

Supporting Engagement at Home

The stay-at-home order may have significantly impacted daily routines for your loved one. They may have had staff changes and daily activities (work, volunteering, day program, etc.) may have stopped altogether. It will take time for programs to resume as they used to. Your family maybe may be wanting to chat with their support staff and friends and have to attend appointments via telehealth. How you can help your loved one engage some of their activities, even though they are staying at home while doing them? The following guide shares some tips to engaging with the community from home.

Talk to your loved one about the changes in their social and daily activities:

- Ask them about people, routines, and activities they used to see and do.
- Get a sense of which things they may miss doing.
- Ask if there are any people they would like to talk to over FaceTime, Zoom, etc.

Provide leadership opportunities at home the household to encourage engagement:

- Leading a home task, project, or activity.
- Examples: setting up game for a game night, pet care, planning meals (where to order, what to eat), choosing the movie, etc.

Meeting New Support Staff over Phone or Video

Telehealth, or using phone and video calls to receive medical and other services, is helping to provide supports to individuals and families at home. It may be challenging to meet a new support provider over video conference, but there are a couple things you can do to make the first meeting go as smoothly as possible:



- Write an introductory email/text about your loved one including their interests and favorite activities.
- It's a good idea to ask for your family member's input when writing the email.
- Choose a time together for the first appointment with the new provider.

Engagement Tips

Telehealth Appointments

- Stay in contact with support staff, support coordinators, and others through the phone or video calls (FaceTime, Zoom, Google Hangout, Skype, etc.)
- If the staff is new, send an introductory note via text or email if possible
- Be sure the phone, tablet, or computer is well charged ahead of the call
- Plan out topics/concerns to discuss together ahead of the call

Connecting with Friends/Staff

- Ask staff and friends for contact information and store it in a safe place
-  Activity ideas- making/decorating a box to place papers with numbers/emails; DIY phonebook with pictures
- Think of activities they can do with their friends and support staff over FaceTime/video
-  Activity ideas- shooting hoops, listening and singing along to music, playing Pictionary, reading/sharing stories, etc.

Connecting with the Community

- Many workplaces, organizations, and day programs may stay closed for a while and reopen in phases.
- Using social media and video calls may be a good way to connect with social groups from different activities in the community.
- Depending on your county's status and the guidance from the Governor, you can safely visit some community locations (like community parks) while still maintaining social distance.