

Coronavirus Plain Language Glossary

Words To Know

These are words you may be hearing or seeing due to the Coronavirus outbreak. These definitions were written by a team of self-advocates and their aspiring allies. This glossary goes with [Plain Language Tips For Working With Support Staff During COVID-19](#).



1. **Advisory** - a notice or warning given to protect you. It says what you should and should not do. The governor in your state is sending out advisories about the Coronavirus.

2. **Agency** - a place where people with disabilities get services.

3. **Agency Crisis Number** - if you are in an emergency, you call this number to get help. You get this number from your agency. Ask your case manager to write the number down.



4. **Airborne** - in the air. For example, if you sneeze germs travel through the air.

5. **Alerts** - warnings of a dangerous situation.

6. **Anxiety** - being nervous, feeling afraid, worried something bad is going to happen.





7. **Asthma** - this illness is in your lungs. Your airways swell up and it is hard to breath. This is a long-term illness. Some people get better. Others have trouble breathing their whole life.

8. **Cases** - number of people who have the virus.

9. **Cardiovascular** - having to do with your heart and blood vessels.



www.cdc.gov

10. **CDC (Center for Disease Control)** - a department in the United States government. They protect people from getting sick. The CDC is a leader in the fight against the Coronavirus.

11. **Checklist** - a list made to keep track of what is needed. It shows what is completed and not completed.

12. **Chronic Bronchitis** - the tubes that carry air to your lungs swell up. You cough a lot and have a hard time breathing. It lasts a long time.



13. **Clean and disinfect** - to wash something and to kill germs and viruses. For example, use a half of cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water to kill germs. Or use a wipe that has 50% - 70% alcohol.

14. **Contagious** - a person who has an illness might get you sick too. The illness spreads from one person to another.

15. **COPD - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease** – an illness in the lungs that makes breathing hard. It gets worse over time.

16. **Coping** - dealing with a hard situation.
17. **COVID-19** - it is a new illness spreading around the world. Its nickname is coronavirus.
18. **Curfew** - a time of day when you need to be in your house.

19. **Electronic devices** - are computers, phones, tablets, etc.



20. **Diabetes** - an illness that happens when you have too much sugar in your blood. It also means you have a problem with turning the food you eat into energy.



- a. **Type 1 Diabetes** - the person does not make any insulin. Insulin is a chemical in your body that helps you turn the food you eat into energy.
- b. **Type 2 Diabetes** - the person makes some insulin. Insulin is a chemical in your body that helps you turn the food you eat into energy.

21. **Discrimination** - Treating people badly because of who they are. The United States Office of Civil Rights said clearly that people with disabilities should get the same medical care as everybody else. Taking away medical care because of a disability is a type of discrimination.



22. **Dry cough** - a cough that is not wet. There is no mucus.

23. **Elders** - people that are over the age of 65.

24. **Emergency Contact Information** - numbers you can call in case you are in an emergency. For example: 911, your doctor, family member, support staff, etc.



25. **Emphysema** - a lung disease that makes it hard for you to catch your breath.

26. **Energy** - the power you get from food or from exercising. Find ways to keep exercising when you are staying at home.

27. **Epidemic** - an illness that most people get.

28. **Epidemiology** - studying how an illness starts and how it spreads.

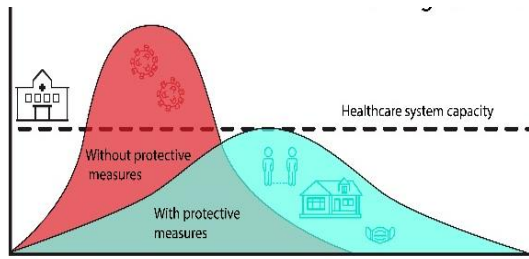
29. **Exposure** - to be around something. To come in contact with something.



30. **Fever** - your body gets hot to try to fight off a virus. If your fever is 100.4 or higher, call your doctor.

31. **Flu** - it is like having a bad cold, but worse. You feel sleepy, weak, and your muscles may ache.

32. **Flattening the Curve** - the red tall mountain shows how many people



might get sick if we do nothing. The green smaller hill shows how many people will get sick if we stay home. The green is better. If too many people get sick at the same time we cannot help them.

33. **Guidelines** - list of instructions that doctors and scientists have agreed on.

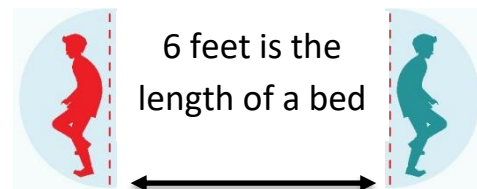
34. **Hand washing** - use lots of soap and water. Rub soap on all parts of



your hands for 20 seconds. Sing Happy Birthday two times that is about 20 seconds. Then put your hands under running water and wash away all the soap and germs.

35. **Health Department** - a public office in every state that helps people manage their health.

36. **Isolation** - these rules are for a sick person who has the Coronavirus. Stay home. Do not go outside. Stay in a separate room in your house, away from others. It possible use your own bathroom. Wear a mask when you come out of your room. Clean and disinfect everything you touch.



37. **Medication** - Prescribed by your doctor to help you maintain your health. There are no approved meds that cure Coronavirus.



38. **Meditation** - A person may be quiet, close their eyes, and/or focus on their breathing. You will feel relaxed. It can be done by yourself or with others.

39. **Mitigation** - What we all are doing to reduce the spread of the virus. For example, staying home, staying 6 feet away from others.

40. **NIH** - National Institutes of Health. (Where Dr. Anthony Fauci works!) A department in the United States government that does research on why people get sick.

41. **Normal temperature** - When your body is 98.6 degrees.



42. **Pandemic** - an illness that spreads around the world.

43. **Panic** - a sudden and intense feeling of being scared.

44. **Pedometer** - is a small device like a watch that you can wear on your wrist. It counts every step you take.



Even though you are stuck at home try to get 4,000 steps a day.



45. **PCA or Personal Care Attendant or Assistant** - support staff who work with people with disabilities in their home. They may help them eat, bathe, use the bathroom, get in and out of bed, take meds or do some housework.

46. **Physical activity** - Something you do with your body. Walking is a physical activity. Keep active when you are staying at home.

47. **Pneumonia** - is an illness when you get an infection in your lungs.

48. **Prescription** - medicine your doctor tells you to take.

49. **Prevention** - what you can do to avoid getting sick.

50. **Provider** - A place where you get support or health care services.

51. **Quarantine** - These rules are for people who are not sick and have been near someone who has the Coronavirus. Stay home. If possible, stay in a separate room in your house.



Do not go outside. It is done to slow the spread of an illness. The governor of your state will say how long you must stay home.



52. **Relaxation Techniques** - things you can do to reduce stress. For example, yoga, singing, dancing, watch a funny movie or daydreaming.

53. **Respiratory Problems** - having trouble breathing and/or coughing a lot.



54. **Sanitize** - is the same as clean and disinfect.

55. **Self-Care Plan** - how you will take care of yourself or get the help you need. The plan should be in writing.

56. **Shelter-In Place Order** - a Governor says stay where you are.

57. **Social Distancing** - when in public stay 6 feet away from others. It really is about physical distancing. If you are next to someone.



- You put your arm out.
- They put their arm out.
- And you should not be touching.

58. **Stay at Home Order** - Stay home. Do not go to work or school.

- Can I go outside? Yes. Stay 6 feet away from people.
- Can I get groceries or medication? Yes. Stay 6 feet away from people.

59. **Stimulus Check** - The government is sending \$1,200 to each person who makes less than \$75,000 a year. People on SSI and SSDI need to sign up to get a check. Go to <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>



60. **Stress** - your body and mind reacting to a difficult situation. A feeling of pressure.

61. **Symptom** - A change in your body that might mean you are sick. For example: a fever, dry cough, or having a hard time breathing.



62. **Testing** - checking to see someone has an illness. There are different kinds of tests. A nurse may put a swab up your nose.

63. **Therapist** - A counselor. A person who is skilled in helping someone control their emotions or deal with problems.

64. **Thermometer** - A device used to see how warm your body is. It measures your body temperature. You put the device in your mouth, under your tongue and wait. In the hospital they run the device over your forehead and neck.



65. **Treatment** - The care or medicine you get to feel better.

66. **Triage** - If there are a lot of sick people at the hospital, there are rules to decide who gets helped first. Who gets treatment first?

67. **Unlearn** - stop doing a habit. For example, during the Coronavirus we must stop shaking hands or standing next to someone.



68. **Vaccine** - a shot that protects you from getting the flu or other illnesses.

69. **Virus** - a sickness you get when germs get into your body.

70. **Wheeze** - there is a whistling sound when the person is breathing. They are having trouble breathing.

71. **Zoom** - a free app to have a video call with up to 100 people for 40 minutes. It can be used on a smart phone, computer or tablet. If you pay money you can have video calls for longer.

Resources Used To Create This Glossary

These plain language definitions were written by a team of self-advocates and their aspiring allies from Green Mountain Self-Advocates. Some definitions were adapted from information from the following resources.

“Everyday Words for Public Health Communication.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/everydaywords/>

“Plain Language Medical Dictionary.” *University of Michigan Taubman Health Sciences Library*, <https://www.lib.umich.edu/taubman-health-sciences-library/plain-language-medical-dictionary>



This publication is supported in part by an agreement from the Administration on Disabilities, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Disabilities policy.

The Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) seeks to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self-advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership. The resource center is a project of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE). Green Mountain Self-Advocates is a SARTAC partner. SARTAC <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/> is a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration For Community Living – Administration on Disabilities.