



Considerations in Adapting Organizational Infrastructure Within Survivor-Serving Organizations Due to the Pandemic

Due to the current health crisis, survivor serving organizations are adapting services, infrastructure, and procedures and are needing to follow new health guidance in order to protect the health and well-being of employees as well as the communities they serve. This document contains general tips and considerations for adapting infrastructure, recommendations for staff in leadership roles, and resources that may be helpful. Some of the information was gathered from different sources, including the [Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits](#), [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#), and [Centers for Disease Control](#).

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For information, resources, and TA on organizational sustainability and capacity building through the [SOS Institute](#), please contact Futures Without Violence. [Learn more and access resources](#). Contact: Mónica Arenas, marenas@futureswithoutviolence.org

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This information and resources are for informational purposes only and are not intended as legal, safety, or medical advice. To obtain the most current guidelines for health and safety related to the health crisis, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and your state and local authorities.

General Considerations

- Your mission, vision, and values should be at the center of your approach to adapting services and policies, especially when assessing accessibility, equity, empowerment, inclusion, and trauma-informed strategies.
- Follow all health and safety recommendations provided by federal, state and local health departments.
- Develop a process with phases of adaptations to services and infrastructure, including administration, guidelines for programming, and community-based services.
- Consider the needs and vulnerabilities of the communities that you work with, such as older people, people with high health risks, people of color, persons living in poverty, the deaf and hearing impaired, persons with disabilities, Native Americans, immigrant communities, etc. For example, older adults may need continued support via remote services for a longer period of time.
- Recognize the impact and needs that the community is facing due to COVID-19, including unemployment, housing needs and insecurity, transportation issues and how this relates to accessing your services.
- Incorporate an equity lens as you develop or adapt service strategies for the community that you serve, as well as policies that impact staff and management.
- Prioritize the health and safety of your staff and the community that you serve in equal measure.
- Recognize the psychological impact and stressors that staff is facing or due to COVID-19.
- Collaboration is key, and your organization is not alone- build and develop collaborations as you adapt and innovate.

Resources

- [DOJ, Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\), Information Regarding COVID-19](#)
- [Resources, Events, by Topic and Profession - Survivor Support & Advocacy: TA2TA OVW](#)
- [Remote Work Resources, TA2TA OVW](#)
- [Resources on Health Crisis Response for DV/SA Programs, Remote work, FUTURES](#)
- [Domestic Violence Reopen Guidance, Ohio Domestic Violence Network \(sample\)](#)
- [COVID-19 Organizational Management Resources, The Management Center](#)
- [COVID-19 HR, Personnel, and Management Resources, Resource Sharing Project](#)
- [Covid-19 Reopening Plan Checklists and Re-entry Forms sample, Raymond Cox Consulting](#)
- [Going Forward: Best Practices and Considerations for Nonprofit Re-engagement, OK Ctr. for Nonprofits](#)

Tips for Organizational Leadership

- Communication is key to provide assurance and leadership for adaptations and transition.
- Maintain staff engagement through a work environment that provides a feeling of belonging and safety. Give staff the opportunity share their voice, concerns and feedback.
- Educate managers on how to respond and support employees that may face increased personal challenges during this time, such as family loss, childcare and school-cancellation challenges, financial stress, and other dependent care and support needs.
- Support direct services staff through a process to build their capacity so that they can feel confident and in control of fulfilling their job duties.
- Encourage staff to take leadership roles and provide opportunities for development, leadership, and coordination. Promote healthy collaboration within and across teams.
- Engage your board, as they need to be informed about the central planning process and financial health. Board members can contribute in several ways, provide support, and help manage.

Resources

- [Leadership During COVID-19: Strategies to Support Yourself and Your Team](#), NCDVMH
- [COVID-19 Adaptive Leadership Checklist](#), OneJustice
- [People Leader Resilience Playbook: How to lead in the midst of uncertainty](#)
- [Remote Supervision in Rural Dual/Multi-Service Advocacy Agencies](#) (Resource Sharing Project)
- [Best Practices for Nonprofit Boards](#) (during the pandemic), Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [Responding to COVID-19: The Role of the CEO & Board Chair in a Crisis](#), BoardSource, webinar

Policies and Procedures

- Update policies and procedures related to benefits, including sick time and telework.
- Consider flexible policies and schedules for staff to care for family members, including allowing employees to donate sick leave to others.
- Educate management and staff on OSHA, ADA, FMLA, etc. compliance (if applicable).
- Consider confidentiality policies and procedures related to health, underlying health conditions, and record keeping.
- Develop a cleaning and sanitation protocol and develop procedures related to cleaning and sanitation responsibilities of each employee.
- Assess how public transportation impacts staff members' and provide supportive and flexible accommodations. Evaluate the need for travel.

Resources

- [Model COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Template and Instructions](#) (Virginia sample model)
- [Family Crisis Network Safe Work Plan for COVID-19 Reopening](#), Sample procedures
- [Sample Administrative Leave Policies](#), Resource Sharing Project
- [Survivors and the Workplace, COVID-19: Options for Workers who are Survivors](#), FUTURES
- [Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Policies for Health and Safety Leave](#), Missouri Coalition
- [Sample Hazard Pay Policy for DV Programs - Version 1 & Version 2](#) (NNEDV) & [Version 3](#) (DE)

- [Payroll Protection Program Loans and Legally Mandated Emergency Leaves](#) (CPEDV compiled)
- [What You Should Know About COVID-19, the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)
- [Tips and Policies for Personal and Remote Devices](#), Victim's Rights Law Center
- [Sample Telecommuting Policy](#), Vermont Network
- [Workplace Policies and how they Support or Contradict Core Values](#). FUTURES

Workplace Health and Safety

- Ensure compliance with local, state and federal regulations regarding workplace health and safety.
- Follow CDC [guidance](#) for cleaning and disinfecting workspaces as applicable.
- Keep cleaning supplies on hand for active, daily cleaning for the foreseeable future. These include sanitizing wipes, bleach, disinfectant spray, soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide necessary and any legally-required protective equipment, face coverings, masks, and gloves, etc. to employees.
- Assess the space for social distancing. See guidance for [planning and rearranging spaces](#).
- Discourage workers from using other coworkers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Use disposable cutlery and plates.
- Place hand sanitizer in high traffic areas, commonly used spaces, and door entrances.
- Identify shared spaces and touch point surfaces like bathrooms, appliances, dishes, water faucets, water coolers, phones, printers, furniture, door knobs, light switches, tables. Provide disinfectant so that common touchpoints can be disinfected by employees before each use.
- Implement a strict clean-desk policy so that non-essential items are not stored on the desk, but rather enclosed in cabinets or drawers, to avoid the need to sanitize those items frequently.
- Reinforce key messages – staying home when sick, using recommended cough and sneeze etiquette, practicing regular hand washing, and social distancing. Place posters to remind staff of these expectations in high traffic areas.
- Restrict the number of employees in confined or common spaces, such as kitchens, elevators and meeting rooms.
- Consider encouraging employees to do a self-assessment each day to check if they have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, headache).
- Have an action plan and contact tracing protocol in place in case a staff member becomes infected with COVID-19.
- Stagger arrival of employees and guests, including the use of half-days and mixed remote work and on-site work. Restrict guests as much as possible.

Resources

- [Health and Wellness during The Coronavirus Pandemic Resources](#), FUTURES
- [Considerations for Community-Based Organizations](#), CDC
- [Return To Work Amid Covid-19: A Cleveland Clinic Guide](#)
- [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#), OSHA

- [12 Ways to Prepare Your Office for Post-Coronavirus Reopening](#), U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- [Planning Considerations for Organizations in Reconstituting Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), FEMA
- [Trauma Informed Response for Work Settings](#)
- [Self-care During COVID-19 \(AZESDV\) & Tiny Survival Guide & Mindfulness Practices](#)

Considerations for In-Person Client Services

- Assess the possibility of continuing remote and virtual services.
- Consider staggering workers, adjusting shifts to reduce the number of staff present at one time and/or alternating days for staff members to work on site.
 - Ensure that the room or area has enough space for necessary physical distancing.
 - Follow cleaning protocol after each person/family leaves.
 - Use only one room in the building for in-person services, if possible.
- Collect contact information of any new person that staff comes in contact with in-person, in case of needing contact tracing.
- Move furniture to accommodate safe social distancing. Add partitions/barriers to divide spaces.
- Designate 6-foot distances with signage, tape, and if necessary, designate arrows for flow of movement. Clients could be greeted from a distance, and provide a face mask, if needed.
- Consider adequate ventilation by opening windows and changing and/or installing air filters.

Resources

- [Domestic Violence Reopen Guidance](#), Ohio Domestic Violence Network (sample)
- [Recommendations for DV Programs on Lifting of Stay-Home Orders & COVID-19](#), WACADV
- [COVID-19: Coalition Guidance for Programs](#), NNEDV

Shelter/Housing Services

- Continue to implement social distancing within shelter by staggering kitchen/meal time, playroom time, and limiting the number of individuals/families in common areas.
- Whenever possible, one family per room is recommended. If shared rooms are provided, no more than two people per room.
- Limit the comings and goings to and from the program or shelter to essential activities and appointments as much as possible.
- For long-term planning, consider adding a private bathroom to each family room.
- If possible, place small refrigerators and television in each private sleeping/family room.
- Prioritize support for rapid rehousing or relocation of families.
- Follow the CDC's recommendations to [inquire about possible symptoms](#) for coronavirus, and clarify that the goal is for everyone's safety, and **not** designed to determine admission or access to services.
- Consider asking residents and staff to self-monitor for symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, running nose, loss of smell, diarrhea.
- Consider hotel sheltering for survivors in [high risk](#) categories, as permitted by the [hotel guidelines](#) unless the program has the capacity to isolate survivors within the shelter.

Resources

- [Resources on housing strategies, TA2TA](#)
- [Recommendations for Responding to COVID-19 in Domestic Violence Shelters](#) (medical)
- [Interim Guidance on COVID-19 for Member Domestic Violence Programs](#), Ohio DV Network
- [Things to Consider for Shelter Programs During COVID-19](#), Violence Free Colorado
- [Interim Domestic Violence Shelter Guidance on COVID-19](#), Arizona Coalition (sample)
- [Guidance for Using Hotels to Meet Survivors' Immediate Safety and Housing Needs](#)

Accessibility Considerations for the use of Facial Coverings

- Follow recommendations on the use of facial coverings (masks) for any interaction with others outside the family household. (The *cloth should cover an individual's mouth, nose and chin*).
- Provide clear and concise language about requirements and explain why it is necessary.
- Consider asking direct service providers to use facial coverings at all times within service areas, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time.
- If possible, supply survivors and their children (except for children under 2) with facial coverings.
- Be aware that wearing face coverings may trigger trauma or anxiety for some survivors.
- If an employee or client refuses to wear face coverings, ask questions to better understand their reason for refusal. Consider any religious protections under Title VII or if they need a related reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- For accessibility for people with hearing impairment, obtain and maintain a stock of face coverings that allow the mouth to be seen to facilitate lip reading.

Resources

- [Sample policy on face covering requirements](#), Ohio Domestic Violence Network
- [Tip Sheet: Face Mask Requirements Within an Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Approach](#), National Center on Domestic Violence and Mental Health
- [Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings & How to Wear Masks](#), CDC
- [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#), California Department of Public Health (6/18/20)
- [Sample letter to employees regarding face coverings](#), ThinkHR (4/28/20)
- [Best Practices for Masks: Considerations for People with Disabilities and Special Health Needs](#), Minnesota Department of Health
- [Visual Communication Tool & Deaf or Hard of Hearing & Unable to Speak but can Understand Communication Cards](#), Oregon Health Authority
- [10 Tips for Managing Face Masks and Hearing Loss](#), Center for Hearing and Communication
- [Why Protective Face Masks Make You Feel Anxious and What You Can Do to Cope](#), (article)
- [Face Masks, PPE, and Trauma-Informed Care: Cultivating Connection in the Era of Covid-19 Coronavirus](#)

Connecting with the Community, Online and Remote Access

- Post online or social media pages indicating whether your facility is open, and the hours and admission protocol. If the facility is not open, provide details on how to access services remotely.
- Build connections with the community to increase outreach, like faith-based communities, food banks, schools, and other local and regional organizations.
- Build creative ways to maintain social connection with survivors and clients. If possible, provide access to digital communications or video platforms that accommodates those who are differently abled.
- Ensure compliance with confidentiality and privacy when communicating with survivors.
- Update safety and privacy planning protocols and educate staff and survivors about those digital platform risks.

Resources

- [Best Practices—Issuing Statements on Service Delivery Changes During COVID-19](#), NJ Coalition
- [Adapting Your Communications Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A New Prevention Peer Webinar Series](#), California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
 - [Part 1 Standing Out Social Media](#),
 - [Part 2 Pitching Your Story to Journalists](#),
 - [Part 3 Making the Most of Your Prevention Communications Plan](#)
 - [Community Outreach Images](#), adaptable and in different languages
- [Remote Work Resources & Technology Resources](#), TA2TA
- [Overview of Nonprofit Digital Strategy](#), webinar, FUTURES

Equity Considerations

- The impact of the pandemic on each staff member and access to resources is not the same; avoid making assumptions, assess the needs of each individual and provide appropriate support and flexibility.
- When setting expectations for staff working remotely, Ensure that staff has what they need in terms of equipment, connectivity, and training for working remotely.
- Consider and acknowledge challenges that staff may be going through, due to health, multigenerational environments, roommates, children, economic challenges, and more.
- Check in with staff who cannot return to in-person work for any reason and strategize how to support them.
- Review your healthcare plan to ensure that you provide adequate coverage for all staff, as well as adequate sick days, time off, protections, and compensation.
- Compensate frontline staff with hazard pay and bonuses; and if possible, provide raises and promotions for staff taking new roles.
- Build a culture within your organization that encourages an ongoing process of adaptation, innovation, and creation of new support and intervention strategies to support the needs of underserved and vulnerable communities during the health crisis.
- Consider the diverse needs, experiences, and perspectives of the communities that you serve and adapt changes as necessary. Consider, consult, learn, and collaborate with other professionals in the field.

Resources

- [COVID-19 and Racial Ethnic Minorities](#), CDC
- [Getting It Right: Diversity and Equity in the Age of COVID-19](#), NPQ
- [Crises as a Catalyst: A Call for Race Equity & Inclusive Leadership](#), ProInspire
- [It's Time to Talk About What Board Commitment to Equity Looks Like in This Moment](#)
- [Equity Analysis Assessment](#) (sample)

Resiliency and Transition

- Cultivate resiliency to strengthen response to change, transition, and challenges. Organizational trauma-informed leadership and practices foster a work environment that supports resiliency for staff and clients.
- Extensive planning is difficult in a changing and uncertain environment, it may be helpful to evaluate your organization's [strengths, weaknesses/challenges, and opportunities](#) for growth.
- Focus on strengths and positive supports, including internal strengths and qualities, as well as external resources to increase resiliency.
- Assess for risks, including the financial impact of COVID-19 on the organization. Engage your board, funders, and community supporters to support your financial sustainability.
- Address the impact of the organizational changes by supporting staff through the transitions. Use the [Transition Curve Toolkit](#) to identify strategies.
- Build and enhance strong collaborations with the courts, legislators, community leaders, law enforcement agencies, food banks, legal services, etc.
- Build a support network of personal and community relationships, in the DV/SA field and outside the field, for peer learning, support, and mentorship.
- Advocate for resources with funders and the community to gather support for collaborative work.

Resources

- [Strategies to Enhance Employee Resilience and Engagement within Survivor-Serving Organizations](#), resource and webinar, FUTURES
- [Transition Curve Toolkit with Resources](#), FUTURES
- [Mini Strategic Planning Process Toolkit with Resources](#), FUTURES
- [Scenario Planning for COVID-19](#), The Management Center
- [Emergency Preparedness Toolkit](#), California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
- [Building Organizational Resilience in the Face of Covid-19](#), National Council/Behavioral Health

Resources on Financial Sustainability

- [Fundraising Strategies for Local DV Programs in Response to COVID-19](#), NRCDV
- [Financial Leadership in Uncertain Times](#), WACADV (webinar)
- [Sustainability to Survivability: 5 Nonprofit Finance Must-Do's in the Time of COVID](#), NPQ
- [COVID-19 Tools and Resources for Nonprofits](#), Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [State by State Listing of Community Foundations with Coronavirus Relief Efforts](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Nonprofits - Sustainability](#), GlobalGiving