

LEXINGTON NEWS



A NEWSLETTER FOR FAMILIES & ADVOCATES

JULY 24, 2020

MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Families and Advocates of the People We Support,

I hope each of you is doing well, as are your families.

Earlier this week we held Town Hall Zoom meetings for families and advocates. We were pleased that over 75 families from both Lexington and Schoharie were able to join us to discuss both Schoharie Arc and Lexington's experience with COVID-19 to date, and new guidelines from both OPWDD and our agencies regarding the opening of day hab programs, employment supports, transportation, visits of people supported to their family homes, community outings and more.

We recorded these meetings again and if you were not able to join us, we hope you can view one of the recordings. Information for this is included in the Zoom Meeting Information section of this newsletter.

As you know, guidance from OPWDD for re-opening programs has come without our prior knowledge as to what the guidance contains and as to when we will receive it. Although we have been planning for these program re-openings, we must take a careful, mindful look at these plans and make sure we meet the OPWDD guidelines when they are made available to us. Things are changing day by day, and will continue to change as we get back to as normal a life for your loved ones as this pandemic allows. Thank you again for your patience as we navigate these new waters while keeping at the forefront of our minds, always, the safety, health and happiness of your loved ones.

There is a lot of new information for re-opening that was presented at the Zoom meetings some of which we have outlined in this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your program manager or residence manager if you have any specific questions as they relate to your family members.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we plan to re-open programs and activities for your loved ones, while keeping a watchful eye on how to continue to keep everyone safe and healthy.

As we mentioned in the Zoom meetings, we welcome and value your input and feedback on our re-opening plans. I can be contacted with any questions or input at shaloni@thearclexington.org or (518) 775-5383.

Please take care of yourselves and your families and thank you for your trust in us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shaloni'.

Shaloni Winston
Executive Director

For those receiving this newsletter in PAPER copy, you can also find it online with LIVE hyperlinks at <https://thearclexington.org/lexington-news>

MESSAGE FROM MEDICAL DIRECTOR, DR. KEVIN P. COPE

Dear Families and Advocates of the People We Support,

My name is Dr. Kevin Cope and for those who don't already know me, I am the Medical Director for Lexington. I also have a Family Practice in the Broadalbin-Perth area and am affiliated with St. Mary's Hospital at Amsterdam.

There has been a lot of information as of late coming from both OPWDD and Lexington about efforts to re-open programs and services for your loved ones. Your Zoom calls this week with Lexington leadership touched on a lot of new guidance for day hab reopening, community visits, and new guidelines for visits by your loved ones to your homes.

We want to remind everyone of the importance of keeping in place preventative measures that have become so vital to our agency to keep COVID-19 away from your loved ones and our employees. They are all things that you have probably heard before, but bear reminding as you bring your loved ones home – the use of face coverings, social distancing measures and hand washing and sanitizing. Although these things have become a way of life for us in the medical field as well as for Lexington, we can't stress enough the importance of keeping these at top-of-mind when you are visiting with your loved ones in your homes.

One of the new measures that we put in place for these visits are the attestation forms that we request from you when you return your loved ones to Lexington (you will read about these later in this newsletter). It is important to note in these forms everyone with whom your loved one comes in contact besides your family unit, so that if anyone becomes ill, we can be sure to use contact tracing to be sure to be able to contact people if we need to. Because our agency supports so many with complex medical needs and who are deemed high-risk, it is so important that we be aware of who the people we support come in contact with. We appreciate your understanding and attention to this detail as we navigate our new normal, for now. In addition, our new family visit guidance limits home visits to one time every two weeks and if your loved one is with you for 48 hours or more, we require coronavirus testing to make sure everyone in your home and ours are safe and healthy.

I am confident that what we are doing are the best practices with the guidance we have available for our re-opening efforts. Thank you for partnering with us to help keep your loved ones safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Kevin P. Cope, MD

ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Follow this link to a recording of the Town Hall Zoom Meeting for Families and Advocates that took place on **Tuesday, July 21 at 1:30pm**. In it, there is a discussion and questions about the new guidance from OPWDD regarding home visits, community outings, day hab reopening and employment supports: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/68Erlrj7rGg3H9PA5ASDVvEsW9S1LPms0SdPqKBexR29BSYBNlqubrESYrEJnZ2NsBxmIppq7SqSNS3AZ>

There are two new Town Hall Zoom meetings scheduled for Families and Advocates that will be a forum for questions and answers with Lexington leadership and will discuss any new guidance from OPWDD that may have been received for reopening, and updates on reopenings that have already taken place. You can register yourself for these meetings, or you can contact Terry Williams to register at williat@thearclexington.org or call (518) 775-5382.

Aug 17, 2020 06:00 PM Eastern Time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvdOmrpz4vE9zqss6lPqZg59f4R2b1ikyP>

Aug 18, 2020 01:30 PM Eastern Time

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvf-GgpjlvEtU3oxhjZh6bJr_kArwgmPmm

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

#RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



Clockwise, from top left:

Harry Bushnell enjoys his return to in-person physical and occupational therapy. With the help of the Community Health Outreach Project grant funds, Lexington was able to invest in a new piece of exercise equipment, NuStep, for our Gloversville Day Hab clinic site. Harry was the first person to try it out. This cross-trainer style bike will help him improve his strength and endurance, which in turn will help improve his ability to transfer and walk. There are 17 other individuals who access this clinic who will benefit from the NuStep to develop much-needed strength and independence that can help manage a variety of conditions and mobility needs.

Holly Ten Eyck enjoys a swing at Ashley's Park in Gloversville. Ashley's park is owned by Lora Johnston, mom of Ashley, who is supported by Lexington. The generously share their park with their friends from the agency.

Susan, who lives at Feura Bush in Albany, celebrated her birthday with her housemates with a bubble dance party!

Lacey is excited to get an Edible arrangement from her Mom!

Zach recently got to spend his birthday at home with his family—he had a celebratory cupcake and gave us a happy thumbs up!

Friends from the Grand Street residence take a summer hike at the Willie Wildlife Marsh trail in the town of Caroga Lake.

VISITS TO FAMILY HOMES

New guidelines and corresponding “Attestation” have been developed and put in place by Lexington, based on OPWDD guidelines, in an effort to partner with families so that loved ones can again enjoy visits at the family home. The specifics within each are designed to help ensure that everyone directly and indirectly involved in these visits remains safe and healthy in light of the unique challenges associated with COVID-19. Should family members or individuals we support have any questions about this information they can contact a member of the Management Team for assistance.

The Residence Manager will go over all expectations in detail. Here are some of the highlights for you to consider:

- All visits have to be pre-scheduled with the Residence Manager, or Assistant Director in his/her absence.
- Families will need to provide their own transportation for the visit.
- Visits for less than 48 hours will require your family member to have standard screening procedures upon return to Lexington.
- Visits that exceed 48 hours will require self-quarantine and COVID testing upon return. Testing will occur shortly after return and then again in 7 days.
- We would require that there be no more than one (1) off-site visit every 14 days.
- We are requiring families fill out a “COVID-19 Family Home Visit Attestation” (at right) that goes over preventative measures. It also asks families to document travel, if any, taken outside the family home and names of people with whom your family member came in close contact (other than those who live in your residence). The Residence Manager will talk about how your visit went and collect this upon your loved one’s return to Lexington.
- Screening procedures, including temperature checks, will take place upon return.

COVID-19 Family Home Visit Attestation

Dates of Visit: _____ To: _____ Visit Start Time: _____

For everyone's safety we are requesting the following:

1. Please use masks during times when 6 ft. social distancing cannot be maintained while in public places.
2. Maintain social distancing whenever possible.
3. Remember the importance of good handwashing/hand sanitizing.
4. Please limit exposure to different people and places during the visit.
5. Members from the family household must meet the following conditions: no household members currently under quarantine/isolation due to COVID-19; no presence of COVID-19 symptoms within the last 14 days; no close or intimate exposure with someone suspected to have had or had COVID-19 within the last 14 days; no out of country travel or travel to 1 of the states listed on NY's Travel Advisory within the last 14 days.

For tracking purposes, please document the names and addresses of any and all places your family member spent time during their visit.

Address where visit occurred:	People person had close contact with:

I understand all the safety procedures listed above and confirm to the best of my knowledge that all members of the family household meet the conditions noted above.
 Family Member's Signature: _____ Time Visit Started: _____

HOW TO WEAR A MASK

Keep a distance of at least 6 feet - wear a mask

To the best of my knowledge the above expectations were followed and no exposure or COVID-19 symptom concerns arise during the duration of this visit:
 Family Member's Signature: _____ Time Visit Ended: _____

Were there any concerns or challenges that occurred during the visit: _____

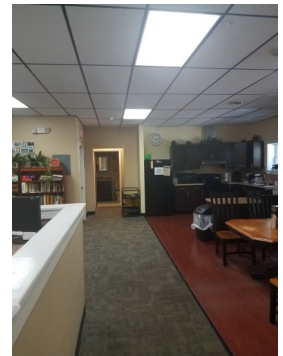
Staff Comments: _____

Residence Manager, Date: _____

FAMILY VISITATION GUIDELINES

In order to make family visits more comfortable we are offering space within our day programs so that families can use these locations to visit their loved one. This will allow for bathroom use and a controlled environment to avoid weather conditions such as high temperatures or rain. Many of these programs have comforts such as kitchens, bathrooms, couches, games and TVs available. We can also offer options for pavilion use in some locations. In order to schedule one of these locations for your next family visit please mention your desire to have a space like this available when you contact your Residence Manager to arrange the visit. The Residence Manager make these arrangements and will inform you of the details of the visit as they complete the planning process. We will still welcome visits at our homes, in outside areas, or window visits.

We ask that you follow all the precautionary guidelines during these visits. These include wearing face coverings or masks during the visit, maintaining social distance of at least 6 feet, and sanitization of hands by visitors and people we support. We understand that it is customary for families to greet each other with a hug or kiss. We ask that you keep this brief and most importantly, please keep your mask on during this. Families have asked if they could bring a snack to share with their loved one. As you know, meals can be challenging for many of the people we support. It might require that your family member may require close support and supervision to be able to eat or drink anything. If your family member is able to stay seated 6 feet away from you and is able to eat or drink independently, you may bring a light snack or drink to share. As always, visits must be preplanned and arranged with the Residence Manager.



Pictured are spaces at Lexington day hab facilities that are available for family visits.

SUMMARY OF RE-OPENING OF DAY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Day Services will resume in phases starting Monday July 27, 2020. The rollout will occur in small steps to ensure that the health and safety precautions that include COVID-19 temperature checks and screening, extensive cleaning and disinfection procedures, Social distancing in Program areas (including face covering practices) will be implemented. Some pictures are included below that show some of the changes to our program locations to accomplish these safety measures.

Phase 1

For Lexington, we will return 30 people who live with family to our Gloversville and Johnstown Day Habs and 43 Harrison Street locations. These groups will be small in size to start and will not go above 15 participants. We will use three main sites for returning community individuals to ensure that we keep individuals in family-like groups and not co-mingle. These three main sites may not be the pre-COVID day site that a person may have attended; however we are working to have their familiar staff members at these locations. There will be no agency transportation at this time.

We will be sure that staff will receive comprehensive training on disinfection procedures and people attending program will receive education on COVID 19 protocols. This will be conducted on the first day of arrival including a video, "What to Expect When You Return to Day Program," that will be part of their orientation. Individuals may not be returning back to their original program sites and the groupings will most likely be different than they were pre COVID. An Agency Director or Assistant Director will be contacting you in the coming weeks to let you know when your loved one will be able to return to one of our dedicated locations.

The Day Hab day is a 4.5 hour day, and as such, Family Support Services will begin to offer services to the individuals in Phase 1 to "wrap around" day habilitation program hours to offer people the opportunity for a longer day beyond the 4.5 hours of day hab, for any individual who is approved for Respite, Community Habilitation and Supplemental Day Hab.

Phase 2

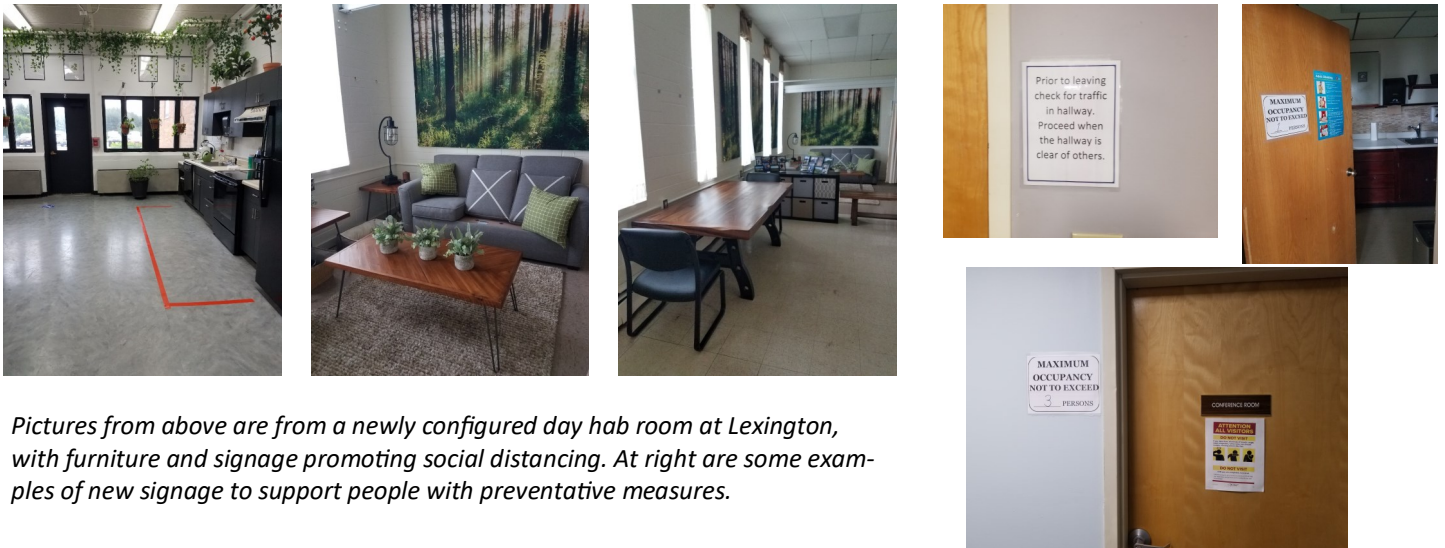
Phase 2 will allow us to serve an additional 35 people that live at home, and we will include our Oppenheim Day Habilitation location to support people in the western region of the county. The date for Phase 2 has not yet been determined but is anticipated to occur several weeks after Phase 1 is implemented.

Family Support Services will be offered as well to this group in the same manner as in the first phase. Those who are eligible for Respite, Community Habilitation and Supplemental Day Hab will work with the Family Support Coordinator to establish an individualized schedule.

The individuals living in our Residential Program will continue to receive their day program services at their home until further notice.

Employment/Pre-vocational Services

For employment services at Lexington we will begin to assess job positions for those that live in Lexington homes who are employed by Lexington to see how we can start to return them safely to work. We will keep people updated as we move through this process.



Pictures from above are from a newly configured day hab room at Lexington, with furniture and signage promoting social distancing. At right are some examples of new signage to support people with preventative measures.

HOW ARE CLINICAL AND MEDICAL SUPPORTS BEING PROVIDED AT THIS TIME?

CLINICAL SUPPORTS

Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy

In April, Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) clinicians were relocated to residences to support people with higher clinical needs with in-person treatments, and were able to provide same supports to housemates. In May, clinicians added telehealth services for people not getting hands-on treatments and continued to meet equipment and other needs. In June, OT and PT therapies were resumed in clinic locations, starting with people who would benefit the most from direct therapy. Each week clinicians are delivering additional therapy services in clinic sites, always keeping the safety of everyone in mind by seeing people from one residence together as a family unit and continuing vigilance with infection control practices and use of personal protective equipment. In-clinic therapy is now being offered for people in the community based on level of need, with appropriate screening protocols. By August the plan is to be delivering 50% of OT and PT services in clinic sites.

Counselors/Psychiatrists/Psychology

Counselors and psychiatrists have provided services using telehealth since March and have each week been adding additional individual counseling sessions, support groups, and if needed, daily phone calls to people who need the support. As day programs open, the plan is to offer in-clinic counseling and psychiatry services while continuing telehealth support. Psychology department staff were assigned to homes based on needs for emotional support and along with counselors, have offered regular support groups for individuals based on their interests and social needs. They continue to offer ongoing support to anyone with more intensive emotional needs through visits, calls and 24/7 support.

Speech Therapy

Speech therapy needs have been primarily met via telehealth and consultation with individuals in homes and their staff during this time. In the next month, in-person speech services will resume.

MEDICAL SUPPORTS

Lexington nurses, in consultation with the agency's medical director, have planned to safely resume routine medical appointments for people with low to moderate health risks based on their ages and medical conditions. Urgent and emergent medical appointments have continued for all individuals if there is discomfort, risk for illness, or injury. Medical appointments for those at higher medical risk are assessed by nursing staff with the medical director to decide how best to meet needs. Staff who accompany people on appointments wear a mask at all times, and people supported are encouraged to wear a mask if tolerated. Rigorous hand washing and use of sanitizer is always practiced. Nursing resumed regular visits in May and those continue so that all needs for individuals are met. RNs continue to be available on call 24/7.

If you have any questions or need further information about these supports, please contact your Residence or Program Manager.

STILL LOOKING FOR FAMILY/ADVOCATE EMAIL ADDRESSES

In order for us to provide you with information in a timely manner, we are asking for you to provide an email address for correspondence if you have not already done so.

Please send this information to Terry Williams via email at williat@thearclexington.org.

Thank you!

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

New OPWDD guidelines are now allowing for participation in community settings, while remaining safe given the risks associated with COVID-19. Now that Lexington in Fulton County is in its Phase IV Reopening, low-risk community activities are permitted, with the expectation that preventative measures such as mask use, social distancing, hand washing/sanitizing and the avoidance of crowded spaces will still be maintained. Group outings are currently limited to a maximum of 8 people, inclusive of employees, and groups must be from the same home or day program group. Outings are limited to one per day per person. Currently allowable community activities include rides, walks and hikes, picnics, drive-in movies, drive thru food service, picnics, outdoor farmer's markets, barbershops and hair salons (with knowledge of expectations prior to appointments), and outdoor church services. Indoor church services can be accessed only if the person supported wears a mask throughout the service. Questions should be referred to the Residence or Day program managers.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDY DETAILS IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Findings from a study that was published in the Disability and Health Journal in late May indicate that individuals in the I/DD population are significantly more likely than others to die if they contract COVID-19. The research states that the fatality rate was 4.5% for people with I/DD compared to 2.7% who do not have I/DD. The study looked at electronic medical records for 30,282 people with the virus, including 474 with DD such as cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. The study's results show that people with I/DD had a higher presence of comorbidities associated with poorer COVID-19 outcomes. The study can be found here: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S193665742030100X>

This study underscores the reasons why we are being so vigilant with our guidelines for home visits. Our population is obviously susceptible to the ravages of this virus, and the safety and health of your loved ones are our number one priorities.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS! Become a member of Lexington today!

Membership in the Arc Lexington began when the agency began—when a small group of parents in Fulton County came together in 1953 to give their children with developmental disabilities the opportunity to live productive, happy lives in their own community. Today, anyone and everyone (18 or older) can become a member of Lexington for as little as \$5. Membership in the Arc Lexington provides myriad support to the agency, the people we support and our employees:

Members provide clout. A larger membership means a louder voice to be heard by local and state legislators and national policymakers.

Members help provide a better informed public. Awareness is an outgrowth of membership, and awareness is the first step to creating society-wide acceptance of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Members help provide opportunity for more of the people we support with I/DD and their families to have access to programs and services, a say in advocacy efforts, and awareness of The Arc New York and the national Arc presence.

As more volunteers are attracted to our work, our leadership base for the future can develop and grow.

We need dollars to fulfill our commitments to those we support. Although membership is primarily a friend-raiser and not a fundraiser, membership dues will help generate funds to support unfunded or under-funded programs and services.

Become a member, or renew your membership today!

Visit thearclexington.org/become-a-member for more information or to join our membership. You can also contact us at (518) 661-9932 or email hartw@thearclexington.org.



SUPPORT. EDUCATION. ADVOCACY.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

RESOURCES

- The Arc Lexington website: <https://thearclexington.org/>
- Lexington's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LexingtonArc/>
- OPWDD website: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/>
- Residential Services—(518) 736-4200—Fulton
- Albany office—(518) 218-7315
- General email: info@thearclexington.org
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