



DD Community Forum Recording

You can watch the March 22 Community Forum on YouTube at https://youtu.be/D_pPKVMh298 or on the Advocates in Action website at <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/Webinars.php>. This version offers closed captioning.

If you have a question that isn't answered in the forum, please contact DDD at: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

National Fair Housing Month 2021

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) kicked off Fair Housing Month 2021. This year’s Fair Housing Month theme, Fair Housing: More Than Just Words, reflects the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to advancing equity in housing and the importance of increasing public awareness of everyone’s right to fair housing.

“Fair Housing Month is a time to recommit to our nation’s obligation to ensure that everyone has equal access to safe, affordable housing,” said HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. “Unfortunately, housing discrimination still exists, from individuals and families being denied a place to call home because of the color of their skin or where they come from, to landlords refusing to allow persons with disabilities to keep assistance animals, to individuals being denied a place to live because of who they love. In this moment of unprecedented crisis, fair housing is more important than ever. 53 years after the Fair Housing Act was signed, our journey to justice in housing continues.”

Each April, HUD, local communities, fair housing advocates, and fair housing organizations across the country commemorate Fair Housing Month by hosting an array of activities that highlight HUD's fair housing enforcement efforts, enhance Americans’ awareness of their fair housing rights, and emphasize the importance of ending housing discrimination.

Secretary Fudge will commemorate Fair Housing Month with a virtual celebration on April 7th at 2 p.m. Eastern time that will also feature the Justice Department’s Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Pamela Karlan; HUD’s Acting Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Jeanine Worden; and HUD Senior Advisor Alanna McCargo.

In addition to highlighting HUD’s enforcement activities, a central focus of this year’s commemoration will be the Biden-Harris Administration’s pledge to end housing discrimination, provide redress to those who have experienced housing discrimination, to eliminate racial bias and other forms of discrimination in all stages of home-buying and renting, and to secure equal access to housing opportunity for all.



Got Housing?! Monthly Conversation

Wednesday, April 21

6:00 PM on Zoom

Plan RI has been hosting a monthly Zoom housing series with guests from around the United States and Canada discussing best practices in community-based housing for individuals with disabilities. Plan RI has partnered with BHDDH to hold “office hours” to hear from individuals and families about ideas for housing in the community, housing preferences, and housing dreams!

This month the office hours will be held on Wednesday, March 10 at 6 PM and hosted by Michelle Brophy from BHDDH and Betty Murray from Plan RI. We want to hear from you so we can work with our housing partners to develop housing that meets your needs!

There are two ways to join:

1. **If you are already registered for the Plan RI Alternative Housing Series:** join with the link for the regularly scheduled meetings that you received in the Housing Series registration confirmation.

2. **If you have not registered for 2021 Series:** [Click here to register](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Virtual Town Hall

Monday, April 12

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Please join the Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPNRI) for a virtual Town Hall for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families on Monday, April 12th from 5:30pm - 6:30pm to provide an update on what CPNRI has been up to, and answer any questions you have. We will discuss our recent vaccine clinics, what's happening with the U.S. Consent Decree, our 2021 priorities, and what you can do to get involved.

Please pre-register by clicking the RSVP below. Once you complete the registration form, you will receive an email confirmation with the Zoom information. This platform features closed captioning, which will be available throughout the duration of the town hall.

[Be sure to check out this letter to the editor from Representative Rebecca Kislak \(District 4, D-Providence\)](#). She calls for the investment in community-based care that supports the civil rights of patients, which includes increased funding and better staffed group homes.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Action for Happiness Calendar April

Active April 2021

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>5 Eat healthy and natural food today and drink lots of water</p>  | <p>6 Turn a regular activity into a playful game today</p>  | <p>7 Do a body-scan meditation and really notice how your body feels</p>  | <p>1 Commit to being more active this month, starting today</p>  | <p>2 Listen to your body and be grateful for what it can do</p>  | <p>3 Spend as much time as possible outdoors today</p>  | <p>4 Have a day free from TV or screens and get moving instead</p>  |
| <p>12 Set yourself an exercise goal or sign up to an activity challenge</p> | <p>13 Move as much as possible, even if you're stuck inside</p> | <p>14 Make sleep a priority and go to bed in good time</p> | <p>8 Get natural light early in the day. Dim the lights in the evening</p> | <p>9 Give your body a boost by laughing or making someone laugh</p> | <p>10 Turn your housework or chores into a fun form of exercise</p> | <p>11 Be active outside. Dig up weeds or plant some seeds</p>  |
| <p>19 Have a 'no screens' night and take time to recharge yourself</p> | <p>20 Spend less time sitting today. Get up more often</p> | <p>21 Focus on 'eating a rainbow' of multi-coloured vegetables today</p> | <p>15 Relax your body & mind with yoga, tai chi or meditation</p> | <p>16 Get active by singing today (even if you think you can't sing!)</p> | <p>17 Go exploring around your local area and notice new things</p> | <p>18 Make time to run, swim, dance, cycle or stretch today</p> |
| <p>26 Try a new online exercise, activity or dance class</p>  | <p>27 Take an extra break in your day and walk outside for 15 minutes</p> | <p>28 Find a fun exercise to do while waiting for the kettle to boil</p> | <p>22 Regularly pause to stretch and breathe during the day</p> | <p>30 Become an activist for a cause you really believe in</p>  | <p>24 Go out and do an errand for a loved one or neighbour</p> | <p>25 Get active in nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting</p>  |

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together

From Informational Interviews to Paying Positions: PCSEPP Participants Nick and Sean

By *Sara Porcaro* | Mar 30, 2021



Nick and Sean

The workplace is a different animal than it was just a year ago. These days, so long as one has an internet connection and a laptop, work is now something countless professionals can take home with them, and since 2020, so many have in efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. However, for some, Zoom alone can't replace the social aspect of going to work and seeing one's peers, and for others, the risk of getting the virus kept them home and out of work entirely. It was, and for many, still is, a lonely time.

It's also one that's slowly but surely coming to an end.

With vaccination rates increasing, people are getting back out into the community again--and Nick and Sean, two participants in the Person Centered Supported Employment Performance Program (PCSEPP) that receive supports from AccessPoint RI, have not only had the opportunity to tour the workplaces that make them comfortable, but to even begin new jobs with Ocean State Book Binding!

"I felt like I needed a job," says Nick, "and I'm glad to have one now. I'm happy to be working, and I like the people I work with."

PCSEPP, a program funded by the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), is one that combines the talents of local service providers (Perspectives, AccessPoint RI, and the J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center) and national partners (Skills for Rhode Island's Future, the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston, and Able Opportunities, Inc.) to encourage individuals to not only discover their talents, but to imagine them at work in the community and build a path towards one's dream career.

"It makes my heart happy to see [Nick] happy," says Nick's mother, Cathy. "PCSEPP showed him that he's worth having a job, and he's so proud of himself."

Nick and Sean both worked with Career Developer Jennifer Quintana to begin their journey through the program with the discovery process, where they discussed past work experience, learned how to take photos and videos on the iPad, and tour several potential workplaces to see where they could imagine themselves using their talents. From places like the Old Theater Diner in Coventry to local Cox Communications offices, they had the opportunity to learn about a variety of jobs and environments. One of those places was the Ocean State Book Binding warehouse in Providence--and while Nick first arrived to see what a typical day on the job looks like, he was also offered a position by the owner, who was happy to show Nick around.

"It was such a surprise," says Jennifer. "We went just expecting to see what a job there might look like, but Nick loved it, and the owner had positions open. He even had another position to fill, and when Sean toured, he found he liked the work environment, too."

And there's plenty to love. With a great Patriots mural on the wall in the employee break room, a friendly dog named Tucker to keep everyone company, and coworkers that are friendly and supportive, the first few weeks on the job have been a hit. Sean works three hours a day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while Nick works Tuesdays and Thursdays; their work consists of unpacking and folding towels and arranging sheets for Rocket Books: digital notebooks whose reusable pages allow users to upload their notes online and wipe away the ink for endless fresh sheets. They're also learning to use Able Opportunities, Inc.'s Work Autonomy app for the iPad to further grow their independence on the job. Nick and Sean enjoy their work, as well as talking about sports and other subjects with their coworkers, and best of all is having a paycheck to save for the future--be it for clothes, a takeout treat, or possible trips in the future. Sean especially, who used to go to Disneyland with his family when he was young, is looking forward to the possibility of saving for another trip to Florida.

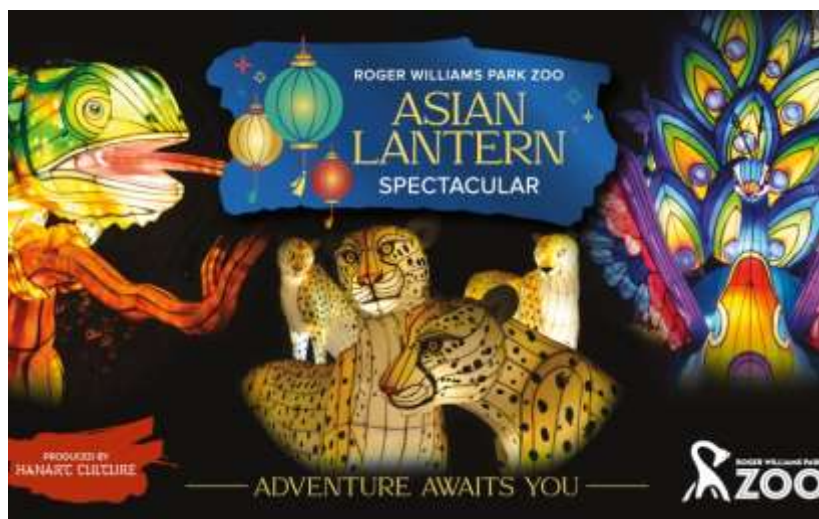
"I like the work I do," says Sean, "and I like getting a paycheck each week. It feels good to know I make my own money."

It also makes it that much easier to relax at home, now with the ability to safely go out for a change of scenery at work and know they've done an excellent job. In their free time, Nick enjoys relaxing in his recliner and watching wrestling videos on his iPad, and Sean likewise enjoys virtual karate classes, as well as helping out around the house, participating in Special Olympics, and getting lunch at Subway. With the income from their jobs, they're able to enjoy more of the things they love, and not only does it bring a smile to their face, but to their friends' and families' as well as they watch Nick and Sean go to work ready to do a great job.

A year after the pandemic, the PCSEPP program is still going strong, and Nick and Sean are charging ahead on their journey. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the program and discovering the path to a career you can feel good about, reach out to Perspectives' Employment Team at employmentservices@perspectivescorporation.com or call (401) 294-3990.

Thank you to Perspectives for allowing us to share this story.

Roger Williams Park Zoo
Asian Lantern Spectacular
April 15th – July 4th



Journey through a wonderland of illuminated larger-than-life lanterns inspired by our wild world. From dazzling and interactive displays to delicious Asian-inspired cuisine, this enchanting multicultural experience is sure to delight all ages!

This extraordinary zoo-wide, walk-through event will be held Wednesday – Sunday nights from 5:30 until 10:00 pm with tickets available for purchase online ONLY. Last admission is at 9:00 pm.

The show which is produced by Hanart Culture will feature over 50 spectacular glowing lantern displays, kids interactive lantern area, savory Asian-inspired cuisine and drinks, hand-crafted keepsakes, and more!

[Click here](#) for safety guidelines, event details, weather policy, and FAQs.

PLEASE NOTE:

- The Asian Lantern Spectacular experience is RAIN or SHINE and all tickets are NON-REFUNDABLE and NON-TRANSFERABLE (unless there is a Zoo closure).
- Tickets are \$25 per adult. Tickets are available online-only. Visitors must choose a specific day and specific time slot, as visit capacity is limited. Once on grounds you may stay as long as you like!
- This event can be considered photosensitive. Guests who are prone to seizures or have light sensitivity should be aware.
- Music is played throughout the Zoo, so if someone in your party is sensitive to noise, consider bringing noise-cancelling headphones.
- A limited number of sensory bags are available and lended to visitors free of charge - simply ask front gate admissions staff when you arrive. Each bag is filled with fidget toys, emotional cue cards, noise-cancelling headphones and other useful toys. They are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis upon entry.

Proceeds from the Asian Lantern Spectacular support Roger Williams Park Zoo's operating expenses, animal care, education and conservation programs.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at bhddh.ri.gov, select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.



DD Community Newsletter
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

401-462-3421

8:30 AM → 4:00 PM

WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours
(Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00),
for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

401-265-7461

4:00 PM → 10:00 PM

AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

For emerging or imminent care
related questions,
Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and
weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

401-265-7461

8:30 AM → 10:00 PM

ON WEEKENDS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the
AskDD email address. Please
do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

E-MAIL THE DIVISION

BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

911

**FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
CALL 911
RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!**

For medical or
healthcare related
emergencies, call
your Primary Care
Physician or 911

CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

CALL FOR:

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

**FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE
DON'T go to their office
unless they tell you to!**

SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK

A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS USING SELF-DIRECTED
SUPPORTS IN RHODE ISLAND

ONLINE MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Guest presenter: **Perspectives' Corporation Team**
Learn about Perspectives' resources offerings
for self-directed users

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use.

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

AGENDA

7:00 – 7:45 – Perspectives' Resources for Self-Directed Users
7:45 – 8:30 – Open discussion on topics related to self-directed supports

RSVP LINK: <https://bit.ly/2YUamqz>

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste into your browser. If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL Interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.



For questions, call or email Claire Rosenbaum, Sherlock Center on Disabilities:
Email: crosenbaum@ric.edu Voice: 401-456-4732 TTY: 711



Congregate Care Visitation Guidance

Updated March 2021

The information contained in this COVID-19 Guidance supersedes previously issued guidance regarding visitation in congregate care sites in Rhode Island.

Background

The I/DD system has been severely impacted by COVID-19, with outbreaks causing high rates of infection, morbidity, and mortality. The vulnerable nature of the I/DD population combined with the inherent risks of congregate living have required aggressive efforts to limit COVID-19 exposure and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In August 2020, BHDDH issued guidance specific to licensed congregate care sites and requested that sites develop a site-specific visitation plan in order to safely ease visitor restrictions. This visitor guidance balanced the importance of visitation with the need to protect residents, patients, staff, providers, and visitors. These plans addressed scheduling of visits, screening for COVID-19 symptoms, practicing social distancing, hand hygiene, wearing a cloth face covering or facemask (both residents and visitors) for the duration of their visit, physical location of the visit, cleaning and disinfecting, communication, and when to pause visitation.

The guidance was updated in November 2020 when COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations began increasing, prompting the strong recommendation that all BHDDH licensed congregate care sites institute a “NO VISITATION” policy, restricting visitation of all visitors and non-essential health care personnel, except for certain compassionate care situations, such as an end-of-life situation.

While the COVID-19 vaccine has been shown effective in preventing or lessening symptomatic COVID-19 infection, at this time, not all residents and staff are fully vaccinated, making it possible for them to still become infected by visitors. In addition, the CDC and public health experts are evaluating if individuals can spread COVID-19, including new variants, even if they are vaccinated. Therefore, the CDC still recommends maintaining the practices that reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as wearing a mask, washing your hands, and maintaining 6 feet of physical distance from others.

We recognize that physical separation from family and other loved ones has taken a physical and emotional toll on residents and their loved ones. Residents may feel socially isolated, leading to increased risk for depression, anxiety, and other expressions of distress. Residents may find visitor restrictions and other ongoing changes related to COVID-19 confusing or upsetting. Residents derive value from the physical, emotional, and spiritual support they receive through visitation from family and friends.

In light of this, the guidance regarding visitation to congregate care sites during the COVID-19 public health emergency is being revised. The information contained in this guidance supersedes and replaces previously issued guidance and recommendations regarding visitation. The guidance still emphasizes the importance of maintaining infection prevention practices given the continued risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Continued adherence to all safety measures and cooperation with surveillance testing whenever possible remains critically important.

Guidance

Each congregate care site will be actively engaged in implementing a plan that permits in-person visitation in such a manner that resident health and safety is protected to the maximum extent possible. Visitation can be conducted through different means based on a site's structure and residents' needs.

This guidance is consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. Additionally, visitation should be person-centered, consider each resident's physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, and support their quality of life. Congregate care sites should enable visits to be conducted with an adequate degree of privacy. Visitors who are unable to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave. By following a person-centered approach and adhering to these core principles, visitation can occur safely based on the below guidance.

In the guidance below, the term **"fully vaccinated"** refers to a person who is ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine, per the CDC's Public Health Recommendations for Vaccinated Persons.

- Sites that have not had any positive COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days **may not restrict visitations** "without a reasonable clinical or safety cause" consistent with CMS regulations. COVID screening, resident and staff testing, hand hygiene, physical distancing and environmental cleaning should remain in effect, and visitation should be allowed if there are no new cases within the previous two weeks. "Failure to facilitate visitation, without adequate reason related to clinical necessity or resident safety, would constitute a potential violation..."
- Sites should allow visitation for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), except for a few circumstances when visitation should be **limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission** (note: compassionate care visits should be permitted). Providers should consider limiting indoor visitation if:
 - The town positivity rate is $>10\%$ and $<70\%$ of residents and staff in the site are fully vaccinated;
 - Resident(s), whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, have confirmed COVID-19 infection, until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions; or
 - There are Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.
- If a site identifies one new onset case (resident or staff), the site should ensure that the case is isolated and case contacts are quarantined in accordance with existing guidance and protocols.

General In-Person Requirements

All of the following are required for in-person visitation:

- **Screening** of all who enter the site for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., temperature checks, questions about and observations of signs or symptoms), and denial of entry of those with signs or symptoms or those who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 infection in the prior 14 days (regardless of the visitor's vaccination status).
- **Face covering** or mask (covering mouth, nose, and chin)
 - Wear a mask that fits snugly but comfortably over your nose, mouth, and chin without any gaps.
 - **Great protection:** N-95, KN-95, or KF-94 mask
 - **Good protection:** Medical procedure (paper) mask that fits
 - **OK protection:** Cloth mask made of a tightly woven, breathable fabric that's at least two layers thick and fits
- **Physical distancing** at least six feet between persons
- Residents and visitors should not travel through any space designated as COVID-19 care space
- **Cleaning and disinfecting** high frequency touched surfaces (e.g. tables) in the site often, and designated visitation areas after each visit
- Meet all Rhode Island Department of Health [quarantine requirements](#)
- Staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**), as indicated

Additionally, all of the following are recommended for in-person visitation:

- **Frequent hand hygiene** (use of alcohol-based hand rub is preferred)
- **Two visitors** maximum per resident
- Visits scheduled **in advance**
- **Brief physical contact:** The CDC continues to recommend sites, residents, and families adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection, including physical distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet between people). This continues to be the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19, particularly if either party has not been fully vaccinated. However, separation and isolation have taken a toll, and there is no substitute for physical contact, such as the warm embrace between a resident and their loved one. If the resident is fully vaccinated, they can choose to have close contact (including touch such as hand holding or a hug) with their visitor while wearing a well-fitting face mask and performing hand-hygiene before and after. Regardless, visitors should physically distance from other residents and staff in the site.

Indoor Visits

- Sites should consider how the number of visitors per resident at one time and the total number of visitors in the site at one time (based on the size of the site) may affect the ability to maintain the core principles of infection prevention. If necessary, sites should consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure all residents are able to receive visitors.
- During indoor visitation, sites should limit visitor movement in the site.
- If a common room is used simultaneously by more than one resident for visitation, there should be enough space to support physical distancing and decrease the interactions between those who are present.
- Provide proper visitor education on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, infection control precautions, other applicable site practices (e.g., use of face covering or mask, specified entries, exits and routes to designated areas, hand hygiene)

Outdoor Visits

- While taking a person-centered approach and adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention, outdoor visitation is preferred even when the resident and visitor are fully vaccinated* against COVID-19.
- Outdoor visits generally pose a lower risk of transmission due to increased space and airflow. Therefore, visits should be held outdoors whenever practicable. However, weather considerations (e.g., inclement weather, excessively hot or cold temperatures, poor air quality) or an individual resident's health status (e.g., medical condition(s), COVID-19 status) may hinder outdoor visits.
- When conducting outdoor visitation, all appropriate infection control and prevention practices should be adhered to.
- For outdoor visits, sites should create accessible and safe outdoor spaces for visits.

End-of-Life and Compassionate Care Visits

- Compassionate care visits should always be permitted. Compassionate care visits do not exclusively refer to end-of-life situations. Other types of compassionate care situations include, but are not limited to:
 - A resident, previously living with family and recently being admitted to a congregate care setting, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support.
 - A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress and is seldom speaking.

Virtual Visitation

- While in-person visits must generally not be restricted, congregate care sites should use alternative electronic methods for virtual communication between residents and visitors as much as possible.
- All congregate care sites should have a process to allow for remote communications between a resident and a virtual visitor (e.g., video call applications on cell phones or tablets) even after in-person visits resume.

COVID-19 Testing

- RIDOH encourages COVID-19 testing of persons visiting congregate care residents. Congregate care sites that wish to test visitors may utilize antigen point of care test kits or encourage visitors to use traditional PCR testing available at www.portal.ri.gov.
- Resident and staff testing are conducted in accordance with state regulations.

Vaccination

- Generally, full immunity from the vaccine develops about seven to 14 days after the final dose. While vaccination mitigates loss of life and greatly reduces the odds of getting very sick from COVID-19, further research is required to determine if a vaccinated person can continue to carry and spread the disease. Therefore, residents and visitors should continue to practice hand hygiene, social distancing, masking, and use PPE, as appropriate.