

April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear ACS Staff, families and supports,

Over the last several weeks we have been bombarded with information. For those of us who enjoy research, we have consumed 3-4 times as much seeking “evidence” or “truth” in a situation that will likely not have “evidence” or “truth” for years to come.

I want to take a few minutes to review what we currently “know” is working, to help you, your families, our participants and the community to stay safe. Let’s talk about social distancing first.



### **SOCIAL DISTANCING- What is that?**

As defined by the CDC, social distancing (also called “physical distancing”) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home.

To practice social distancing:

- ① Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- ② Do NOT gather in groups
- ③ Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to COVID-19 and slowing its spread.

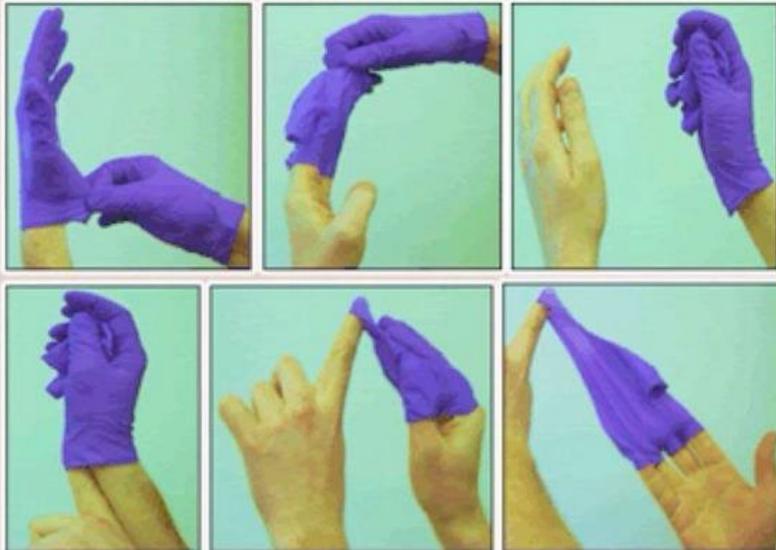
### **WHAT DOES THAT MEAN WHEN PROVIDING DIRECT CARE?**

- **Social boundaries are CRITICAL and must be taught and given positive reinforcement frequently.**

Here are some replacements that you may want to consider:

- ❖ Waving or a thumbs up
  - ❖ Make up a “happy” dance for celebrating a job well done
  - ❖ Consistent verbal praise
  - ❖ Namaste’ bow as a greeting or farewell for the day
  - ❖ **BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN!** The more ways we make this change fun the easier it will be on staff and participants.
- **Keep in Stable Groups.** Like with the guidance with our household units, we should keep are community actions to small groups of 10 or less (including staff) and keep the groups as “stable” as practicable. A stable group means the individuals in the group don’t change often and don’t interact unnecessarily with others outside of their group and each is screened regularly for possible symptoms.

- **Be an example!** Our participants watch EVERYTHING we do. If you are teaching social distancing you must practice social distancing. When interacting with other staff be mindful of the space between you and thank each other for maintaining safe space. This is called modeling and is an excellent method of teaching preferred behavior.
- **Do not touch another person unless it is necessary.** This seems like a statement that is a “no brainer,” but believe me old habits are hard to break. Ask yourself the following as you are supporting participants:
  - ❖ Am I doing something for this participant that they can do for themselves?
  - ❖ Have I exhausted my options to assist with verbal direction before giving physical assistance?
- **If you need to assist someone in close proximity, ensure that it is unavoidable, you are breaking social distancing rules for the shortest period of time possible and wear gloves. Wash your hands prior to putting the gloves on, DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE, and dispose of gloves properly after use. WASH YOUR HANDS AGAIN.**



#### HOW TO REMOVE GLOVES

1. Remove gloves by gripping one glove on the outside near the cuff & peel it off, inside out
2. Cup the inside-out glove with the gloved hand
3. Use 2 fingers of the bare hand near the cuff to peel the second glove off, with the first glove inside it
4. Dispose of gloves properly

**What do I do if I see a person unnecessarily breaking social distancing rules?**

**REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND INITIATE A HIGH-LEVEL GER.** We know the current circumstances are difficult to navigate and we also understand that human contact is critical to everyone's well-being; however, at this point in time breaking social distancing without justifiable purpose could literally mean life and death for the people we serve, our staff and others in our community. We have a responsibility to each other to protect social distancing in all settings and blatant disregard of this recommendation is being viewed as potential abuse to our participants.

If you have questions or feel you have come up against concerns that you are not sure how to address, please ask for help. We want to support you in every way possible as we continue navigating these unprecedented circumstances.