



# *Reach For Your Potential, Inc.*

1705 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Suite I, Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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August 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and individuals served,

I want to reach out to everyone again regarding COVID-19, its impact on Reach For Your Potential and the individuals we serve. It has been a very busy and stressful few months since I last communicated. We have had no members ill with COVID-19, however we had eight Direct Care staff that have tested positive for COVID-19 since mid-March. All of these staff have recovered and are back to work.

Moving forward to this fall and winter, I am very concerned that the pandemic may worsen over the next 2-3 months. There is a significant chance we will see an increase in the number of positive cases in Johnson County once the University of Iowa classes start this fall.

In addition to a potential increase in exposure due to the students return, the regular influenza (flu) season starts in November and December. Influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses, but are caused by different viruses. Unfortunately, some of the symptoms of each illness are similar, such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. This makes our job more difficult in identification, preparation and notification of a potential COVID-19 exposure.

We continue to take the COVID-19 threat very seriously and are planning for the next 6-8 months. RFYP is in the process of purchasing enough personal protective equipment, such as gloves and face masks to last this time frame. We are also working with Towncrest Pharmacy to provide an influenza shot clinic for both members and staff, to help reduce the impact of the regular flu season.

For the past few months I have required staff to wear face masks when working in the homes. In addition, staff take their temperature before starting their shift which is recorded and tracked daily. The member temperatures continue to be taken three times per day and are also recorded and tracked daily.

**With the potential increase in cases, I ask that visitors, including guardians and family members, to wear face masks at all times while in the home and have their temperatures taken when entering the homes. Any visitor with a temperature greater than 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit should not remain in the home.**

In addition, RFYP will quarantine a home in the following circumstances:

- If an employee informs RFYP that they had close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 2 minutes without both parties wearing face masks) with an individual that tested positive for COVID-19
- If a RFYP employee has symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, headache and/or cough
- If a member has close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 2 minutes without both parties wearing face masks) with an individual that tested positive for COVID-19
- If a member has symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, headache and/or cough



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The length of time that a home is under quarantine varies depending on the results of the employee or member test, but could be as long as fourteen days. During the time a home is quarantined the members will remain in the homes, avoid social interactions and have limited visitors as much as possible. Guardians will be notified when a home is quarantined and also notified when the quarantine is lifted.

Staffing at the homes, apartments, and the office has remained constant during the past few months. This fall and winter, if we see a decrease in Direct Care staff due to illness, then we may need to reduce the number of Direct Care staff at some locations. We continue to review staffing at all locations, and if one staff is able to meet the needs of the individuals, then staff may be reduced. Some non-essential job duties may also be on hold. Direct Care staff will need to prioritize job duties that involve supervision, personal cares, medication management and meal preparation.

With an increase in the number of cases in Johnson County, we are continuing to enforce the importance of social distancing. We are asking staff to take members on activities where they will not be around other people, such as going for walks or taking car rides. If a member wants to eat food from a restaurant, then we suggest that they eat outside or have food picked up and brought home to eat. Most of the grocery shopping is still purchased online and picked up at the stores.

My hope is that COVID-19 will have limited impact on the services that we provide this fall and winter. Our top priority continues to be the protection of the members we serve. By continuing to implement the protocols that are described above, we will all get through this difficult time together. If you have any questions, just let me know.

Thank you,

Ronald Schieffer, Executive Director