

IDHS/SUPR Virtual Support Group for Frontline Human Services Workers

As the impact of COVID-19 increases, frontline staff working in inpatient, outpatient, congregate care and community-based settings may experience emotional challenges at higher rates. This is because they must balance caring for others with concerns about their own health and well-being and that of their family and friends.

Additionally, their work may lead them to have close contact with individuals who are at high risk for the virus. Balancing these concerns over a long period of time often results in feelings such as fear, worry, sadness, anger, resentment and guilt. Having a space to acknowledge and discuss those feelings with colleagues experiencing similar difficulties can help provide some relief.

Recognizing the crisis, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Divisions of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) and Mental Health (DMH) have partnered with Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP) to offer a **free virtual support group for frontline workers in human services who face challenges related to working during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The **Wellness for Illinois Frontline Staff: Support Group for Direct care Staff During COVID-19** offers a free, safe and private place for frontline staff to meet virtually with others having similar experiences, share strategies for navigating these difficult times and feel less alone with the day-to-day ups and downs and worries of living and working through a pandemic. Common mental health and wellness issues these workers may be facing include:

- Safety worries due to close physical contact with individuals at high risk for COVID-19 and who may have trouble following-or who may not follow-safety guidelines

Support Group for Direct Care Staff During COVID-19 begins on Wednesday, 7/15. Register now!

- Increased job-related stress, anxiety or depression
- Feelings of failure, sadness, guilt or shame for feeling worried about going to work or not being able to work as often as usual
- Physical and mental fatigue from extra safety precautions frontline staff need to take and try to ensure their clients are following
- Feeling of distraction or worry about the impact on one's own family members

Frontline staff can register now to attend the first information session on **July 15, 2020 at 6:00pm (CT)**. To learn more about the **Wellness for Illinois Frontline Staff: Support Group for Direct Care Staff During COVID-19**, please [register here!](#)

IDHS/SUPR, DMH and AHP are contributing to state efforts to address the challenges of frontline workers during COVID-19. Sharing experiences with those who can empathize can be extremely helpful in reducing anxiety and stress and can help workers cope with these new stressors.

The Behavioral Health Support Group is supported wholly or in part through an Emergency COVID-19 grant to IDHS/SUPR from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (FG-000268).