Supporting the Wellbeing of Vulnerable Adults during the COVID-19 Emergency

April 2020 – We have a collective responsibility to make sure that vulnerable adults are safe – especially during challenging times. We encourage you to check in with vulnerable adults regularly to ask how they are doing and what they need. Lending an ear and helping vulnerable adults access supports and services can go a long way to keeping them well.



Check in to See How You Can Help

It is important to remind caregivers and vulnerable adults that you are there to help, not judge them. If a vulnerable adult raises a concern, consider if you can safely follow-up with their caregiver. Validate that this is a difficult time, everyone is struggling, and that support is still available. See page 2 for a list of resources you can connect vulnerable adults and their caregivers with based on their needs.

Questions You Might Ask Caregivers

- Is now a good time to talk? If not, is there a better time?
- Now is a difficult, stressful time for everyone. How are you? Are you okay and safe? Is there anything you need?
- We all need support right now. Who are the supports in your life? Are you able to connect with them right now?
- Since the COVID-19 emergency started, what's changed for your family? Has anything been more of a struggle? Are you facing new worries or needs?
- Is everyone in your family able to get what they need to get by (for example, you can ask the family about food, housing, income/employment, safety, education, health, heat, internet, etc.)?
- Do you need help connecting to _____? (*see page 2 for local resource suggestions based on needs)*

Questions You Might Ask a Vulnerable Adult

Questions you might ask those that live alone:

- Now is a difficult time for everyone. ? Are you OK and safe? Is there anything you need?
- How are you feeling?
- Do you have any pain or discomfort (from a medical or dental condition)?
- Do you feel overwhelmed or depressed?
- Since COVID-19 emergency started, what has changed for you?
- Do you have any concerns for your health and safety?
- We all need support right now. Who are the supports in your life?
- Does someone check in with you regularly? Who makes sure that you have everything that you need?
- Are there things that you need and have no way to get? (You may want to ask about medication, utilities, heat, food, etc.)
- When and what did you last have to eat?

Questions you might ask those that live with others:

- Is now a good time to talk? If not, is there a better time?
- How are you feeling?
- Do you have any pain or discomfort (from a medical or dental condition)"
- Do you feel overwhelmed or depressed?
- How are people getting along in your house? Are you worried about anyone in your house?
- Are you afraid or feel intimidated by anyone in your home?
- Are you being left alone for long periods of time without the care that you need?
- Does anyone refuse to help you?
- Has money or other possessions gone missing?
- To follow up, ask open-ended questions: Tell me more about that. . . What happened next? What is happening right now?

Common Resources that may be needed during the COVID-19 Emergency	
General support *(When in doubt start here!)*	❖ **2-1-1:** Directs to all information and supports available during COVID-19**.** Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211nh.org. ❖ **SERVICELINK Aging and Disability Resource Centers:** ServiceLink helps individuals access and make connections to long term services and supports, access family caregiver information and supports, explore options and understand and access Medicare and Medicaid. Call toll free 1-866-634-9412 or visit https://www.servicelink.nh.gov/locator/index.htm
Financial & other Assistance	❖ **Unemployment Insurance Benefits have been expanded during COVID-19:** Call NH Employment Security at 603-271-7700 or visit www.nhes.nh.gov/ to assess eligibility and get further instructions, e.g. call times. ❖ **Cash and other Assistance:** For TANF and other state assistance, visit https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/ or call 1-800-852-3345. Visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/covid19-changes.htm for temporary eligibility and program changes. ❖ **NH Legal Aid:** For free legal information, referrals and Pro Se assistance, apply online anytime at www.nhlegalaid.org, or call 9 AM-1 PM Monday-Friday at 1-800-639-5290 or Senior Law Project for free legal assistance for persons 60+ years old at 1-888-353-9944. NH Bar Association, https://nh.freelegalanswers.org/ ❖ **Dental Emergencies:** NH Dental Society (603) 225-5961 www.nhds.org
Food & Nutrition	❖ **Food Pantries:** NH Food Bank's list of local agencies: www.nhfoodbank.org/need-food/agency-list. ❖ **NH Food Access Map:** Crowd-sourced listing of food resources during COVID-19: bit.ly/nhfoodaccessmap. ❖ **Food Stamps (SNAP):** Visit https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/ or call 1-844-275-3447. ❖ **Meals on Wheels:** Call ServiceLink for information on locally based home delivered meals options or visit http://www.navigateresources.net/nhsl/MatchList.aspx?k;;0;;N;0;533842;Home%20Delivered%20Meals;Home%20Delivered%20Meals;Partial
Housing	❖ **Most evictions and foreclosures are temporarily frozen during the current NH State of Emergency:** See NH Emergency Order #4, issued on March 17, and clarification provided in Emergency Order #24 on April 3. ❖ **Housing Assistance:** If you are experiencing a housing crisis, call NH 2-1-1, or contact your local city or town welfare office (searchable at www.nhmunicipal.org/municipal-directory). Call ahead for current operations.
Crisis Support	❖ **Domestic Violence Helpline:** 24/7 help at 1-866-644-3574 or www.nhcadsv.org for free, confidential support. ❖ **Crisis Text Line:** Text 741741 or visit crisistextline.org for free, 24/7 support from a trained Crisis Counselor. ❖ **NAMI:** For information on a variety of crisis and mental health supports visit www.naminh.org/resources-2/covid-19 or call (800) 950-6264 M-F, 10am- 6pm. For 24/7 crisis support text "NAMI" TO 741741.
Substance Use	❖ **NH Doorways:** Call 2-1-1 for information on substance use disorder treatment during COVID-19**,** or visit www.thedoorway.nh.gov.
COVID-19	❖ **NH DHHS**: Visit www.nh.gov/covid19 or call 2-1-1 for COVID-19 related guidance and resources.

Look out for Vulnerable Adult's Safety

- ❖ **If you have any concerns that someone is in immediate danger, call 911.**
- ❖ **If you suspect that a vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, you must call Adult Protective Services (APS) at 1-800-949-0470.** APS Central Intake can determine whether APS involvement is warranted, or if other community supports are more appropriate.

Examples of when you might follow-up for more information or call APS with a concern include:

- Anything the caregiver or vulnerable adult told you raised concerns for the vulnerable adult's safety
- The vulnerable adult OR caregiver has concerning injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
- The caregiver appears to be under the influence to the extent they could not care for the vulnerable adult
- You observe evidence of illicit substance use in the home (e.g., drug paraphernalia) or other hazards that could lead to a vulnerable adult's injury/illness (e.g., weapons in reach, extremely unsanitary conditions)
- The vulnerable adult looks or behaves significantly differently than is typical for them or would be reasonably expected
- You are repeatedly unable to get in touch with the vulnerable adult (unrelated to barriers like internet, phone access) AND are seriously worried for their safety (e.g. prior safety concerns due to domestic violence or substance use)