

## Talking with Potential Job Seekers about the Coronavirus

The document that begins on the following page is meant to help guide a conversation between IPS specialists or peer specialists with IPS participants about Covid-19. The goal is to provide information about going back to work during this pandemic, and to help individuals weigh the risks and benefits to employment.

Talking about the pandemic can cause anxiety for some people. But not talking about what is going on can also be stressful. Some people may prefer to discuss parts of the document on different days so that they do not feel overwhelmed.

Discussions about personal safety should be ongoing. Individuals may change their perspectives if a person in their life becomes infected, if their living situation changes, or if the numbers of new cases of COVID-19 increase in their area.

Tips for talking with IPS participants:

- Listen.
- Avoid language that could blame others and lead to stigma.
- Pay attention to information individuals have and provide accurate information, as needed. Double check information with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) or local public health departments.
- Keep information simple as you focus on health and safety.
- Discuss actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## **Considering Employment During the Pandemic**

Why do you want to return to work now?

Do you have concerns about working now? What are they?

### **Transportation**

Taking a bus or train to work can put you at risk of becoming infected. One solution would be to consider jobs near your home so that you can walk or ride a bike to work. If you decide to use public transportation you will be safer if you wear a mask, stay as far from others as possible, avoid touching your face, and wash your hands as soon as you get to work.

What are your plans for getting to and from work?

### **Ways to be safer at work**

Wearing a mask can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. What is your plan to wear a mask at work?

Washing your hands frequently with soap and water is helpful. You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. If that is not possible, use hand sanitizer and rub your hands together for at least 30 seconds. Do you have hand sanitizer?

Avoid touching your face.

Stay at least six feet away from others on the job if you can. Evaluate different work environments to determine where you may be able to stay apart from other people. An example of a job that allows distancing may be working as an evening janitor in an office building.

Working outside can be safer than working inside. Examples of outside jobs are landscapers, groundskeepers, some construction workers, road workers, lifeguards, newspaper delivery people, snow removal jobs, and crossing guards.

Riding elevators with other people can be unsafe because elevators are small spaces. Take the stairs if you are able to do that.

What type of job do you think you want to obtain?

### **Promote the safety of others**

If you are sick, even if you don't know for sure that you have COVID-19, STAY HOME.

Use your elbow or a tissue to cover your face when you cough or sneeze.

Wash your hands frequently for twenty seconds (sing the Happy Birthday song).

Take special caution to avoid exposing the elderly and people with underlying health conditions because even if you feel well, you could have the virus. Avoid going near others who may be more vulnerable.

Consider your housemates and family members because you could accidentally bring the virus home. Discuss your interest in employment with them. Is anyone at home more vulnerable?

Who lives with you?

Do those people have health problems or are they over 65 years?

Have you discussed your interest in employment with them?

**Pre-existing conditions** may make COVID-19 more dangerous for you. People of all ages who have underlying health conditions that are not well controlled are at high risk for serious infections. Do you have any pre-existing conditions you would like to talk about, or would you like more information?

Researchers do not yet know all of the possible risk factors for COVID-19. And they do not fully understand why some people have few symptoms, while others require hospitalizations. For up-to-date information, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>, The World Health Organization ([https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019?gclid=Cj0KCQjwudb3BRC9ARIsAEavUtVDWgndzMpC3MILoyaHiPDH4PksfOyMHj3Bx8a3WcSh0WejRjoJHYaAv2KEALw\\_wcB](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019?gclid=Cj0KCQjwudb3BRC9ARIsAEavUtVDWgndzMpC3MILoyaHiPDH4PksfOyMHj3Bx8a3WcSh0WejRjoJHYaAv2KEALw_wcB)), and your local public health department.

**Consider your options**

What are my options? <i>Examples: get any available job, look for jobs that may be safer, avoid employment, make plans to be safer at work...</i>	Possible advantages of each option (and rate 1-5: terribly important =5, not important =1)	Possible disadvantages of each option (and rate 1-5: terribly important =5, not important =1)
<i>Example: I could get a job that is close to my home so that I don't have to take a bus to work.</i>  Example: I could remain unemployed until the pandemic ends.	One advantage is that I could earn money (5). I would feel safer by not using public transportation (4).  I would be much safer (4).	If the job doesn't allow social distancing I could still be at risk (4).  I would not earn any money (5).

What are my options? Examples: get any available job, look for jobs that may be safer, avoid employment with/without employment benefits...	Possible advantages of each option (and rate 1-5: terribly important =5, not important =1)	Possible disadvantages of each option (and rate 1-5: terribly important =5, not important =1)

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 IPS specialist/peer specialist signature

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 Date

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or  Discussion was not in person