook.pdf
- ***Managing Stress and Anxiety in the Context of COVID-19***
omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/covid-19-managing-stress-anxiety.pdf
- ***Managing healthcare worker's stress associated with COVID-19:***
www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID19ManagingStressHCW032020.pdf
- ***Stress Management Tip Sheet:*** www.newpaltz.edu/media/idmh/covid-19/IDMH_COVID19_Community_Stress_Management_TipSheetFinal.pdf
- ***Coping as the Pandemic Continues Tip Sheet:*** www.newpaltz.edu/media/idmh/covid-19/IDMH_COVID19_Continuing_Stress_TipSheet.pdf

- **COVID Toolkit from Stress Management Resources from NADSP** (National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals): <https://nadsp.org/covid-19resources>
- **COVID Fatigue** article and podcast: www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2020/12/mental-health-concerns-rise-as-covid-fatigue-deepens/
- **Your ‘Surge Capacity’ is Depleted-It’s Why You Feel Awful** article (scroll down to find): elemental.medium.com/your-surge-capacity-is-depleted-it-s-why-you-feel-awful-de
- **Self-care advice from the American Psychological Association:** www.apaservices.org/practice/ce/self-care/health-providers-covid-19
- **Note:** There are other resources available to you:
 - Through your employer’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - Local Mental Health providers
 - Mobile Applications (Apps) such as “Headspace” and “Calm”
 - Websites such as HelpGuide.org

Dealing with Grief and Loss:

- **Managing Bereavement around the Coronavirus (COVID-19):** complicatedgrief.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Managing-Bereavement-Around-COVID-19-HSPH.pdf
- **COVID Toolkit Grief Resources from NADSP** (National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals) <https://nadsp.org/covid-19resources>
 - *Grief and Loss for Direct Support Professionals:* This 24 min webinar discusses DSPs grieving the persons supported, not their own family or coworkers, and the different types of grief. The webinar contains relevant information tailored to DSP’s. It is not COVID specific.
 - *Let’s Talk with Dave: When Death Happens at Work:* This webinar is 55:23 mins. The webinar offers a more personal discussion regarding death in the workplace. The moderators discuss their experience with death in the field.

Helping Individuals with Disabilities Cope with Grief and Loss:

- **Loss Bereavement and Death:** Note, this is a British resource. Use of the term “learning” disability applies to intellectual disability: www.thh.nhs.uk/documents/_Patients/PatientLeaflets/general/Bereavement-BILD.pdf
- **Managing Grief Better-People With Intellectual Disabilities:** www.intellectualdisability.info/mental-health/articles/managing-grief-better-people-with-intellectual-disabilities
- **Loss and Grief within Intellectual Disability** (article): www.researchgate.net/publication/283010367_Loss_and_grief_within_intellectual_disability

OPWDD encourages agencies to share these resources with their staff, as well as identify and recommend additional resources they feel are useful to staff and individuals.