

Social Distancing in Congregate Facilities to Limit further Spread of COVID-19 Disease

Limiting the number of people who congregate and interact with one another within a facility and allowing more physical space between people can help to curb spread of this infection. Depending on specific facility needs and severity of exposure to persons with COVID-19, social distancing can range from decreasing the number of people who can congregate at a time for different activities to suspending all non-essential activities. Explain to clients and staff why people are isolated from others to avoid stigmatizing those who are affected.

The following are examples of social distancing that can be considered in congregate settings to limit the spread of an infectious respiratory illness:

Sleeping Arrangements

- Increase spacing so beds are at least 3-6 feet apart
- If space allows, put less residents within a dorm/unit
- Arrange beds so that individuals lay head-to-toe (or toe-to-toe), or use neutral barriers (foot lockers, curtains) to create barriers between beds
- Move residents with symptoms into separate rooms with closed doors, and provide separate bathroom if possible
- If only shared rooms are available, consider housing the ill person in a room with the fewest possible number of other residents
- Avoid housing people with underlying conditions in same room as people with symptoms

Mealtimes

- Stagger mealtimes to reduce crowding in shared eating facilities
- Stagger the schedule for use of common/shared kitchens

Bathrooms & Bathing

- Create a staggered bathing schedule to reduce the amount of people using the facilities at the same time

Recreation/Common Areas

- Create a schedule for using common spaces
- Reduce activities that congregate many residents at once such as “house meetings” and opt for smaller group activities
- Limit the number of people in a room to 10

Transport

- Opt for transporting less people per trip and ensure that passengers have more space between one another

Communication

- Reduce the amount of face-to-face interactions with residents for simple informational purposes
- Consider using the following methods of communication: Bulletin boards, signs, posters, brochures, emails, phone, sliding information under someone's door or mailbox

Staff Activities

- Reduce unnecessary assembly of staff (e.g., large meetings where information can be communicated otherwise)
- Where appropriate, opt for conference calls instead of in-person meetings