

Positive Scripting during COVID-19

The Behavior Management Department understands that individuals might be feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or concerned during this time. Stress during infectious disease outbreaks can cause: changes in sleeping or eating, difficulty concentrating, worsening of chronic health problems, worsening of mental health conditions, or increased use of substances (such as alcohol and other recreational drugs). As these conditions become more prevalent, staff are encouraged to use the scripting samples below to help individuals regain a sense of control and anxiety reduction.

Individual's Concerns	Staff Response	Phrases/Support
<p>Individuals are feeling out of control or like their routine has been impacted. Individuals expressing that they are 'going stir crazy', 'feeling overwhelmed', etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help individuals feel as though they can still exert control. • Offer alternate activities and make plans. • Maintain routines as best as possible. • Staff should be creative in finding activities and events that individuals can safely participate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Would you like to go for a walk?' • 'Let's do an activity this afternoon!' • 'Let's plan what our week will look like.' • 'I can see that you are feeling a bit stir-crazy, what do you think we can do?'
<p>Individuals worried about family members or friends who might be at higher risk of contracting COVID</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should validate and support this concern. • Staff should encourage alternate communication methods between individuals and their loved ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Would you like to phone, Skype, or FaceTime your grandmother?' • 'Would you like to write a letter to your dad? We can mail it together!' • 'I can tell you are worried about your mom. That means that you care about her. Maybe you can tell her how you feel, would that help?'
<p>Individuals are expressing frustration regarding COVID-19 rules and precautions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should validate individual emotions and concerns by acknowledging how they feel. • Staff should be supportive and encouraging when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I know you are frustrated by having to wear a mask. They can be uncomfortable sometimes. We can wear the mask at the mall and then when we get home you can

	<p>talking to individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should speak calmly and reassuringly. • There has been a lot of misinformation and anger about any changes, so staff should be patient when explaining the rules 	<p>take it off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I understand your frustration about the rules changing all of the time. I think we are all trying to get through this the best way that we can'. • 'I know that you want staff to take you to the mall right now, but you are experiencing some symptoms so we have to stay home today'.
<p>Individuals are expressing anxiety, fears, or curiosity surrounding COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should validate individual emotions and concerns by acknowledging how they feel. • Staff should be supportive and encouraging when talking to individuals. • Staff should speak calmly and reassuringly. • Encourage health and wellness by setting good examples. • Encourage healthy practices such as eating healthy food, maintaining sleep routines, being active, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I can see you are upset right now. How can I make you feel safe?' • 'Quest and the Government of Alberta is working hard to make sure everyone is healthy and safe'. • 'When I feel worried, I know I can protect myself by washing my hands, staying at home, and keeping informed'. • 'When I feel isolated, I look after my mental health by calling someone I care about, journaling, etc.'