

## March 2025

## National Developmental Disabilities Month

**Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** is a celebration to promote the inclusion, understanding and equity for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) in our communities, workplaces and schools (3).

In March, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), along with other community partners, join together to highlight how community integration makes our neighborhoods stronger and more diverse (3).

First established by President Regan's Proclamation in 1987 to increase awareness of individuals with DD in all aspects of community life, as well as to bring attention to existing barriers (3).

### Community Integration

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enacted in 1990 bans the unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities in a regulation called "the integration mandate" (1) (2).

The ADA requires state and local governments that provide services to individuals with disabilities to offer those services in their homes and communities, not just in institutions (1).

Community integration includes and welcomes individuals with DD into the larger community. Community integration enables individuals with DD to participate totally in life at the same level as their non-disabled peers (1) (4).

For community integration to be a long-term success, individuals with DD must have equal access to:

- Civic engagement.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Healthcare.
- Housing.
- Peer support.
- Recreation and leisure activities.
- Spirituality and religion.
- Valued social roles (marriage, parenting, etc.) (4).



### Examples of Community Integration Activities

Community integration comes in different forms, and programs which involve a variety of activities, instruction, and services for a mix of people to include individuals with and without DD.

Examples of community integration might include:

- Joining community sports leagues.
- Taking public transportation.
- Participating in recreation center programs.
- Going to plays, concerts, or sporting events.
- Visiting museums or historical societies.
- Volunteering with charitable organizations.
- Joining interest clubs.
- Participating in faith communities.
- Visiting neighborhood parks or nature centers (4) (2).

### Factors That Affect Community Integration

Several issues affect the ability for an individual with DD to participate in community integration.

These include but are not limited to the:

- Severity of disability and/or an individual's impairment.
- Accessibility, or lack thereof, to community surroundings.
- Availability of assistive technologies and devices.
- Fundamental cultural and political influences and/or the beliefs in the community.
- Degree of support from caregivers, family, friends and overall community (4) (2).

Please direct questions or concerns regarding the Office of Integrated Health Supports Network "Health Trends" newsletter to [communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov)

### App of the Month



Access Now is sharing accessibility information about places around the world. Search for specific places like a restaurant, hotel or store, or browse the map to see what is nearby with the accessibility features you require. If info isn't already on our map, you can add it yourself and contribute to our worldwide community. Filter the map by category and tags and find the access that you need now. (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS Office of Integrated Health-Health Supports Network. User accepts full responsibility for utilization of app).

### Reference

1. [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\). \(n.d.\) Community integration. U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division.](#)
2. [Dubé, K. \(2023, October\). Community integration: What it is, and example activities. Foothold Technology. \[Internet\].](#)
3. [National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities \(NACDD\). \(2025, February\). Developmental disabilities awareness month. \[Internet\].](#)
4. [United Disability Services \(UDS\). \(2021, March\). The importance of community integration for people with disabilities. \[Internet\].](#)

## March 2025



### ABA Snippets ...

#### **"Luck, Superstitions, and the Behavior Science Behind St. Patrick's Day Traditions"**

St. Patrick's Day is synonymous with green attire, shamrocks, a collective belief in mystical creatures—and of course luck. People worldwide celebrate the holiday, and many engage in superstitions based on the idea that certain actions or items will bring good fortune. Behavior science can help us understand how these traditions and other superstitions like protecting your mother by avoiding stepping on a crack and wearing a deteriorating shirt for a favorable football game outcome have been able to persist in the modern world.

The connection between behavior and outcome, also known as operant conditioning, is at the heart of superstitious beliefs. B.F. Skinner's famous experiments with pigeons demonstrated that animals could develop "superstitious" behaviors by associating an action with a reward, even when there was no causal link between the two. A pigeon might turn counterclockwise or thrust its head into a corner of the cage before receiving food, and over time, it would continue to perform that action, as if it influenced an outcome, even though the food delivery was occurring on a time-based schedule and entirely independent of the elaborate performance (1).

The principles of behavior apply to all living organisms, and similar superstitious behavior patterns can emerge in humans as well. People may wear green or follow certain rituals, such as finding a four-leaf clover, and then experience good fortune, even though the "lucky" event may be completely coincidental. In the same way the pigeon's performance of turns and head thrusts was established, a person may continue carrying out the ritual even if it does not have any real impact on outcomes.

From a behavior science perspective, luck and superstitions are learned behaviors reinforced by repeated experience and passed down culturally. Whether or not the green attire or clover truly influences our fortune may be irrelevant as many will enjoy a little extra luck this St. Patrick's Day.

You may contact DBHDS about these efforts via the following: [nick.vanderburg@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:nick.vanderburg@dbhds.virginia.gov)

#### References

1. Skinner, B. F. (1948). 'Superstition' in the pigeon. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 38(2), 168–172. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0055873>

## **Norovirus – Norovirus – Norovirus – Norovirus – Norovirus - Norovirus**

Norovirus is a group of viruses which cause severe vomiting and diarrhea. It is a very contagious virus which is easily passed from person to person. It is also called the "24 Hour" bug or "Stomach flu". There is no cure for norovirus.

Norovirus outbreaks usually happen seasonally in colder months. The infection is the No. 1 cause of foodborne illness in the United States.

Norovirus spreads easily through:

- Close contact with someone who has the virus.
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the mouth or nose.
- Eating or drinking contaminated foods or beverages.

Symptoms usually appear between 12 to 48 hours after exposure to the virus and last for one to three days. Symptoms of norovirus include:

- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Stomach pain.

In addition, there may also be:

- A headache.
- Fever.
- Body aches.

**Most people with norovirus feel better in a day or two after their symptoms have stopped but remain contagious for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea.**

Medical practitioners recommend individuals remain home for at least two days after their symptoms have resolved as to not spread the virus to others.

The virus can stay in the stool for two weeks or more after recovery.

Some precautions to take to reduce the spread of norovirus include:

- Washing hands often with soap and water. Using hand sanitizer doesn't kill norovirus particles as effectively as hand washing.
- Washing food before eating it (fruits and vegetables).
- Cooking food thoroughly (especially seafood or shellfish) or to an appropriate temperature (at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit, or 62.77 degrees Celsius).
- Avoiding contact with people who have a norovirus infection.
- Cleaning and sanitizing highly touched surfaces and objects.
- Washing clothes thoroughly, especially if they're soiled.

If you have a norovirus infection, you should not prepare food or take care of others, as you're at risk of spreading the infection.

Treatment for the infection focuses on relieving symptoms to include:

- Drinking plenty of liquids, especially liquids that contain electrolytes.
- Getting a lot of rest.
- Eating soft, bland foods.

Norovirus can lead to serious dehydration in older and younger individuals, along with individuals who are medically fragile. If signs and symptoms of dehydration are present seek medical attention right away, don't wait, severer dehydration requires IV fluids.

#### References

1. [Cleveland Clinic. \(2023, February\). Norovirus. \[Internet\].](#)
2. [Mayo Clinic. \(2024, March\). Stomach flu: How long am I contagious? \[Internet\].](#)

