



Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services

Part 2: Guidance for Vaccinating Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

Presented by:

**The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services**

**The Office of Integrated Health
Health Supports Network**

The Day of the Clinic: Things to Know

Sensory Issues to Consider

- Giving individuals pictorial checklists upon arrival with clear, easy to read information can help individuals and caregivers stay informed and may reduce anxiety on vaccination day.
- If the room (auditorium, etc.) cannot be less overwhelming, consider offering noise-reduction headphones and/or sunglasses to reduce sensory overload for individuals.



Sensory Issues to Consider

- Individuals with intellectual disabilities can sense negativity more easily than the rest of us, so please try to be positive.
- No one can see you smile behind your mask, so please use a friendly tone of voice.
- Be patient, it may take individuals with I/DD longer to follow directions and/or answer your questions.
- Be encouraging, friendly and positive.
- Some individuals with I/DD (especially those with autism) may not like to be “touched”. Please be respectful of their personal space.



Be Welcoming to Caregivers and Family Members

- Most individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have caregivers (family members, direct service providers, friends, etc.) who help them with day-to-day activities.
- Encourage family members and/or other caregivers to accompany individuals to the vaccination site.
- If family members or other caregivers will be accompanying the person being vaccinated, ask if they will need to be vaccinated at the same time, so everyone is accounted for in the schedule.



Some Important Things to Know

Here are some things individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities might want their vaccinators to know:

- I might feel anxious, and a new environment with loud noises and bright lights might make this worse.
- My caregiver must stay with me to at all times throughout the process to communicate my needs, maintain my safety, and address any of my concerns.



Some Important Things to Know continued...

- Distraction helps me.
- Tools like fidgets or offering to hold an individual's hand.
- Ask for my caregiver's help.
- Encouragement helps.
- Please tell me that I am doing a good job, or that I am being brave and strong.
- Be clear about expectations.



Some Important Things to Know continued...

- I may not think to start a discussion to distract myself, so please feel free to begin a discussion with me.
- Some things you can ask me are my favorite song or activity.
- Or even ask me what helps me feel calm.



Tips for Administering Vaccines continued...

- Ask the individual and caregivers if they any questions about the vaccine.
- Some people with disabilities may have questions or concerns, which are not common among other people.
- Have accessible materials on site which gives more information about the vaccine, any potential side effects, and when the vaccinated person needs to return for a second dose, if needed.
- A reward or a sticker at the end always helps.



Share Personal Experiences of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

- You can download a Vaccination Visual Story from Jefferson Hospital here:
<https://hospitals.jefferson.edu/content/dam/health/PDFs/departments/COVIDVaccineVisualStory.pdf>
- You can download a copy of **Kory's Story**: Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine here:
<https://centerforstartservices.org/sites/www.centerforstartservices.org/files/korysstorygettingthecovid19vaccine.pdf>



After the Vaccine

Special Accommodations: After the Vaccine

- Monitor for allergic reactions for 15-30 minutes, per CDC guidance. (Please remember: I/DD individuals may not understand abstract concepts such as: headache, nausea, dizziness, etc.)
- Provide accessible information about whom to call if the person has questions or concerns post vaccination.
- Consider providing chairs that rock, or sensory spaces people can use for their 15-minute wait. They can all be great resources, assuming they can be sanitized and kept COVID-19 safe.
- If I am waiting and being watched for 15 minutes, please give me updates on the time.

The Second Vaccine Dose

- Schedule the vaccination appointment for the second dose, if one is needed, (if not already scheduled).
- Ask the individual and caregiver if they have any questions or concerns about scheduling for their second dose.
- Develop a plan to remind people about the second-dose appointment, when needed.
- Encourage the person who was vaccinated to sign up for [V-safe](#), CDC's after vaccination health checker.



Additional Resources

Support Organizations for More Information

Reach out to partner organizations who serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as:

- The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).
- Other state agencies on aging and disabilities.
- Centers for Independent Living.
- Community-based organizations and advocacy groups.
- Veterans' groups.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Tribal organizations, and others to identify vaccine needs and accessible locations.

Resources

Free Online Trainings & Webinars

- [Strategies for Addressing Anxiety Related to COVID-19](#) (AUCD Webinar recorded 6.24.2020) - Dr. Karen Weigle, Associate Director, and Dr. Jill Hinton, Clinical Director, Center for START Services
- [COVID-19 Toolkit for DSPs](#) (NADSP)- Resources to help DSPs take care of themselves during the Crisis
- [MH Treatment Approaches in a World with COVID: You can do it!](#) with Dr. Katy Stratigos (Virtual SNTI May 2020) - [Q&A with Dr. Stratigos](#)
- [The Science of Hope in a Time of Crisis](#) (START/AUCD Webinar recorded 4.15.2020) - Dr. Dan Tomasulo
- [Violence & Mental Illness: The Real Story](#) (AUCD Webinar recorded 9.26.2019) - Dr. Jill Hinton, Center for START Services Clinical Director
- [Mental Health Diagnosis in IDD: Bio-psycho-social Approach](#) (AUCD Webinar recorded 10.18.2017) - Dr. Roberto Blanco, NC START Medical Director & Dr. Jill Hinton, Center for START Services Clinical Director
- [Trauma-Informed Care Throughout the Lifespan \(AUCD Webinar\)](#) - Dr. Jill Hinton, Center for START Services Clinical Director
- [Mental Health Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(MHW-IDD\)](#) a free 6 module training from Texas Health and Human Services developed in partnership with Dr. Joan B Bealsey, Center for START Services Director
- [Trauma Informed Care: Perspectives and Resources:](#) A comprehensive web-based, video-enhanced resource tool from Georgetown University's National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health

Resources

Parent, Family, Caregiver Resources

- [Family Matters Toolkit by HCARDD](#) - This toolkit is for caregivers who are interested in improving the health and health care of a family member with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The resources included in this toolkit can be used together, or as stand-alone materials, depending on your needs, goals and existing resources.
- [Health Care Resources for People with DD and Caregivers \(Health Passports, Communication Tools, About Going to the Hospital\)](#) by HCARDD
- [Autism-related materials from the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center](#). *Publications include tip sheets, booklets, and more available through the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and its affiliates.*
- [Autism resources for parents from Autism Speaks](#)
- [STOMP: Stopping the over medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both](#) easy read leaflet from NHS England
- [Genetics education materials for parents and schools from GEMSS](#)
- [Developmental Monitoring and Screening](#) from the CDC (in English and En español)

Healthcare Provider Resources

- [Healthcare for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Toolkit for Primary Care Providers](#) from the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
- [Free Webinars from the National Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry](#)
- [Autism related resources for healthcare professionals from Autism Speaks](#)
- [Genetic education materials for school success \(GEMSS\)](#) resources for healthcare providers
- [Improving Emergency Care for adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Toolkit for Providers](#) from HCARDD
- [Implementing Health Checks for Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Toolkit for Primary Care Providers](#) from HCARDD

Resources

Health Care Provider Resources - Positive Psychology Resources

- [UPenn Authentic Happiness Website](#)
- [PERMA infographic](#) from PositivePsychologyProgram.com
- [Positive psychology books](#) written by leaders in the field
- [VIA Institute on Character](#)
- [The Positive Psychology Center](#)
- [The Greater Good Science Center](#) at UC Berkeley
- [Greater Good in Action](#): Science-based practices for a meaningful life
- [VIA Institute on Character](#)

Websites & Organizations

- [AUCD Mental Health Aspects of IDD Special Interest Group](#) - The Mental Health Aspects of I/DD Special Interest Group (MH SIG) at AUCD provides information to Network members on critical issues related to mental health for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
- [Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities National Training Center](#)
- [Mental Health –Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(1998-2009\)](#) - Former groundbreaking journal in IDD-MH developed by Anne Hurley PhD and Robert Sovner MD that continues to offer valuable information today
- [National Center for Trauma-Informed Care](#) (NCTIC) a program of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- [National Center for Cultural Competence](#) at Georgetown University
- [Center for Child and Human Development](#) at Georgetown University
- [Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin](#) (Read: [Policy](#)

Resources

Websites & Organizations

- [Recommendations: Addressing the Mental Health and Wellness of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities \(IDD\)](#)
- [The Positive Psychology Center](#) at the University of Pennsylvania
- [American Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities \(AAIDD\)](#)
- [American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry \(AADMD\)](#)
- [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](#)
- [National Disability Navigator Resource Collaborative](#)
- [Genetics Education Materials for School Success \(GEMSS\)](#) a program from the New England Regional Genetics Network (nergn)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry \(AACAP\)](#)
- [US National Library of Medicine MedlinePlus](#)

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>

Jefferson Health (2021). Vaccine visual story,
<file:///C:/Users/dha92624/Documents/COVIDVaccineVisualStory.pdf>

Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (2020). COVID-19-Vaccine-Information-in-Plain-Language.pdf. <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information-in-Plain-Language.pdf>

The Center for START Services at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability/UCED (2021). Kory's Story: Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine.
<https://centerforstartservices.org/sites/www.centerforstartservices.org/files/korysstorygettingthecovid19vaccine.pdf>



Thank You

**from the Office of Integrated Health
(OIH) at the Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health and Developmental
Services (DBHDS)**

If you have any questions or concerns send them to
communitynursing@dbhds.virginia.gov