



**COVID-19 Update      September 25, 2020**

**Last Chance to Be Counted!**  
**Census 2020 ends September 30**

This year alone, more than \$3.8 billion in Rhode Island funding depends on an accurate census count. That’s equivalent to almost 40 percent of our annual RI State budget.

Program funding based on the census include Medicaid, student loans, Pell grants, SNAP, highway and transit funding, Section 8 vouchers, and Medicare Part B. The Census also determines the number of seats each state has in Congress. Rhode Island could lose a seat in the House of Representatives if the Census shows a decline in population.

We need you to stand and be counted in order to ensure that Rhode Island receives the funds it needs for you, your family, and your neighbors. Together, we all need to make one last push to complete our census. There's a lot going on these days, but taking 10 minutes to fill out the census will make a difference in Rhode Island for the next 10 years. **Please, go to [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov) [[r20.rs6.net](https://r20.rs6.net)] and fill out your census — and make sure your friends and family do, too.**

For more information, see the United Way’s video **10 days for 10 years** at <https://m.facebook.com/LiveUnitedRI/videos/632066827507706>



**Rethinking ID/DD Transportation Services During the COVID-19 Era**

**September 30**  
**3:00 - 4:30 p.m. ET**

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for people with disabilities and older adults, as well as for the aging and disability networks. The Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) are partnering to present a series of webinars to explore these challenges and opportunities.

Please join us on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 from 3 - 4:30 p.m. (EDT) for the third webinar of this series, which will focus on transportation services. Specifically, we will:

- Review the transportation landscape for individuals with ID/DD;
- Learn from providers about their strategies to operate and maintain transportation services during the pandemic; and
- Discuss the future of transportation and lessons learned from COVID-19.

**[Register here](#) and get more information [here](#).**

*The first webinar in this series focused on [Supported Employment Services](#) and the second was about [ID/DD Day Services in the Era of COVID-19](#). Materials will soon be available online*

**Virtual Town Hall**  
**Integration For All: Why Rhode Island Needs an Olmstead Plan**  
**Tuesday, September 29, 2020**  
**5:00 p.m.**

In *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states have a legal obligation to ensure that people with disabilities can live, work, and receive support services in the most integrated setting possible. An Olmstead Plan provides the framework through which a state intends to comply with this legal obligation. Rhode Island does not have a Plan, yet we need one.

[REGISTER HERE \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

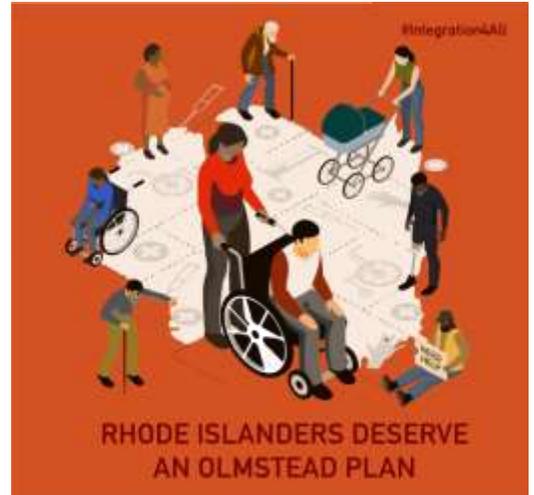
I hope you will join us for the first of this three-part webinar series. During this initial Virtual Town Hall we will be discussing with Rhode Island community leaders the need for our state to have an Olmstead Plan.

Panelists include:

- Megan Clingham, RI Office of the Mental Health Advocate
- Bob Cooper, Governor's Council on Disabilities
- Robert Marshall, RI Developmental Disabilities Council
- Marc Anthony Gallucci, Ocean State Center for Independent Living
- Mary Marran, Butler Hospital

What would an Olmstead Plan do for you or your loved ones? Please join us and provide your valuable input.

Once you register, you will receive an email confirmation with instructions on how to join the meeting. If you have any questions in advance, please contact [jennifer.raxter@mhari.org](mailto:jennifer.raxter@mhari.org).



**Speak Up With Your Vote!**

**Thursday, October 8**

**6:00 pm**

Join Advocates in Action for their presentation "Speak Up With Your Vote!" Learn all the ins and outs of voting by mail and in person. This fun presentation will take you step-by-step through the voting process so you can vote with confidence.

Your voice and your vote matter! Mark your calendar for Thursday, October 8 at 6:00 pm.

Register now for FREE: [REGISTER HERE \[us02web.zoom.us\]](https://us02web.zoom.us)

# Institute for Community Inclusion Resources

## Paper on Informed Choice and Employment

ICI recently released a paper on informed choice as it applies to employment decisions for people with I/DD. Individuals making decisions regarding employment and careers need to make an informed choice — a choice made by them, based on information and experience. This publication provides guidance how to ensure individuals with disabilities make decisions about employment in a way that puts them at the center of the decision-making process, with the necessary information to make a choice about the type of job and career they would like to pursue. To read the piece online go to [https://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/TO31\\_F.pdf](https://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/TO31_F.pdf).

## COVID-19 Publications and Resources

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public agencies, day and employment service providers, people with disabilities and family members have had to quickly adjust to changes in how services and supports are provided. The publications and resources provided here have been developed to help guide professionals, individuals, and families through this challenging time as we develop new approaches to providing day and employment services, vocational rehabilitation, and supporting community life engagement. See: <https://covid19.communityinclusion.org/>

Sample documents:

- Pandemic – A Guide for Informed Decision Making
- Participation of People with Disabilities in Online Groups and Activities
- Engage...Virtual Community Life Engagement
- Technology and Apps for Individual Success
- Impact of COVID-19 and Getting Financial Supports
- Keeping Your Focus on Employment During the COVID-19 Crisis: A Guide for People with Disabilities
- Using Technology for Remote Services: A Guide for People with Disabilities
- Mastering a Job with Remote Supports During COVID-19

## CDC Issues Mask Guidance Communications Tools

The CDC has launched a [new webpage](#) dedicated to the use of masks to help stop the spread of COVID-19 to others. The CDC recommends wearing masks in public settings around people who don't live in your household and when you can't stay six feet away from others.



## **National Center for Innovation & System Improvement (NCISI)**

### **Fierce Conversations Training**

**October 5th, 2020 10:00am - 11:00am EST**

Have you ever had conversations that ended up in arguments, dispute or broken relationships? How about conversations that lead you to an “Aha!” moment or one that gives you the job you are seeking? Conversations are the backbone of any relationship - with colleagues, with business partners, with friends and families. It succeeds when you get your message across, it fails when you are unable to communicate your ideas and feelings well.

This training shows you how to transform everyday conversations into effective and powerful tools to get your message across. It guides you on how to make more dynamic and more effective interactions “one conversation at a time.” Fierce conversations do not mean cruel, brutal or angry conversations. It means powerful or intense conversations. According to Susan Scott, the author of the book Fierce Conversations, it means “one in which we come out from behind ourselves into the conversations and make it real.” It simply means telling what you really feel and being real. You will be taken step by step through the 7 principles of fierce conversations. These are guides in transforming relationships one conversation at a time.

### **Say “Yes” to “Stress”: Listen to Your Body & Cultivate A Healthier You!**

**October 16th, 2020 3:00pm - 5:00pm EST**

The Coronavirus crisis has definitely “rocked our world” and created a culture of heightened anxiety and stress. It is essential now, more than ever, to make self-care a priority and take good care of ourselves, our bodies and our minds. Join us as we explore the stress response and learn six essential strategies that can get you started on reconnecting to and cultivating a healthier you.

### **The Glass Is Half Full: Cultivate Optimism and A Growth Mindset During A Pandemic**

**November 17th, 2020 3:00pm - 5:00pm EST**

It’s all about perspective. Perspective refers to our mindset - the way we view ourselves, the people in our lives and the world around you. Carol Dweck, a well-known Stanford researcher identifies two types of mindsets: a growth mindset and a fixed mixed mindset. Training participants will explore the benefits of a growth mindset and the dangers of a fixed mindset and journey into the world of optimism. Participants will be introduced to 6 easy ways to cultivate a growth mindset, and choose a more positive, optimistic outlook on life in spite of adversity.

### **Cost and Registration**

All trainings listed are **\$50 per session** unless otherwise noted. A link to the session will be provided upon paid registration. To register visit [http://ncisi.fedcap.org/training/upcoming\[nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com\]](http://ncisi.fedcap.org/training/upcoming[nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com]) Find your session and complete the registration process. Other trainings are available for professional development and children’s services.

The **National Center for Innovation & System Improvement (NCISI)** is dedicated to changing the lives of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. The work of NCISI involves the creation of effective and innovative partnerships that result in the full inclusion of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment in the community. For more information see <https://ncisi.fedcap.org/>.

## 10 Ways To De-Stress

You might not be able to change what is stressing you out, but you can control how you react and respond to stress. If you notice that you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, here are some things you can do to help yourself:

### **1. Leave the room**

Getting up and removing yourself from a stressful situation can be a huge help. A brief change of scenery can help put some distance between you and your overwhelming feelings. Take a quick walk to the bathroom. Take 60 seconds to walk to the kitchen for a glass of water.

### **2. Organize**

Pick something small: your desk, your closet, or your to-do list are all great choices. Spend 20 minutes focused on tidying up — it will help you feel in control of something and give you a sense of accomplishment.

### **3. Do some breathing exercises**

Think about how you breathe when you're relaxed — like when you're about to fall asleep. Slow and deep, right? Forcing yourself to breathe this way is one of the best ways to bring on calmer feelings. Try 4-7-8 breathing to start: inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds. *Breathe2Relax* and *Breathe* are two good apps for guided breathing exercises.

### **4. Write it out**

When your feelings start to bubble up and get overwhelming, putting them on paper can help you untangle them. Try a stream of consciousness exercise: 10 minutes of writing down all your thoughts without hesitating. Or make a list of things stressing you out — seeing them reduced to bullet points can help you think more clearly.

### **5. Meditate**

Meditation triggers your body's "relaxation response" — the complete opposite of the common stress response of "fight or flight". It slows your breathing, blood pressure, and pulse — all things that go along with being in a calm state of mind. Learn [how to meditate in 10 easy steps here](#).

### **6. Watch something funny**

Putting on a funny show or video will help take your mind off of everything going on for a little bit. And laughter really can be the best medicine! It's known to reduce mental stress and bring on feelings of relaxation.

### **7. Exercise**

One of the best ways to handle built-up stress is to physically release it. While we don't know exactly how exercise helps reduce depression and anxiety, we do know that it can work for many people. Aerobic exercises (like running) and non-aerobic exercises (like weight lifting) are both effective in reducing symptoms of depression. Everyone is different, so don't be afraid to follow a different fitness journey than your friend.

## 8. Write down 3 things you're grateful for

Showing gratitude is known to improve mood and help you better handle adversity — so not only is it a good way to reduce your immediate stress, but it can help you keep your future stress level down, too. And when you write down a few things you're thankful for, you can always look back at your list when you start to feel that stress bubbling up again.

## 9. Talk it out

Sometimes when we're stressed, every problem (big or small) seems like a big deal. Talking to a friend, parent, or someone else you trust can help you get out of your own head and see things from a different point of view. Try using the [NotOK app](#) to help you reach out to others when you're feeling overly stressed.

## 10. Light a candle or diffuse essential oils.

Scents can trigger very powerful emotional responses, and some are particularly good at inducing relaxation. Try lavender, lemon, and jasmine scents — all known for alleviating tension.

## Silver Linings

### **notOK App: Teen siblings create a digital panic button to help people**

Excerpted from: <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Wellness/teens-struggle-depression-led-brother-create-app/story?id=52791054>



When Hannah Lucas was diagnosed with a medical condition that caused frequent fainting, she felt scared and alone. “I started passing out more and more often and I was terrified of going anywhere,” Hannah said.

Hannah, a high school sophomore from Georgia, became anxious and depressed and started to self-harm, she said. From that dark point in her life, Hannah and her younger brother, Charlie, created an app to help people in distress. The idea for the notOK App came from Hannah, who told her mom she wished there was an app she could use to quickly alert her family and friends when she needed help either physically or emotionally.

Charlie heard his sister's idea and used coding skills he learned in summer camp to design the app. “I helped illustrate it so he would know what to do,” Hannah said of her brother. “He looked at my drawings and coded it to tell the coders exactly what I wanted and how I wanted it to look.”

Charlie said his motivation for building the app came from watching his sister spiral into depression. “I saw Hannah depressed, and she told me about her idea, and I started wire-framing it,” he said. “Making this app made her feel better and that made me feel better.”

Hannah pitched the app while taking a summer class on entrepreneurship at Georgia Tech. Professors there were so intrigued by the siblings' creation that they connected the family with a development company in Savannah. Over the course of five months, Hannah and Charlie worked side by side with the developers, often over Skype, to see their idea for the app turn into reality.

**NotOK** is available in both iOS and Android versions. The app is free and allows users to press a button that sends a text message to up to five preselected contacts. The text, along with a link to the user's current GPS location, shows up on the contacts' phones with the message, “Hey, I'm not OK. Please call me, text me, or come find me.”

For more information see <https://www.notokapp.com/faqs>.

## The 29th annual Allen Ginsberg Poetry Competition Winners

Artists Mark Moitoza's poem "I Don't Like This" won First Place and Dawn Mallozzi's "Pandemic Poem" won Honorable Mention! The competition is sponsored by Arts Equity (formerly VSA arts RI) and funded by BHDDH & The Fogarty Foundation.

Congratulations to the winners!

### I Don't Like This

I don't like people getting sick  
Or dying  
  
People are scared right now  
  
Be careful with other people  
  
Stay away from each other  
Especially if you don't get along  
  
I like to go to the store but  
I have a hard time breathing in a mask

We've lost a lot of things we need  
Like toilet paper and art class and  
Going out to eat

I miss all my best friends but  
Sometimes I go on Facebook  
And say hello

It's easier that way

I miss going on trips and  
Parties and dancing

I miss the good people

**-Mark Moitoza**



### Pandemic Poem

I haven't been going out much  
I've been scared, well, not scared  
But leery- I've been afraid for my family  
My grandmother might not survive it  
I've been writing everyday-  
Everyday stuff  
Things that have been going on  
With my family and in the news  
I've been watching old fashioned TV shows  
Bonanza, Gunsmoke, Leave it to Beaver  
Spending more time with my mom  
Our relationship's gotten closer  
Sometimes we get on each other's nerves  
But that's gonna happen  
Sometimes I get visitors  
Like my niece and that's good  
Sometimes my sister and her daughter  
Good family time- I like that  
The fact that we're stuck inside  
We have no choice  
But to spend time with each other  
It's been OK  
No complaints yet

What I'd like to do is to  
Find more speaking arrangements  
After all of this is over because  
With this pandemic, people might not  
Let me in  
I miss going to work  
And being with my other family  
My work family  
I miss those guys so much  
And I know it's not going to be the same  
I miss the environment  
It was always happy  
I just like being around people  
Besides just the people in my house  
I mean I love them and  
I don't mean to be a jerk  
But let's get real here  
I'd like to see some other people  
For a change  
It's like cabin fever  
And with the humidity  
It's terrible  
My hair's not cooperating  
But I'm inside  
So, I guess it doesn't matter

Who knew that this was going to happen  
And that our lives would stop  
Everybody is affected  
It is scary, quite frankly  
Millions of people getting sick  
Getting turned away from hospitals  
That's scary  
I saw that they're bringing in  
Refrigerator trucks to Texas  
Whoever thought it would come to this  
Hopefully we'll all get through this  
I'm thinking we might be  
Going back to school too early  
This is what I heard  
I don't know where  
There's a child's version  
I don't know what to believe  
Everybody's opinions don't match  
And everybody has their own opinions  
Quite frankly, I'm sick of the whole damn thing  
Sorry to be so blunt  
That's just who I am  
Something's gotta give  
I don't mind wearing a mask  
I mean, it sucks but  
It helps yourself and others  
So just do it.

**-Dawn Mallozzi**



## If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at [www.bhlink.org](http://www.bhlink.org) or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

## Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

### Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

### Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

*Includes a link to ASL videos*

### BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website [bhddh.ri.gov/COVID](http://bhddh.ri.gov/COVID)

### RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email [callcenter@ripin.org](mailto:callcenter@ripin.org)

### Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

*Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you*

## Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from the Division, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at [bhddh.ri.gov](http://bhddh.ri.gov), select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.



DD Community Newsletter  
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

## Contacting the Division

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

**Weekdays During Business Hours For:**

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**
- **QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES**

During business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00), for questions or support  
**(401) 462-3421**  
 Para español, llame  
**(401) 462-3014**

**After Hours On Weekdays For:**

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

For emerging or imminent care related questions, Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and weekends 8:30am-10pm  
**(401) 265-7461**

**On Weekends For:**

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. Please do not email critical issues.  
[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

**E-MAIL THE DIVISION**

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE **SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:**

- **NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS** about Your Services and Supports
- **GENERAL QUESTIONS** about Your Services or the RI DD System

**FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!**

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911

**CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR**

**CALL FOR:**

- **ROUTINE Healthcare Questions**
- **NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care**

**FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE**  
**DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!**



**Stay involved with the Special Olympics Rhode Island Movement while meeting socially- distanced activity goals for a great cause!**



- ◆ **Who:** YOU! Invite your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to take part in the challenge (at a safe distance) or to donate to your fundraising page. You can even form a team or invite a team that you are on to participate!
- ◆ **What:** Set a goal to run, walk, cycle or do other fitness activities. Track your progress on your favorite wearable tracker or on the Charity Footprints app.
- ◆ **Where:** **Celebrate the Movement** takes place wherever you are! You'll also help us to "virtually" move all the way around the state of Rhode Island on our Charity Footprints page!
- ◆ **When:** You can sign up on [www.charityfootprints.com/sori2020](http://www.charityfootprints.com/sori2020) right now and ask people to help you reach your fundraising goals.
- ◆ **Celebrate the Movement** takes place from September 26 through October 3. Complete your activity anytime and anywhere between September 26 through October 3 and be sure to update your page on [charityfootprints.com/sori2020](http://charityfootprints.com/sori2020).
- ◆ *We'll announce new challenges and prizes so check back often for updates!*

### How do I get started?

- ◆ Choose your activity and fundraising goals. Then decide how much you'd like to raise. Challenge yourself and set a goal worth your time! We'll be having contests for those who reach their goals, with prizes to be announced in September.
- ◆ Go to [charityfootprints.com/sori2020](http://charityfootprints.com/sori2020) to set up your fundraising and activity tracking page. It's really easy, and really fun to get your friends and family involved!
- ◆ Sign up to honor or "*support an athlete*" you know. Just as you are inspired by an athlete, those you ask for donations will be inspired too.
- ◆ Form a team if you want! Stay socially distant but compete virtually with each other, or against other teams!
- ◆ Use social media to get word out and ask your followers to support our cause.
- ◆ Take lots of pictures of your training for **Celebrate the Movement!** Share them on social media or send to [patricia@specialolympicsri.org](mailto:patricia@specialolympicsri.org).
- ◆ Stay tuned to learn about challenges and prizes you can earn...*this will be so much fun!*



# Stay Safe and Celebrate the Movement!

September 26 - October 3



During this pandemic, the athletes of Special Olympics Rhode Island have had their world turned upside down. As more of their activities have been taken away from them, our athletes have come to rely upon their Special Olympics Rhode Island family to be there for them. Even through these challenging times, we promote their physical and emotional health virtually, and are carefully planning to return to play in mid-August with strict guidelines in place.

Special Olympics Rhode Island has developed a new and innovative way to stay fit, be socially responsible and will allow you to support our great athletes. **Celebrate the Movement** is a virtual fitness and fundraising challenge for the week of **September 26 through October 3, 2020**. You pick the activity and set your goal. For example, maybe you'll run a marathon distance in one week. Then ask everyone you know to support you through your fundraising page at [www.charityfootprints.com/sori2020](http://www.charityfootprints.com/sori2020). It's easy and lots of fun to reach your goals!

## Just can't commit to an activity?

- ◆ Tell your friends and family you are doing a **Zero K for Special Olympics Rhode Island**
- ◆ Get donations for your commitment to Zero distance.
- ◆ Take pictures or videos of your Zero K training routine from your couch!
- ◆ Form a team of socially distant **Zero K Heroes for Special Olympics Rhode Island**...have fun with the concept while making a difference in the lives of our athletes.

## Thank you to our generous sponsors!



