



## SUNY COVID SNAPSHOTS

### MODULE

### CONTENT

Module 4  
Lesson 1

#### Ensuring Accessible Services for Youth with Chronic Conditions

##### What qualifies as a chronic condition?

Lasts for 1 year or more and requires ongoing medical attention or limit activities. Disabilities that limit daily living:

- heart disease
- diabetes
- depression
- learning disabilities

##### Burden among Native American youth

Diabetes is 2x more prevalent among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) than non-Hispanic whites, often comorbid with other chronic conditions

##### Chronic conditions require specialized care!

Medication (prescriptions), equipment, physical therapy, over the counter supplies (gauze, tubing), personalized support.

Barriers to care due to COVID-19:	Strategies for successful treatment, medical adherence, telehealth
<p>(<a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7522296/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7522296/</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptions to daily structure and routine</li> <li>• Greater demands to self-care due to increased caregiver load</li> <li>• No support from in-home medical personnel</li> <li>• Routine medical procedures/treatments suddenly cancelled as non-critical</li> <li>• Rapid change to telehealth without transition support</li> <li>• Lack of engagement in health promotion behaviors (healthy meals, exercise)</li> </ul>	<p>(<a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7522296/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7522296/</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent patient-caregiver-provider communication</li> <li>• Support to transition to telehealth/virtual environments</li> <li>• Regular outpatient consultation via telemedicine</li> <li>• Non-judgmental perspective from providers</li> <li>• Considering whole (family, social, physical) environment</li> <li>• Home observations and patient reports</li> <li>• App-based medical adherence interventions</li> </ul>

##### Always remember the areas where the individual's learning disability impacts performance

- Maintain structure and routine
- One-step directions and short tasks



Module 4

Lesson 1

continued

- Acknowledge fears and struggles
- Emphasize fun activities that capitalize on strengths
  - Resources:
    - [https://ldaamerica.org/lda\\_today/the-snowball-effect-of-the-coronavirus-on-children-with-learning-disabilities-and-anxiety/](https://ldaamerica.org/lda_today/the-snowball-effect-of-the-coronavirus-on-children-with-learning-disabilities-and-anxiety/)
    - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/8756870520982294>
    - <https://illuminatives.org/nefa/>
    - <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/OMH-Modernizing-Health-Care-Physical-Accessibility.pdf>

Lesson 2 Strength-based Strategies for Urban Native Youth Coping with Isolation

Social isolation is the absence of social contact due to being disconnected from social networks. Isolation leads to loneliness, which is the emotional distress that results from feeling socially disconnected.

What causes social isolation and loneliness:

Mental and physical health problems, not living near family, living alone, dissatisfaction with family/social life, chronic illness, transportation issues, exposure to domestic/community violence, disconnection from culture.

Statistics:

79% of Gen Z and 71% of Millennials vs. 50% of Boomers report loneliness.



Isolation harms

Social isolation can increase risk of premature mortality by 29%

Increase heart disease by 29%, stroke risk by 32%. Poorer general health and wellbeing, especially related to depression, deaths of despair such as drug and alcohol-related deaths/suicide.

Strengths-based strategies for coping with isolation

Behavioral lifestyle factors:

- Better sleep and exercise
- Medical adherence
- Engagement in extracurricular activities
- Making cultural activities more accessible
- Holding virtual healing ceremonies
- Providing art kits for activities.

Overcoming barriers to make strategies accessible

- Public transportation to connect youth to their community – bus passes, subway cards, gas cards.
- Family-friendly policies: paid family leave, flexible schedules, paid time off for part time employees (often youth).



Module 4  
**Lesson 2**  
continued

- Food and nutrition – community gardens for growing food and medicine, expanding benefits to farmers markets, education on minimizing food waste and providing transportation or food to underserved communities.
- Technology: providing BOTH equipment like smartphones, iPads or laptops and internet or data for accessing virtual activities.

**Lesson 3**

**Supporting Youth with Identity Formation during COVID-19**

**What is “Identity Formation”?**

In the broadest sense, Identity Formation means finding one’s place in the world. In youth and young adults, identity formation is a critical aspect of the transition period that is known in life course theory as “Emerging Adulthood.”

**What happens during identity formation?**

- A sense of self is developed – WHO you are, WHAT you believe, WHY you believe what you believe.
- A moral code is created – their own ideals and ethics
- Affiliation with labels and groups to find belonging and connectedness
- Groups to identify with (people who are like them).
- Moving away from family or family values or finally accepting their family values.
- Independence, emotionally/financially/physically
- Pursuit of higher goals (education) movement towards long term career

**Challenges due to COVID-19**

- Losing cultural knowledge and skills (for example)
- Not able to accomplish or celebrate milestones: getting a driver’s license, graduation, ceremonies, events
- Sudden changes, disruption of routine
- Being “stuck” literally and figuratively with family, (especially in highly populated areas there may not be space to go outside, escape)
- Can’t explore self, may be in unwelcoming or abusive environment
- Not being able to do sports, clubs, things that give a sense of self-worth and growth.
- Not having someone to talk to – not just a hotline, an actual connection,
- Re-integration after COVID lockdowns: difficulty re-establishing a new routine, handling changes (might have to change again)

**Suggestions for supporting identity formation (personal)**

- Give youth opportunities to interact with the Native community
- Send consistent and frequent reminders for events
- Be a sounding board – be there to listen and support
- Have a non-judgmental patient attitude
- Emphasize the importance of self-care, especially practicing patience with oneself
- Be the role model – lead by example