**COVID-19: What in the World is Going on?**

**Plain Talk for Pandemic Times**

**I feel fine.**

**Everyone looks okay.**

**Why is everything changing so fast?**

***What is going on? Why is everything changing so fast?***

A new virus has been spreading around the world.

Common symptoms include fever, dry cough, and breathing problems.

The official name for the virus is Novel Coronavirus 19, or COVID-19 for short.

* Novel means that it’s new. Scientists have not seen it before.
* Corona means it has little spikes that look like a crown when viewed under a microscope.
* 19 means it was identified in 2019 and has spread all over the world as people traveled.

***But a cold is a virus, and the world doesn’t shut down. Why is everyone so worried about this one?***

Different viruses do different things. Some viruses, like a cold, attach to the nose and throat.

COVID-19 attaches to the lungs where it makes copies of itself really fast. It’s hard for people to breathe. It is also hard on the heart.

People with weakened immune systems have a hard time fighting it off. For older people and people with health conditions, COVID-19 can be deadly.

Even if someone is young and healthy, they can still carry the virus without any symptoms and make other people sick. They can also get sick themselves.

***But why do I have to stay home?***

Because COVID-19 is new, scientists do not have a vaccine for it. And that makes it easier for more people to get it.

No vaccine + more infected people = strain on health care services.

The main point is, COVID-19 affects all of us, and it will take all of us to slow the spread.

***Aren’t people just overreacting?***

No. This is not an overreaction. Because there is no vaccine, and people can pass the virus without knowing it, it can overwhelm our healthcare system very quickly.

We need to help slow the spread so everyone can get help when they need it.

The only way to help slow the spread is to shut down all events and activities where people gather, keep a distance from each other when we go outside, and make sure to wash our hands and clean surfaces at home.

If we don’t do these things, and too many people get sick at the same time, there will not be enough doctors and hospitals to help everyone.

***I feel like I am being punished and my freedoms are being taken away.***

No one is being singled out to do this. We are all learning to adapt to this change…

and find new ways to connect with each other:

* FaceTime or text with friends and family.
* Use Zoom or Skype for video chats.
* Connect online with groups.
* Get online access to library media and books.
* Watch church services online.

Need Help? ask a friend, relative or support provider for assistance.

**What if my care providers can’t work or I need more help?**

If you are a client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), contact your case manager and let them know what’s going on.

**My workplace shut down. What do I do now?**

Due to the virus, businesses are closing, except for essential services (food, pharmacy and health care). If you have a job coach and your employer has told you not to come to work, talk to your job coach to help you understand what this means for you.

**Will I still get my benefits, like SSI?**

Yes. You will still get your monthly SSI/SSA check.

Social Security offices have closed for face-to-face contact, but they are still doing their work. If you have questions, call Social Security at 800-772-1213.

**How long will this last?**

It will take a while to get back to normal.

One way to cope with not knowing how long this will last is to focus on how to make things work with what we have.

We have helpful people everywhere—friends, family, neighbors, services.

We have technology to connect us.

We have resilience and the ability to face tough challenges.

We are all in this…together.

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