



UPDATES FOR LEXINGTON LEADERS

July 7, 2021



NEW COVID-19 GUIDANCE FROM OPWDD and FROM LEXINGTON

Last Friday, right before the holiday weekend, OPWDD released new COVID-19 guidance. We have been reviewing it, and we have listed below the guidance that we have been able to process from OPWDD and apply to people we support and staff members at Lexington. Please note that additional guidance will follow in the coming days. We need time to mindfully and thoughtfully review, process, and apply revised guidance to our agency before we release the information to you and then to the agency-at-large. Thank you for your patience and your commitment to keeping everyone at Lexington safe and healthy.

NEW PPE GUIDANCE

We are pleased to present this new guidance, effective immediately. We will send out communication regarding PPE usage to all staff on Thursday. You may implement the changes immediately if you are able to communicate with your staff before Thursday.

PPE Guidelines for People We Support in non-Covid Positive Environments

Fully Vaccinated (two weeks post final vaccination):

- A face mask is **no longer necessary or needs to be encouraged** in any setting, except during Transportation, unless the person chooses to wear one.
- The only time a face mask or covering should be encouraged (to the extent they can medically tolerate one), is **during transportation**.

Unvaccinated:

- Staff should **continue to encourage the use of a face mask or covering** (to the extent they can medically tolerate one), at all times unless the person is in their bedroom and alone.
- Social distancing should be encouraged to the extent possible.

PPE Guidelines for Staff in non-Covid Positive Environments

Fully Vaccinated (two weeks post final vaccination):

- The **use of a face mask or covering is no longer required except during transportation of people we support**.
- Staff must wear a surgical mask **during transportation of people we support**, regardless of vaccination status.

Unvaccinated Staff:

- The **use of a surgical face mask is required for all unvaccinated staff and visitors at any location where the people we support are present or receiving services**, including: IRA residences (Supervised & Supportive), Day Programs (areas of buildings used to provide supports and services), Article 16 Clinic, the Nigra Arts Center, transportation, and during services including Community Hab, Respite, after-school programs, medical appointments, and recreation.
- The use of a face mask or covering during such times by unvaccinated staff is an OPWDD expectation. Lexington is requiring that the face covering be a Lexington issued surgical mask only.
- Staff must wear a surgical mask **during transportation of people we support**, regardless of vaccination status.
- While not required, **unvaccinated staff are encouraged to wear a surgical mask at all other Lexington locations and offices** as well.
- Unvaccinated staff should continue to socially distance to the extent possible, any time you are not wearing a surgical face mask (ie – eating, inside a vehicle with others, or other situations where space is tight).

***Note:** When outdoors in any setting, people we support and staff do not need to wear a face mask or covering - regardless of vaccination status

**** For known or suspected COVID positive environments, guidance for the use of PPE and other infection control measures will be provided by Lexington's Medical Department and the COVID Response Team.**

ADDITIONAL COVID GUIDELINES UPDATES

COVID Community Inclusion Guidelines

- There are no longer any restrictions on community outings in terms of destinations, length of use, capacity, etc.
- For unvaccinated people we support, social distancing should be encouraged to the extent possible during food and beverages.

Family Visitations:

Off-site visitations: There are no Covid related limitations on frequency or length of such visits. However, staff coverage for off-site visits and transportation may not always be feasible due to staff unavailability. Off-site visits that require staff coverage need to be assessed carefully keeping in mind the staffing needs of the home. Please discuss any such situations with your Director before making commitments to families.

On-site visitations:

- Encourage families to schedule visitations ahead of time, to ensure proper coordination with activities and staffing.
- Fully vaccinated family members and visitors can use common areas or the person's private room for a visitation.
- Unvaccinated family members and visitors will be asked to use the person's private room, and to socially distance when inside the home or building.
- Managers will need to ask for proof of vaccination in a discrete manner and plan the visits accordingly.

Transportation:

- Transportation will resume at full capacity without restrictions.
- Staff will be required to wear a surgical mask, and the people we support should be encouraged to wear a face mask or covering to the extent possible.
- People we support who are not fully vaccinated will be encouraged to socially distance themselves to the extent possible.
- At least 2 windows must be open a minimum of 3 inches at all times to allow for adequate ventilation.

Day Hab Services:

- While OPWDD has given authorization to open day hubs, they have also given us greater flexibility in how the service can be provided for a period of 6 months to transition safely.
- Day Hab services at Lexington will continue to be offered to people we support through a combination of site-based and/or at their Supervised IRA residence over the next six (6) months.
- Between now and 12/25/2021, Lexington will continue to work with the people we support, staff, and their families to determine when they will return to a site-based day hab program.
- Current pilots will continue to be used to determine the safest and most meaningful methods to provide day hab supports for each person.

Symptom Screening

There are no current changes to our screening protocols or guidelines.

TENT MEETINGS IN SCHOHARIE NEXT WEEK

Please encourage and facilitate the attendance of your staff

We are getting ready for our outdoor meetings near the TPI/Annex Buildings in Schoharie. These meetings will feature staff recognition celebrations, Nurturing Environment meetings, as well as management meetings. We are looking forward to seeing our Schoharie family members in-person next week! For many Schoharie staff, this will be their first opportunity to experience our Nurturing Environment meetings which are so important to helping understand Lexington culture - please

encourage them to attend. For all meetings, there will be fun, surprises and more! Please RSVP for these meetings to Rene Craig at CraigR@thearclexington.org or call (518) 773-7931.

- Tuesday, July 13 - 1:00Pm - Nurturing Environment Meeting
- Tuesday, July 13 - 3:00PM - Nurturing Environment Meeting
- Wednesday, July 14 - 10:30AM - Celebrating Abilities
- Wednesday, July 14 - 1:00PM - Management Meeting
- Thursday, July 15 - 9:30AM - Nurturing Environment Meeting
- Thursday, July 15 - 11:30AM - Nurturing Environment Meeting
- Thursday, July 15 - 2:00PM - Nurturing Environment Meeting

The tent is also available in Schoharie this week and next for any departments/programs or homes that wish to have an in-person meeting or staff appreciation event. Please contact [Tammy Ruise](#) to sign up.

Dear Lexington Leaders,

Thank you for being patient as we go through all the new COVID-19 guidance that we recently received from OPWDD. Our priority continues to be keeping people we support, and staff, safe and healthy. Thus we have to be careful about looking at new guidance, what we have in place, and safe, gradual steps to get back to the new "normal."

Thank you to all of you during this challenging time. We appreciate you encouraging your staff to participate in our staff recognition programs this summer...and to you for also working and helping during this staffing crisis.

For all of those who we got to see at the tent meetings at the Arts Center, thank you for attending, bringing and encouraging staff and people we support. We were so uplifted to be able to celebrate milestones for our Lexington family at these meetings, and look forward to doing so in Schoharie next week. Thank you for your input, your insights and more. But mostly, we are grateful for the amazing work you do every day...supporting people and supporting your staff.

Shaloni & Dan

This newsletter will be archived at the following link:
<https://thearclexington.org/lex-leaders-covid-updates>
