



TIPS FOR HELPING ADULTS IN AN INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS (ILS) PROGRAM

Written by Irene Raciuz, Manager of Residential Services for Villa's West Region, for her ILS staff, but these tips are great for any family member or friend helping our adults in the ILS program.

This is a stressful time for all of us, but more so for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Now that social distancing and staying home is not just for a week, but could be long term, it is important that everyone has a schedule they can maintain.

As I spoke with the people we serve, the one thing that every one of them told me was that they were bored. This could be an issue if they do not have things to do, because it might lead to them leaving their home, meeting up with friends, or going to places that they should not go to. Also being without a schedule could also affect their finances by leading them to purchase things online that they would not normally entertain doing.

As everyone has experienced, everything is fluid, with daily changes related to supporting people (with and without disabilities) to deal with COVID-19.

Person-Centered practices (one person at a time) to develop for each we support:

- Links to YouTube videos on social distancing to help explain COVID-19 information and changes in routines people are experiencing in their lives, and letting them know that they are not the only ones impacted.
- Link to free live-streaming exercises classes.
- Sample of a schedule
- Blank schedules

Talk to each person you work with on what their day looks like and what is important to them.

- Start with the time they get up and include: chores, meals, calls to friends, favorite TV shows, video games, exercise, feeding/walking their pets, and when they meet with you by telecommunication.
- Once you have all the information, use one of the blank schedules to make a daily schedule for them that they can have with them at home to use every day.
- Ensure the people you serve who are still employed have coaches and safety procedures based on where they work.

Please remember that for a lot of these individuals you are their link to being active, learning new skills, and being someone they can count on to communicate with them at least once a week.

Though we may not be able to meet face to face, you can still communicate with the people we serve through phone calls, text, **or even better – use Facetime!** It is important at this time for everyone to not only be safe, but to feel safe.

Most of all, be safe and make sure everyone washes their hands and make sure to practice the newest buzz word – **SOCIAL DISTANCING!**