

# Quarterly Newsletter

8<sup>th</sup> Edition | June 2020



Washington  
State  
Independent  
Living Council

## DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

BY KIM CONNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we all continue to navigate this unprecedented time together, let us take comfort and gain strength in our collective efforts to advocate for individuals with disabilities. Let's be honest: working in our respective roles to support those we care for during a global pandemic is stressful and daunting. If you feel overwhelmed or feel like you aren't doing enough, you are not alone! Sometimes we may think to ourselves that our contributions are small. It is my hope that of all the lessons learned throughout the pandemic, we learn that every individual's contributions are important and vital.

WASILC continues to advocate and educate on behalf of the disability community. Our efforts include: the need for PPE for support staff accompanying people with disabilities to the hospital, to their doctor appointments, and to COVID-19 testing sites; and the importance of people with disabilities being counted in testing positive and morbidity. Without this vital data, systems deployed during an emergency will not have accurate information to effectively plan for the disability community. Data and information is key to effective planning and implementation for the next wave of COVID or any other disaster/emergency.

Silver linings: State and local emergency departments, health departments, and municipalities are reaching out—in a bigger way—to disability organizations to collaborate and develop policy to address the accessible needs of the disability community. Collaborative efforts include input in developing accessible testing sites, effective communication strategies, and convening weekly meetings by the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Preparedness (CIEP), a WASILC program. CIEP is collecting data on the gaps/barriers and best practices during the pandemic. A report will be issued that will better inform planners, providers, and policy makers.

Lastly, I want to give a shout out to Todd Holloway, Emergency Liaison with the Center For Independence (CFI) and Chairperson of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee. Todd played an integral part in advocating at the national level for CARES Act funding for Centers for Independent Living (CIL) by sharing local stories about the effects of COVID on the consumers they serve. He shared these stories with NCIL, who in turn included these stories as part of their advocacy efforts with key legislators in securing additional funding for the Centers.

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# CENTRAL WASHINGTON DISABILITY RESOURCES (CWDR): WORKING IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

By: Joshua Hackney, CWDR Youth Transition Coordinator

As individuals throughout the world are asked to social distance and stay at home, CWDR continues to answer the call advocating for all persons with disabilities throughout central Washington. Our agency is taking the necessary measures to ensure the safety of both consumers and staff. CWDR is working with its consumers to identify barriers that impede their independence as we all, to some extent, are facing due to the COVID-19 virus.

The measures set in place outline social distancing, wearing face masks, and having hand sanitizer on hand. Currently, we are not able to meet with individuals in person, yet we are checking on the individuals we are serving, taking calls, finding creative solutions to assist individuals with disabilities to advocate, obtain resources and information necessary to mitigate potential exposure, and to use webinars, and assistive technology to conduct skills and activities programs, to lessen the isolation, decrease depression, and maintain in-home activities and skill-based modules while keeping people in touch with one another.

Our agency is also collaborating with various area resources to assess barriers locally and statewide so that we are able to advocate and meet the needs of persons with disabilities while we face a historical pandemic. Persons with disabilities are especially prone to secondary illnesses which can be life threatening.

Through this pandemic, how can you help? Do what you can to support the small businesses that are staying open to do take-out or delivery. Do you have a family member, friend, or neighbor who is elderly, has a disability, or has difficulty leaving the house, or should not leave their home? Find out if there is anything they need that you

could drop off at a prearranged time at their doorstep. Does someone need medications filled?

Contact groups like Girl Scouts to assist their fundraising through the masks that they have made. Donate to nonprofits that are working to advocate for individuals with disabilities. This could be by donating face masks, food or even money to help lighten the impact that we face. For those of you supporting the health and safety of our community, we give our utmost appreciation. From health care providers, to public health, city and county officials, who are working tirelessly to work at reopening safely, but also to reduce the negative economic impact. Just say thank you!



Central Washington Disability Resources

## Quick COVID-19 Resources

1. [Drive-in Wi-Fi hotspots available statewide.](#) Click on the [map](#) of locations.
2. The Red Cross is offering *free* virtual family assistance for anyone. Click [here](#).
3. The American Association on Health & Disability (AAHD) has an on-going video series for disability-related topics related to COVID-19 on their [YouTube channel](#).

For more resources, visit [wasilc.org](#).

# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Because we are managing the tasks of daily life amidst a global health pandemic and a national crisis, it is imperative that we focus individually on our mental health, show ourselves grace and patience, and admit that it's ok to not be ok.

We can "Be Kind to our Mind" by remembering the following tips:

1. Pause. Breathe. Think about how you feel
2. Take breaks from reading the news and social media
3. Make time to sleep and to exercise
4. Reach out to your family, friends, co-workers, etc. Stay connected!
5. Seek help if you feel overwhelmed or unsafe

- Mental Health America Tools to Thrive <https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>
- Managing Stress & Anxiety During Covid-19 and Workplace Mental Health <https://www.bizlibrary.com/products/content-libraries/mental-health-playlist/thank-you/>
- Myths and Facts about Mental Health [https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/TtC%20quiz%20cards\\_0.pdf](https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/TtC%20quiz%20cards_0.pdf)
- Maintaining Healthy Boundaries as an Employee Champion [https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/2.%20Maintaining%20healthy%20boundaries%20as%20an%20Employee%20Champion\\_0.pdf](https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/2.%20Maintaining%20healthy%20boundaries%20as%20an%20Employee%20Champion_0.pdf)
- Famous People with Mental Health Diagnoses <https://medium.com/invisible-illness/fifteen-famous-people-who-were-successful-in-spite-of-their-anxiety-issues-90ea48c94e29>
- Sound Health (Services in ASL for Deaf and Hard of Hearing) <https://www.sound.health/deaf-hard-of-hearing/>
- Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/>
- Head Space <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>
- UCLA Mindful <https://www.uclahealth.org/ucla-mindful>
- Stop, Breathe, Think <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>
- If you are in a crisis, feeling suicidal or know someone who is, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. You can also use the Crisis Text Line at <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Quarterly

Meetings

2020

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Thursday,

July 9

from

9:00am-4:00pm

Due to COVID-19, this meeting will be held virtually via Zoom

[Click here to join](#)

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October 1-2

Alliance of People with disAbilities

1401 East Jefferson St

Suite 506

Seattle, WA

98122

Centers for Independent Living

Alliance of People

with disAbilities

Seattle, WA

206.545.7055

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Center for Independence

Lakewood, WA

253.582.1253

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Central WA Disability Resources

Ellensburg, WA

509.962.9620

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Disability Action Center —NW

Moscow, ID

208.883.0523

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Spokane Center for IL

Spokane, WA

509.326.6355

## INTERESTED IN JOINING WASILC?

We promote the Independent Living (IL) Philosophy by empowering communities through advocacy, education, and collaboration. This philosophy emphasizes the idea people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, deserving of equal opportunity to decide how they live, work, and take part in their communities.

### HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

There are two ways you can participate with WASILC. You can join a committee or apply to serve on the Council. We are currently recruiting for three open Council positions. If you are committed and passionate about the values and mission of WASILC, you can apply [here](#). For more information, you can either visit our [website](#) or contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at: [kim.conner@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kim.conner@dshs.wa.gov).

WASILC strives to ensure statewide representation of members who represent a broad range of individuals with geographic, disability, business, ethnic, service provider, advocacy and agency diversity. To apply, submit an online application to the Governor's Office at:

<https://www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/boards-commissions/apply-serve-board-or-commission>

### ABOUT US

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) is an eleven-person, Governor appointed council that ensures Washington State delivers Independent Living (IL) services that are community-based and consumer-controlled for all disabilities. The primary purpose of WASILC is to monitor, review, evaluate, and maintain a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). For questions about WASILC and its mission please contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at 360.725.3695 or email: [kim.conner@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:kim.conner@dshs.wa.gov)

The Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP), a program of WASILC, is a statewide disability advisory group that provides technical advice on physical and programmatic accesses and effective communication strategies. Questions about CIEP and its mission can be directed to Jim House, Disability Integration Manager at 360.339.7435 or email:

[jim.house@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jim.house@dshs.wa.gov)

For general information on upcoming meetings, events, and resources, visit us at: [wasilc.org](http://wasilc.org).

