### 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:

| Disruptions to daily structure and routine | Consistent patient-caregiver-provider communication |
| Greater demands to self-care due to increased caregiver load | Support to transition to telehealth/virtual environments |
| No support from in-home medical personnel | Regular outpatient consultation via telemedicine |
| Routine medical procedures/treatments suddenly cancelled as non-critical | Non-judgmental perspective from providers |
| Rapid change to telehealth without transition support | Considering whole (family, social, physical) environment |
| Lack of engagement in health promotion behaviors (healthy meals, exercise) | Home observations and patient reports |
| App-based medical adherence interventions |

### Strategies for successful treatment, medical adherence, telehealth

**Always remember the areas where the individual’s learning disability impacts performance**

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

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