



- **Office Hours with Commissioner Turner:**

Thank you to all who participated in our open office hours last week. There were many good questions, and we hope you found the session to be informative. Next week's office hours will be Wednesday, April 15th at 9:30 a.m. Central. The details to join the meeting are below. Please submit any questions you have to the DIDD.Covid19@tn.gov inbox with the subject "Question for Commissioner Turner".

Meeting link: <https://bit.ly/39ECArT>

Meeting number (access code): 612 549 691

Meeting password: Pvf8MDjTr83

Join by phone

Tap to call in from a mobile device (attendees only)

+1-415-655-0003 US TOLL

Global call-in numbers

Join from a video system or application

Dial 612549691@tngov.webex.com

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

- **TN Stay Apart Campaign:**

Join Gov. Bill Lee and us in the fight against #COVID19. Save Tennessee lives. Get the latest COVID-19 information at

<https://tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>

DIDD also has guidance available online at

<https://www.tn.gov/didd/covid-19.html>

- **Empowering Growth and Wellness:**

Fear, anxiety, panic, confusion, sadness, hopelessness, restlessness, loneliness, anger. There is no denying that the past few weeks have been a difficult and strange time for people all over the world. It is likely that you and those around you are experiencing several strong emotions in response to the current global pandemic. Being aware of your own mental health and the mental health of those around you is more important now than ever. Whether it is your family, friends, people you care for, people who help to support you, or





yourself, it is critical that we all remain aware of how we are feeling and coping with this situation each day. It is important to remember that there is no right way to feel in a situation like this. All feelings are valid. We all need to acknowledge all of our feelings and find healthy ways to cope and manage those feelings both for ourselves and for those around us. The following are tips and strategies to manage the mental health effects of the current pandemic:

Seek help when needed

- Acknowledge your feelings and talk to someone. You are not alone.
- It is important to stay connected to friends, loved ones or natural supports and to lean on them.
- If additional support is needed, many mental health practitioners are utilizing telehealth at this time. Reach out to your current provider or insurance company for what resources are available.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency, call now. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 855-CRISIS-1 or 855-274-7471

Help others find positive ways to express their feelings

- Talk about and validate the feelings of others. This includes really listening to what the person is saying. This can be done by:
 - Restating/summarizing their words ("So you are saying ___.")
 - Share your own observations or help to identify the emotion ("I noticed you are pacing, are you anxious?")
 - Normalize their response "We are anxious about the virus too"
 - Be genuine and demonstrate understanding and concern ("This seems to be very difficult for you.")
- Recognize triggers and warning signs that indicate others may be experiencing distress or negative emotions. This is especially important for those unable to communicate their feelings.
- Teach, model or demonstrate healthy ways to express emotions and coping skills or strategies to manage stress.

Stay Connected

- Check-in on your friends and loved ones.
- Reach out to someone else who may be struggling or isolated by themselves. For example, social apps such as Nextdoor are utilizing their services to connect neighbors and to identify people nearby that may need help. It is important to maintain social distancing while doing so.
- Use technology to find creative ways to maintain social networks:
 - Use FaceTime, Facebook Messenger Video Chat, Zoom or other free video-conferencing software that allows you to connect to one or more people at a time.



- Schedule dinner dates or game nights with your friends and family via phone or video-conferencing.

Maintain healthy daily life routines as much as possible

- This includes getting sufficient rest, getting sufficient nutrition and making healthy food choices, engaging in physical activity and exercise, staying in touch with others, maintaining good hygiene and appearances, following a regular schedule, completing normal chores and household duties, etc.

Find meaningful activities to fill your free time and keep yourself and others occupied. While typical indoor activities (i.e. games, puzzles, TV, etc.) are great ways to pass the time, it is important to get creative and find new activities as well.

- For example, you can find ways to get outdoors or spread joy in your neighborhood while maintaining social distancing (decorate your windows, make and display funny yard signs, write or draw encouraging messages or symbols using sidewalk chalk, have a picnic in your yard, etc.).
- Look to social media and sites such as Pinterest to find other fun activities to engage in. Many tourist attractions are offering free online tours (museums, theme parks, aquariums, zoos, etc.) and musicians and celebrities are offering free online concerts, storytime, cooking classes, exercise classes and more.

Seek out hope

- Dig into your faith or spirituality practices to find reassurance and connect with others. Many churches, for example, are live-streaming their services and still holding virtual gatherings via video-conferencing.
- Practice informational distancing. Minimize watching, reading, or listening to the news about COVID-19. Seek information to stay informed from trusted sources, but set some personal limits and try not to immerse yourself to the point of increased anxiety or stress about the situation.
- Seek out good news and positive stories. There are many great sources for this online and in social media. Videos and stories of how people are coming together all over the world to encourage and support each other are everywhere if you just look for them. This is one of my favorites: <https://youtu.be/TDyt44iy97I>

While it is easy to get swept up in the information overload surrounding COVID-19 and how it will affect all of us in the days to come, it is important to not overlook our mental health as we navigate through this. It is critical that we all stay grounded and take things one day at a time. Stay informed and do your part to help yourself and others. We will get through this...together.

Additional Mental Health Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
<https://www.centerforstartservices.org/covid-19-resources>



<https://mhanational.org/covid19>

<https://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

Self-Care for DSPs: <https://nadsp.org/covid-19resources/>

- **Job Postings:**

- **Tennessee Early Childhood Intervention (TEIS)**

- Davidson County – 3 positions

- Rutherford County – 3 Positions

- Job Overview

- Summary: Under general supervision, is responsible for professional social counseling work and/or service coordination of average difficulty; and performs related work as required by department.

- Work Activities include gathering information, monitoring processes, materials or surroundings, communicating with persons outside of the organization, documenting and recording information, making decisions and problem-solving.

- To view the whole job description and apply, please click the following link:

- <https://bit.ly/2UESa2j> and search TEIS in the search bar.

- **Council on Developmental Disabilities Accepting Grant Applications to Support People with Disabilities during COVID-19:**

- The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities is encouraging people with disabilities, families of people with disabilities, and disability non-profit organizations to apply for new, one-time grants through its scholarship fund.

- The Council special funding grants are to be used for technology to support people with disabilities to grow their leadership skills and stay connected during social distancing with COVID-19.

- Funds must be used to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their families by:

- Promoting their health and well-being;
 - Providing opportunities for leadership development;
 - Creating social distancing-compliant activity and engagement with family, friends, and peers;
 - Decreasing anxiety due to social distancing;



- And/or increasing positive shared experiences.

Grant amounts are: \$500 per individual, \$1,000 per family, and \$1,500 per agency/organization. The funding will be offered as reimbursement. Priority will be given to people with disabilities and family members, especially from rural communities.

Applications are due by May 30, 2020. For more details and to fill out the online grant application, visit: bit.ly/TNCDDCovid19.

- **Seating and Positioning Clinics make Face Masks:**

Shoutout to our East Seating and Positioning clinic team who is working hard at making cloth nose and mouth coverings for employees and people at DIDD East Tennessee Homes! The [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) recommends that you stay home - but if you can't for work or grocery essentials, they say you should be covering your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others and stay 6-feet apart. Thank you to all of our employees across Tennessee who are working hard to keep the people we support and themselves safe and healthy.



You can read more CDC guidance on their website, like routinely washing the face cloths, at this link: <https://bit.ly/2UVID1E>

- **Seating and Positioning Maintenance:**



While our regional Seating and Positioning Clinics have suspended clinic appointments, DIDD has several videos and step-by-step guidance resources online for basic daily maintenance of seating and positioning equipment. They're all gathered on the DIDD website at this link: <https://bit.ly/39Vrm2f>

The clinics may continue to provide emergency services to some persons supported on a case-by-case basis. If a person supported has emergency seating and positioning needs, please contact Deborah Poirier at (615) 428-6254 to evaluate whether an exception may be granted.

Once clinic appointments resume, appointments that have been canceled will be rescheduled and new appointments will be scheduled.

Read the department's full COVID-19 guidance by visiting: www.tn.gov/didd/covid-19.html

Daily wheelchair cleaning

-  Use warm soapy water and a rag
-  Small toothbrush can help clean tilt mechanism
-  Pay special attention to the wheelchair frame
-  Wipe seat and back surfaces completely
-  If meals are in the chair, immediately clean any spills
-  Clean shoulder harness
-  Let everything air dry before the person transfers back to the chair