Are we getting and giving the advice and guidance we need?

How do we take care of each other and ourselves as the COVID-19 pandemic continues?

Abstinence Only vs Harm Reduction

Abstinence Only

Goal of immediate and complete abstinence-based lifestyle

Harm Reduction

Minimizing injury to self, others and the community

Harm Reduction Principals for COVID-19
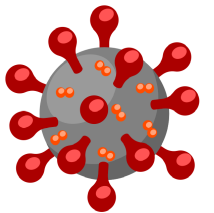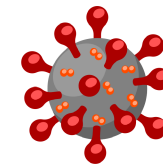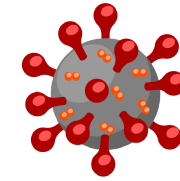
- **Be Pragmatic**
  - COVID-19 is here for the foreseeable future
  - Limit the exposure/risk of infections
- **Espouse Humanistic Values**
  - Respect individual's rights, culture and dignity
 - Accept their decisions
- **Focus on Harms**
  - Minimize negative consequences

HARM REDUCTION MEANS RESPECT, DIGNTY, COMPASSION

Harm Reduction Principals for COVID-19

- **Balance Cost-Benefit to individuals and community**
  - Identify consequences of decisions and costs and benefits for preventing these consequences
- **Establish Hierarchy of Goals and Priorities**
  - Address most immediate goals of patients
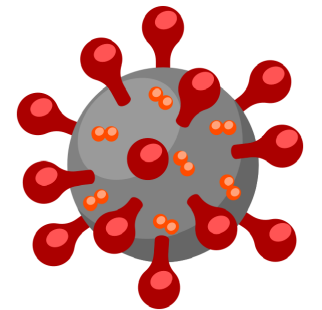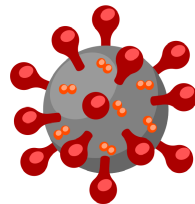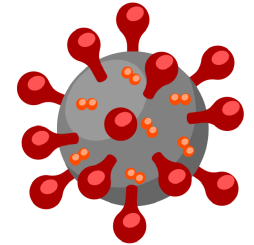 - Keep engaged in care
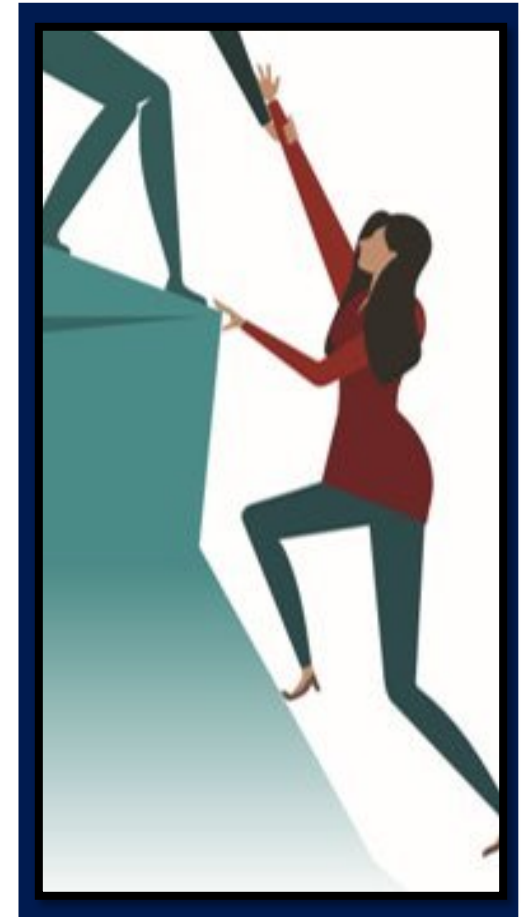
Main Recommendations in the COVID Era

Stay Safe Through:

- Hand Hygiene
- Physical Distancing
- Masks
- Clean and Disinfect
- Quarantine and Isolation

Adapted from the Weitzman Institute Community Health Center, Inc. – COVID-19 ECHO May 20, 2020

Having Conversations- Challenging Scenarios

- **Unable to physically distance**
- **Does not believe or follow recommendations**
- **Must return to work**
- **Vulnerable patients**
  - Housing insecurity
  - Congregate living
  - Limited income
  - Little access to information
- **Addressing misinformation**

Adapted from the Weitzman Institute Community Health Center, Inc. – COVID-19 ECHO May 20, 2020

Unable to Physically Distance

- **Family size, housing size, primary caretakers**

- **Harm reduction approach**
  - Use the resources available to best of ability
  - Keep physical distance within household; separate medically vulnerable
  - Sleep reverse or rearrange rooms
  - Artificial barriers
  - Handwashing
  - Disinfecting surfaces
  - Cluster becomes your family unit; isolate as a cluster
  - Create a sick plan

People that Do Not Believe/Follow Recommendations

- **People that do not think COVID is a and/or does not affect them**
  - Patients may not want to be labeled/ stigmatized
  - De-escalate the situation
  - Use evidence/data of what we know
  - Explain Herd immunity – without vaccine, will not get to
 - It's not the "me" it's the "we"

People Do Not Believe/Follow Recommendations

- **People that think it is too difficult to follow recommendations**
  - Plan as best you can to stay within guidelines
  - Know community resources
 - Organizations offering free masks/hand sanitizer

Work-Relate Challenges

- **People that are required to work, but do not want to**
  - Discuss what provisions are offered for protection
  - Make decisions on a case by case basis, depending on unique needs
  - Consider note to be out of work – will patient lose job?
  - Discuss if workplace can accommodate remote work; however, support people to work safely if they need to
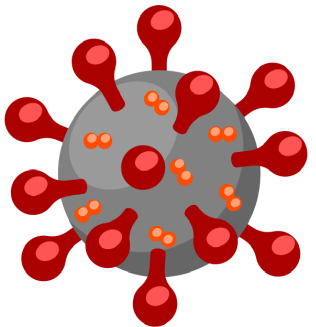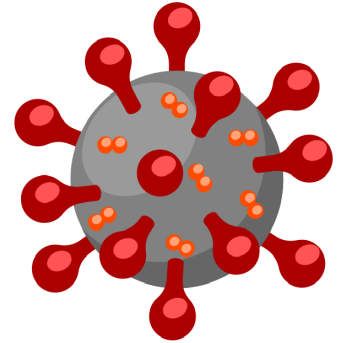
Work-Relate Challenges

- **High-risk people that want to return to work**
  - Understand if people can work from home
  - Discuss nature of what makes them high-risk and the risk to themselves and others if they return to work (both at work and at home)
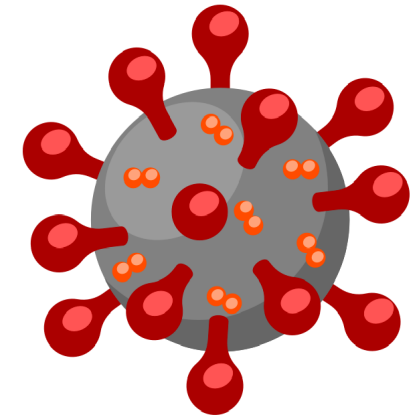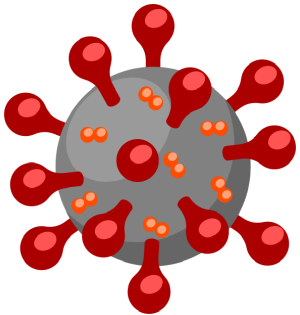
Vulnerable Population

- More individualized plan needed
- Modify the "norms" of care pre-COVID-19
- Ensure they have a plan and means to reach others at all times
- May require more outreach
  - Different types – go physically to the shelter, etc.
  - Information scission in community

Vulnerable Population

- Prescribe longer duration of medication
- Consider behavioral health consequences of re-traumatization/isolation; practice physical but not social distancing
- Consider a plan to address domestic violence

Addressing Misinformation and Information Overload

- Have difficult conversations without demeaning people

- Present facts only

- Discuss possible harms of misinformation

- Incorporate patient beliefs into overall treatment pan, if appropriate

- Locate culturally specific information materials

Adapted from the Weitzman Institute Community Health Center, Inc. – COVID-19 ECHO May 20, 2020

Thank You!