Employment Services through COVID-19

Questions to ask Persons Supported:

- **How are you?** (Listen for fear, anxiety, emotional needs, routine support.)
  - Who in their support system may they need to connect with? This may include their Supports Coordinator / Case Manager, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, etc.
  - Is there anyone you would like support in staying connected to so you can continue to do well? Identify key people.
  - How has your routine been impacted? (Work, Social Life, Transportation, Benefits, etc.)
  - Guide person through the source of their needs and use tools like Motivational Interviewing to discuss what the person CAN control.
    - https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/empowering-change
    - Motivational Interviewing - Reminder Card
  - Help the person create a list of what the person CAN control and assist identify what they can do to gain control.

- **How is your health?**
  - What are their food access and security needs?
  - Eating habits?
  - Level of activity?
  - Access to medication, medical care, mental health services?

- **How can I support you?**
  - Do you have personal protective equipment (PPE) to do your job?
  - Has your transportation been changed or affected? Do you have a back-up plan?
  - Do you understand the changes at work and in the community? Do you know why this is happening? (Support this process and level of understanding.)
  - What technology do you have access to at home: smartphone (type?), computer/tablet, internet, email, App Stores and apps, printer?
  - Did your employer provide a return to work date and or state you are expected to be retained after COVID-19?

For Individuals Working at Essential Businesses:

- Review how ISP is written to assess flexibility of support. Remember ODP Employment Services are direct AND indirect.
- Gather information and procedures on how employer is enforcing safety precautions. Reinforce business precautions and CDC recommendations to stay safe (ex. Safe distancing, washing hands, gloves, reason for Personal Protective Equipment). Assist person and supports in understanding, which may include creating documents as necessary, if not created by business, in a way person understands.
- Review with and notate their employer's sick leave policy which may include a special COVID-19 addendum.

- Assess if accommodations needed due to COVID-19 impact. For example, if a business has changed practices, there may be a need for a picture checklist.
- Increase communication with person and support team, including off-site support to person via phone, Facetime, or other virtual capability. A 15-30min check in call at minimum will support mental health and processing of what is happening.
- Assist understanding risk associated and how to maintain safety.
- Assist monitoring of COVID-19 related symptoms of person and those around.
- Support informed decision-making related to work: https://nadsp.org/informed-decision-making/
- Support learning/re-learning of tasks
- Support navigating of transportation changes
- Support any needs related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) while understanding rights of employer during a pandemic.

For Individuals Working at Non-Essential Businesses:

- Review how ISP is written to assess flexibility of support. Remember ODP Employment Services are direct AND indirect.
- Support in looking into Unemployment Compensation (UC) eligibility. Visit www.uc.pa.gov for complete information regarding COVID-19 supports.
- Increase communication with person and support team, including off-site support to person via phone, Facetime, or other virtual capability. A 15-30min check in call at minimum will support mental health and processing of what is happening.
- Assess virtual accessibility and usage: internet, apps, website navigation. This time could be used to review company policies and procedures.
- www.PhilaOnTheJob.org

For Individuals experiencing a lay-off, decrease in hours, or self-selecting to stop working:

- **Support understanding of employment status**:
  o What did their employer tell them? Are they returning to work? Decreasing their hours? Are they completely laid-off? Did they make an informed decision to self-select to pause employment?
  o How might benefits be impacted? Do they need to contact WIPA and/or Benefits Counselor?
  o Obtain employer's confirmation of employment status.
- **Support grieving process:**
  o Encouraging momentum and maintaining stamina
  o Create new game plan – goal setting
  o Assess need to revise ISP authorizations and make requests based on needs.
  o Revise and update resume, as well as Cover Letter when applicable.
  o Support connecting to Benefits Counseling (through WIPA or ODP specific service)
  o Assess virtual accessibility and usage: internet, apps, website navigation.

- o Leverage virtual platforms to continue engagement of job search and/or maintaining stamina for work. If lack of technology, mail or drop off flash drives with information and packets of materials that could be worked through via phone; you can also email materials if access to home printer.
  - o Set up virtual informational interviews, mock interviews. Use this time to teach virtual best practices (ex. Mute when not talking, be in a quiet space without distractions, dress appropriately, know how to operate the camera even if simply on/off)
  - o Discovery – Virtual shopping can be a way to build interest inventories.
  - o Discuss videos of jobs showing the different tasks and routines.
- For more resources and employment journey support, www.PhilaOnTheJob.org

For Individuals Supported experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and/or living with someone who is:

- Support informing employer and following employer's/CDC's protocols including but not limited to: sick time/PTO, temperature taking, Unemployment, understanding quarantine/self-isolation, filing of Worker's Comp (if applicable).
- https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx

Resources to support based on person:

- **Communication Tools:**
  - o Zoom – Create a free account and access meeting times for maximum of 40min.
  - o WhatsApp, Google hangouts, FaceTime, texting
  - o NetflixParty - Watch parties (requires Google Chrome) and can obtain 30 day free trial. NAMI Bucks hosts on Sundays and Netflix Party extension is http://bit.ly/NAMINPEXT. Follow NAMI Bucks on social media (Facebook and Instagram) for weekly updates.
- **Employment Resources:**
  - o www.PhilaOnTheJob.org
  - o Job Accommodation Network: https://askjan.org/
  - o Career One Stop: https://www.careeronestop.org/
- **Holistic Resources:**
  - o NAMI Philadelphia hosts "Wellness Wednesdays" live on social media at 1pm. Follow @NAMIPhiladelphia on Instagram and Facebook.
  - o Live Well Foundation https://www.livewell-foundation.org/depressionsupport
  - o TikTok, social media "watch parties" and concerts, meditation, yoga, at-home workouts, painting, drawing, virtual tours to places such as Zoos, make a list of things you've wanted to do, read (audiobooks), Podcasts, YouTube videos, listen to music
  - o City of Philadelphia, as of 3/30, opening up free food sites to anyone in need. Visit phila.gov/COVID-19 for more information.
  - o Suggestions to minimize fear/anxiety: limit news coverage and media access, decrease conversations about COVID-19, increase positive talk, practice mindfulness and gratitude.