



Support Co-ordination in a Pandemic – a practical checklist



Contact EVERY client and help them assess their critical needs, supports and ability to manage if/when it all goes pear shaped.

Here are the questions (reworded from our internal slightly to take out my swearing and add a few things I missed) our team are talking to our clients about.

1. Do they know what this is all about – have families/carers explained the current situation? Here's an easy English resource: <https://www.thegrowingspace.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Easy-English-Coronavirus-TheGrowingSpace-2020.pdf> and a social story: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>
2. Do they understand the risks for them (ie: are they at greater risk – smoker, lung concerns, diabetes, immunosuppressed for example – not an exhaustive list) – point them to official information sources <https://www.health.gov.au/> and the COVID hotline: 1800 020 080
3. Are they considering self-isolating and if so, what preparation has been done?
4. Do they have a week or two of essential supplies – food, hygiene, cleaning
5. Do they have a month of prescription medication and over-the-counter medication (don't forget laxatives!)
6. Do they have enough consumables – continence aids, wipes, catheters, feeling tube gear to last a month or so?
7. What are their CRITICAL (could die without) support needs, and do the providers of these supports have a plan in place to support them?
8. If they have significant critical support needs, is there a way a worker could move in a self-isolate with them?
9. Can their family/informal supports cover if support workers are no longer available – what is the back-up plan if they're not available?
10. What are their plans for support if/when day options/ADE/school closes, or if someone in their group home gets sick?
11. Have they consider having support workers doing as much work as possible outside with participants, keeping well apart if possible, and have they considered all the ways a support worker can help remotely to reduce risk (obviously this won't be possible for everyone!)
12. Do they have a cleaner and do they want to keep them on – consider only allowing the cleaner to use the participant's cloths, mop, duster and vacuum to reduce the chances of spread.

13. Handwashing – do they understand the protocol, and are they confident to demand this of workers – if self employing or contracting, do they know about the free training on offer - <https://covid-19training.com.au/login.php> and <https://training.disabilityservicesconsulting.com.au/products/infectionfree> and, could they put up a poster <https://www.thegrowingspace.com.au/a-sign-for-your-door-or-workplace-covid-19/>, and set up a handwashing station outside to use before anyone even enters the house? (no-one should share the handtowels which should be washed daily in 60deg water, or they could use paper towels potentially)
14. NDIS – do they know about the changes – ability to rollover plans etc? Make sure you are well across the daily updates at <https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-and-other-government-services/ndis-and-disaster-response#faq>
15. Check in on their mental health – this is a very stressful time for many – ask how often they'd like you to check in, and potentially refer/suggest support from mental health professionals
16. Follow up with an email for those for whom it might be useful – outline the stuff they're already doing to prepare, the stuff you talked about that they could action, and the things you're going to do for them, as well as when you will contact them next (this email could likely work as your casenote).

Please don't assume you know the answers to above without that direct conversation (where possible). I have been surprised by the gaps, and our support and ideas have been appreciated.

At The Growing Space, we have worked to assign each participant a risk level (A-D) to help us know when things get really bad, who is most at risk, based on the answers to these questions – it also means that if one of our team can't work, someone else should be able to quickly and easily pick up and follow up with those who need it the most.

And don't forget – what is **your** plan for maintaining your mental health, and what is **your** back-up plan if you can't look after your clients yourself?

Support Coordinators are not medical or legal professionals, so don't cross those boundaries – be aware of your limitations and refer out as needed.

All the best during these tough times!



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