

Community Support Services, Inc. F.A.Q & Protocols

Current as of June 1, 2020

General

- What if I am an employee and someone I live with gets sick?
 - Contact your supervisor to report that you have a family member in your home who is ill **before** reporting to work. Depending on the symptoms of the person you live with, you may be asked to self isolate until a test is completed for your family member, or their symptoms resolve.
- What precautions is CSS taking regarding employees working second jobs with other agencies and businesses?
 - CSS has a change of shift procedure that was covered during the May13th All Staff and emailed on May 9th that addressed steps employees who work at other jobs should take to minimize cross contamination. Additionally, in an effort to stop the continuing spread of covid through our residences, CSS has developed a new policy that will go into effect July 1, the Temporary Single Health Care Employer Policy. All employees who work directly with supported individuals must work solely for CSS, and stop work as a health care worker in any other setting or company. The policy is temporary, and will be reviewed October 1.
- Does CSS have a plan if a resident is diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Yes, we have multiple plans depending on the scenario. Each case is managed individually based on the known circumstances. Most plans involve how to isolate the affected individual and the employees they have had contact with as well as overall care for someone who is ill.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- What does CSS consider essential PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)?
 - Gowns (if available), masks - surgical and/or N95 (KN95), gloves, face shield or goggles. We utilize CDC guidelines and surgical masks and face shields are provided to everyone who is working. Gloves should be worn when performing specific tasks, such as assisting someone with hygiene needs or donning/doffing PPE and be disposed of after the task. Other items, such as the N95 mask/gowns are not recommended for people that are not confirmed or suspected of being infected by COVID-19.

PPE Gloves:

- Can you wear gloves around the residences or office buildings?
 - It is not recommended to wear a single pair of gloves throughout the day. Instead, employees should be washing their hands frequently and using hand sanitizer between every activity, and wherever they may have come in contact with contaminated material. Gloves should be reserved for specific activities, such as assisting with personal hygiene or donning/doffing PPE.
- Do we have to wear gloves to feed the individuals?

- It is important to wear gloves whenever you are in contact with bodily fluids or working with someone who is symptomatic.
- How many times can you change gloves?
 - Gloves should be changed between every instance involving an employee assisting in an activity that might involve bodily fluids. Handwashing and sanitizing is recommended between every activity as well.

PPE Masks:

- Do undamaged masks have a usage period? Are the masks disposable?
 - There is a national shortage of masks, so CSS staff are asked to wear and reuse their mask until a replacement mask is provided. Currently replacement surgical masks are being provided every week. Staff should place their used mask in a labeled paper bag for use upon the start of his or her next shift. Staff should check the mask at the start and end of the shift for any damage. If damaged, please contact your supervisor immediately for replacement.
- Is putting the surgical mask back in the brown bag after use saving any potential germs?
 - It is unknown how long COVID-19 lasts on masks, but placing the mask in a paper bag reduces the risk of contaminating another person through touch or use. Surgical masks do not prevent the wearer from becoming infected, but reduce the risk of the wearer infecting others. Please make sure to follow the instructions for putting on and taking off masks, and make sure to wash hands both before and after putting on and taking off masks.
- Do we request a surgical mask only when someone has a cough or sneeze?
 - All working CSS staff have been provided a mask for use during their shift. This should be worn at all times to prevent the spread of infection of the mask wearer to others. This includes wearing a mask while driving with an individual in the van, in the home, out in the community, etc.
- Should I wear two masks?
 - Wearing two masks is not recommended and does not provide additional protection.
- Can I bring my own mask from home?
 - No, please only wear the PPE provided to you by CSS while working with the individuals we support.
- Can I wash/disinfect the surgical mask at the end of the day?
 - The CDC and FDA have stated that there is no known way to disinfect surgical masks without causing damage to the mask itself. This is largely due to the mask's material. Staff are asked to keep the masks in a labeled paper bag when not in use to allow the mask to dry out and to avoid contaminating others.
- I am allergic to the provided masks or I do not like how they feel. What do I do?
 - In order to protect others, staff are required by CSS and the state of Maryland to wear a mask. If staff cannot wear the one provided, please contact your supervisor or the delegating nurse to discuss options.

- Should individuals also wear masks?
 - Although encouraged, many of the individuals we support have difficulty wearing masks correctly and consistently. If you work with someone who can wear a mask over their nose, mouth, and chin without disturbing it, then it is fine for him or her to wear it out in the community or when exhibiting symptoms.

PPE Face Shields:

- Do we get a face shield if we go to work in the day program at individual's homes?
 - Yes, all staff will be given a face shield. All employees should have already been issued a mask. The employee should contact the supervisor immediately if he or she has not been given a mask or shield. Face shields and masks are required to be worn throughout the staff's shift while at the individual's home.
- Do we request the face shield when the individual is coughing regularly?
 - Face shields should be used by staff who are working with an individual regardless of their symptoms. If the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your supervisor and delegating nurse to ensure the person receives prompt medical care.
- Can you wash the face shield with soap and water if there is no alcohol pad?
 - Staff can wash the shield with disinfectant spray and a paper towel. If no alcohol wipes or disinfectant cleaner is available, you can use soap and water. However, using an alcohol wipe is the preferred cleaning method. Please notify your supervisor immediately if you are out of alcohol wipes and/or disinfectant so supplies can be replenished.
- Do we need to keep our face shield in the house where we are working or can we keep it with us and bring it to work every day?
 - Staff are asked to keep the provided face shield in the individual's home and disinfect it on a regular basis. If you work at multiple CSS locations, you can take the shield with you and disinfect it between uses. However, staff will have a different mask at each location.
- Do face shields have to be worn while cooking for/with the individual?
 - Staff can remove face shield while cooking due to steam, heat, and/or fog and to maintain kitchen safety.
- What about situations where the individuals would be asleep and only one staff is at the house at that moment; does staff need to wear the face shield in that case, where they aren't in close proximity to anyone else?
 - Staff who are providing AON support may take brief breaks from wearing the PPE if they are not in the same room/area as the individual. However the breaks should not be longer than 15 minutes. Any time staff provide support or supervision to the individual, masks and shields must be worn.

PPE General:

- In the event that you have a face mask, gloves, face-shield, and other PPE on: which one do you take off first, second, etc.?

- You will receive specific training on the use of PPE that is required for the level of care that's provided to the individual being supported. For example, all employees are required to wear a mask and face shields while on duty. Only employees working with individuals with suspected or positive COVID need to wear N95 or KN95 masks and gowns. Please discuss the use of PPE with the nurse and your supervisor before using. Here are the CDC guidelines for the proper order of PPE removal:
- (<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>):
 - gloves
 - face shield
 - gown
 - mask
 - wash hands
- What about booties to cover our shoes?
 - At this time, CSS is not distributing booties for shoes and they have not been required by the CDC. Staff can consider bringing a separate pair of shoes to the residence to change into prior to working which can be left in the home. If disinfectant spray is available, staff can also spray their shoes prior to starting/leaving work.

At CSS Houses/In the Community

- Are we altering our menu plans?
 - Yes. We are still following My Plate to the best of everyone's ability, but we understand that the items that might be on the menu may not be available and might need to be substituted with other items.
 - Food is also being provided by our deli, either already prepared in individual portions or in the form of easy to prepare meal kits. Thanks to the excellent work of our deli staff, we have been able to supply houses with food not available in stores, as well as help with cooking good and healthy meals.
- What is the best way for an employee to accept a delivery?
 - Have the delivery dropped off at the doorstep for a contactless delivery and maintain social distancing. If possible, remove the item from the packaging and bring it in the house, then discard the packaging. If it is not possible to remove the item from the packaging outside, bring it inside, but make sure everyone is clear of the items while they are removed from the packaging. Discard all packaging or clean it. Wash hands after for at least 1 minute before finally putting items away.
- How far can we travel away from the residence?
 - Each staff working with individuals supported by CSS is to have a daily schedule approved by the supervisor. The location of where activities will be done is to be specified on the schedule. The team should choose activities that are reasonably close to the home, but based on individual preference and likelihood of less crowds. Some parks may be less crowded, and should be chosen for walks and

hikes over those that are crowded with children or other families. If your house is located near a path, trail, or pleasant place to walk around, use that area instead of a longer drive. If your home has no nearby walking trails, find something reasonably close. Schools may have tracks open for running and walking, and some neighborhoods have sidewalks that are good walking places.

- Keep the letter authorizing you that identifies you as an essential worker, and engage in authorized activities only. Follow the schedule determined by the team and call the supervisor for any alterations deemed necessary.
- Where can we get supplies that are hard to find in stores?
 - Notify your supervisor of the items you need. We are trying to find these items through other suppliers, and will distribute them with the deli food distribution, or supervisors will bring them by and put them on your porch. Use supplies carefully, and store them carefully. Many cleaning items are hard to find, and some individuals may pour them out, or even consume them if not stored away properly.

Hand Washing/Disinfecting:

- Sometimes there is no hand sanitizer in the house. Can we wear gloves instead?
 - Hand Sanitizer is secondary to washing hands. Staff should be washing their hands regularly throughout the work day. If the staff is handling items that may be infected or assisting the individual with a personal hygiene task, then gloves are recommended. Otherwise hand washing for a full minute, often is the best protection against spreading germs.
- If you use the same paper towel you turned off the faucet with to open the door, couldn't you possibly contaminate the door handle?
 - The goal is to keep your hands from becoming contaminated. By using the paper towel to open the door handle, your hands stay clean. Disinfectant should be used to clean all door handles and other surfaces every shift.

Social Distancing

- Because of the social distance policy, if an individual is engaging in SIB, PD, etc., should the staff use intervention techniques such as Mandt?
 - Staff are required to follow the behavior support plan for the individuals they support at all times. Using Mandt techniques is allowed if the behavior exhibited deems physical intervention necessary, it's use is included in the BSP and agreed to by the team.
- Are we still allowed to take individuals out for grocery shopping?
 - Please discuss specific grocery plans with your supervisor. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. However, it may be appropriate for an individual to go to the grocery store, if they can tolerate wearing a mask, and can follow social distancing guidelines.
- Is it okay to take a walk outside in the community?
 - Yes, walks outside are encouraged in the neighborhood, local parks, trails, or tracks if open at schools. Provide the support the individual requires including

backpacks, implement strategies in the person's behavior support plan, and maintain at least six feet of distance from other community members who are out also walking. Do not gather in groups with other houses, but walking with your own house, exercising with running games, or kicking a soccer ball is a good way to interact while supporting individuals.

- Is the 6 feet distance applied to the staff and individuals in the group home?
 - Although maintaining distance from others is encouraged in the residencies, it is not always possible to assist someone from 6 feet away, especially in situations where the individual's health and safety needs may require close proximity for specific situations. We are encouraging staff to promote as much independence as possible and to use your PPE when assistance is needed at close range. Please discuss how to balance social distancing while implementing services such as a behavior support plan, nursing care plan, and PCP with your supervisor, nursing and psychology staff as appropriate.

Symptom Checking

- How many thermometers are supposed to be kept at the house? Can we have temporal thermometers in the houses for staff to keep track of incoming staff as they arrive for work?
 - There is a national shortage for thermometers, but CSS has been able to provide digital thermometers for each individual's use. We are looking to provide temporal thermometers in the near future. Each house should have one thermometer for each individual. If your house does not, please notify your supervisor. Please remember to clean with alcohol wipe before and after each use.
- Some individuals might have serious allergies and the symptoms are similar to COVID-19. How should the staff handle this?
 - Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should report to the nurse immediately for evaluation and coordination with the PCP for testing. Staff will then receive instruction on how to protect themselves and the individual until he or she is cleared.

Pulse Oximeter:

- Is there a specific finger to use with the Pulse Oximeter?
 - Any finger can be used with the Pulse Oximeter.
- Is there a standard number for the Pulse Oximeter?
 - All individuals should have a pulse in the high 90s. If the Pulse Ox is below 94, here are some things to try:
 - Make sure the individual is sitting up and being still.
 - Immediately retake the Pulse Oximeter.
 - If the number is consistently between 91 and 94, document, continue to monitor the reading and report to the nurse within 24 hours.
 - If the number is 90 or below, contact the nurse immediately.
- Do we need to take the Pulse Ox and blood pressure (BP) everyday?

- The nurse will notify CSS employees when the individual needs to have his/her pulse oximeter and blood pressure taken. Only residential homes with individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have been exposed, are recording the pulse oximeter and blood pressure results unless they were previously being monitored for another health reason.

Employee Benefits

- Does the rate of pay change when working with an individual who has been deemed positive for COVID-19?
 - Yes. CSS has developed a special position to support individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. Please reach out to HR for Details.
- Do furloughed employees get bonuses?
 - In order to qualify for the Quarterly Review Bonus, employees must follow these guidelines:
 - PT CSAs must work 15 hours per week
 - FT 40 employees cannot use more than 120 hours of leave
 - FT 30 employees cannot use more than 120 hours of leave
- Do we have to pay the emergency leave money back? How long is it available?
 - Any money cashed out will not be required to be paid back. Emergency leave applied to staff accounts will be accessible until June 2021.
- Are Subs included in Emergency pay?
 - Substitutes and Administrative employees were not provided emergency leave.
- Can employees who have not worked for more than a year take an emergency leave for a month?
 - All permanent full-time and part-time direct support professionals are given emergency leave. It is recommended that emergency leave be used appropriately with regards to the current pandemic.

Meetings

- Do you have to join the town hall meetings when you are off shift?
 - Staff do not need to watch the Town Hall Meetings live. These meetings, as well as the All Staff meetings and Dr. Greenberg videos are all uploaded into Absorb throughout the week. They are located on the homepage of Absorb beneath the announcements.

Additional information, resources, and guidance regarding COVID-19 can be found:

- Montgomery County has a dedicated COVID-19 website which is <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html> This website provides information, guidance and directives.

- The Montgomery County health department's website is <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs/>
- The DDA website provides regular updates. Please find all guidance and more at <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx> Click on COVID-19 information.
- The CDC website also provides guidance and ongoing updates as this pandemic evolves. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>