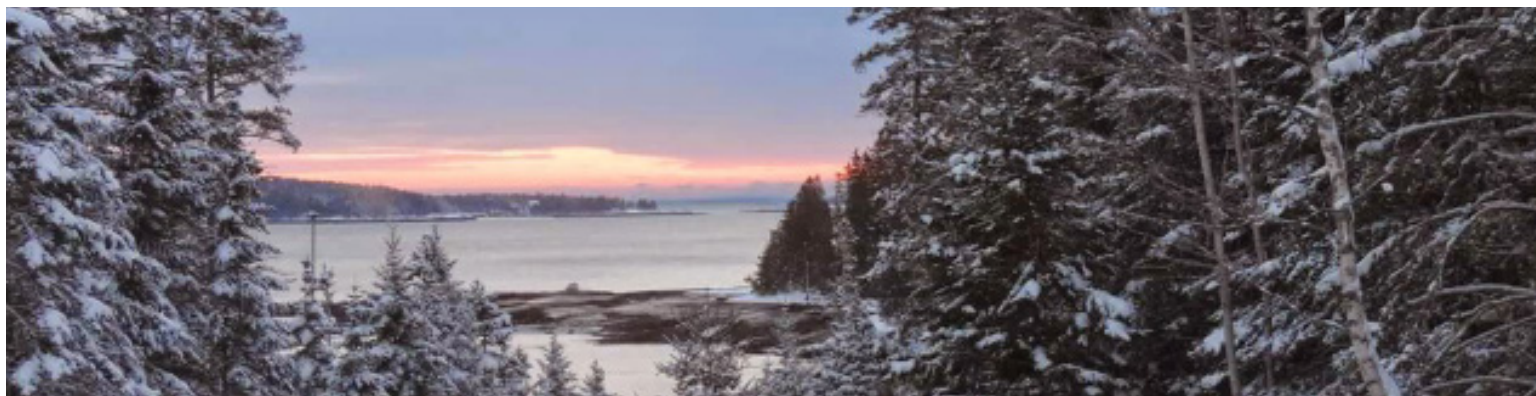


Personal Care Connections

A quarterly newsletter for GSIL's Attendant Care Programs



CARES Act Funds

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses impacted by COVID-19. In June of 2020, Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) was awarded Federal CARES Act funds to provide relief from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funds were made available for individuals with Independent Living (IL) plans who had an economic need resulting from the pandemic.

While many GSIL consumers were already receiving IL services, more than 300 did not have an active IL plan and as such, would be ineligible for these funds unless an IL plan was in place. Long-Term Support Coordinators (LTSC) completed over 300 IL Service Plan intakes within 2 months to ensure that any consumer with COVID related needs could access these funds.

As of July 31, 2020, all eligible consumers were enrolled into the IL Services Program. Then we were able to distribute funds to help alleviate some financial burdens arising from COVID-19.

Examples of how GSIL supported consumers with CARES Act funds include:

- PPE and cleaning supplies
- Assistive Technology (computers/laptops/iPad's) to connect consumers with their medical providers (telehealth)
- Grocery gift cards and household expenses
- Transportation assistance

GSIL also used funds to provide Attendant Care Employees with a \$0.25 an hour increase in pay.

Although a significant amount of the funds have been disbursed, requests for urgent assistance are still considered on a case-by-case basis. **If you have any questions, please reach out to your Long Term Services Coordinator.**

What's Inside?

Skills Training	02
Health & Wellness Webinar	03
Grief During Covid	04
Word Scramble & Recipe Corner	05
HR Contact Updates & Linkables	06
HR Corner & Congratulations	07
Program Info	07
Quiz	08

Skills Training

Submitted by: Cheryl Pinheiro, RN, CCM, Statewide Director of PCA Services

COVID Best Practices & Information

Although it is a new year, the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us. It has been a very long year, so many lives lost, children attending school remotely, parents forced to work from home, social isolation from family, friends and neighbors. One thing for sure is that we are strong, but we cannot let our guard down and become complacent. There is light at the end of this dark tunnel, but we have much further to travel before life as we know it can get back to normal.

Some important facts to remember:

- Make sure ACEs wear masks and gloves when performing any personal care and unable to maintain physical distance
- Make sure ACEs wash their hands before and after care.

Encourage ACEs to stay home if they are sick. GSIL understands that this is a tough call to make considering workforce shortages, however it is best for all parties. COVID only reinforces why it is good to work with your Coordinator to develop a strong back-up plan for when your normal ACE is unavailable.

Travel Quarantine Guidance

Travelers/visitors to AND residents of NH need to self-quarantine for 10 days following the last date of any high risk travel, which includes travel internationally (including to/from Canada); on a cruise ship; or domestically

outside of the New England states of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or Rhode Island.

People meeting the criteria for high-risk travel have the option of ending their quarantine after day 7 by getting a test on day 6-7 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection (SARS-CoV-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19); this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test); antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. If the test is obtained on day 6-7 of quarantine, the person is asymptomatic, and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine after 7 days, but they must still self-observe for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social and group gatherings, wearing a face mask when around other people, practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.). Any new symptoms of COVID-19 should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine). This 7-day quarantine “test out” option ONLY applies to travel-related quarantine (not quarantine due to a high-risk close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19).

Exceptions to Travel Quarantine

The following people do NOT need to quarantine after high-risk travel:

1. Persons who are 14 days beyond the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., 14 days after full vaccination).
2. Persons who are within 90 days of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that was diagnosed by PCR or antigen testing (if a

person had a previous infection that was more than 90 days prior, then they are still subject to travel quarantine). Such persons, however, still need to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, always wear a face mask when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene at all times.

If you are exposed to COVID-19, please contact your PCP as well as your GSIL Coordinator so GSIL can get your ACEs the necessary protective equipment needed to continue providing you with care services.

Vaccines are now available for front line workers, nursing homes and hospital employees, people over 65 yrs. of age, as well as those under 65 who have two or more underlying conditions. ACEs are front line workers eligible to receive vaccination immediately. Because supply of the vaccines is not sufficient to vaccinate everyone, states have established prioritization protocols.

NH's plan can be seen here:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid19-vaccine-allocation-plan-summary.pdf>

If you are unclear when you might be eligible for vaccination, please consult your primary care provider. If you are eligible now, you can register for a spot by visiting vaccines.nh.gov or calling 2-1-1.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your Long Term Services Coordinator or Human Resource Representative and someone will be able to assist you.



GSIL Holds its first Health and Wellness Webinar!

Submitted by: Cheryl Pinheiro, RN, CCM, Statewide Director of PCA Services

On Wednesday, February 3, GSIL held its first Health and Wellness Webinar. We were so happy to have 20 consumers throughout the state participate from their own homes!

We chose Emergency Preparedness as our first topic and the discussion ranged from the importance of having an emergency paperwork file to staffing emergencies and fire safety.

The Health and Wellness committee is hoping to hold regularly scheduled webinars in the future as a way to collaborate with consumers and provide a platform for consumers to engage and collaborate together.

If you have any questions, are interested in participating in future webinars or if you have topic ideas: please email Tiffany Gladu, GSIL Long Term Services Program Coordinator, at tgladu@gsil.org.

Grief During COVID

Submitted by: Lisabritt Solsky, VP of Corporate Strategy & Business Development

GSIL has been following with interest the effect COVID has had on many normative traditions like school, work, weddings, death, and grief. Nearly every aspect of life has been impacted in one way or another. Schools have gone remote, hybrid, in person, back to remote. Everyone has learned new technology to adapt to a more distant world. The list is long.

One aspect that does not get as much attention is grief, yet COVID has dysregulated our customs around it dramatically. To be clear, for purposes of this article, we are talking about grieving a loved one who has passed, not the generalized grief we all feel over the lives we had pre-COVID (which can be an article for another edition of PCA Connections!)

Irrespective of the cause of one's death, traditional funerals, church services, graveside ceremonies, sitting Shiva, etc. are all ill advised. And yet, these traditions and rituals are what signal our brains and by extension our emotions, how to move through the stages of grief. Absent these rituals, mourning has become interrupted and mourners are at greater risk of severe clinical depression, anxiety, and other manifestations of unresolved emotion.

Fortunately, humans are adaptable. Just as kids and teachers are learning how to do school from a distance, so too can we grieve from a distance. Is it the same? No. Is it better than nothing? YES.

Two days before Christmas, a college friend's father died. I texted to express my sympathy and he immediately sent me a Zoom link for an impromptu Zoom wake taking place in 10 minutes. I logged on. I knew no one else on the Zoom, but I heard great stories about a lovely man and was able to show my support to a good friend. We laughed, we cried, we wished we could hug. Honestly, considering that my friend and his family live 2 hours away, I might not have even gone to an in person wake because of the travel hassle. But "thanks" to COVID, he had a Zoom wake, and I didn't hesitate to join in.

Here are some suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control about how to get the benefit of rituals even when we cannot participate in the way we are accustomed:

- Invite people to call you, or host conference calls with family members and friends to stay connected.
- Ask family and friends to share stories and pictures with you via phone, video chat, email, text message, photo sharing apps, social media, or mailed letters.
- Create a virtual memory book, blog, or webpage to remember your loved one, and ask family and friends to contribute their memories and stories.
- Coordinate a date and time for family and friends to honor your loved one by reciting a selected poem, spiritual reading, or prayer from within their own households. Some cultures practice a prolonged mourning period with multiple observances, so hosting virtual events now and in-person events later may be in keeping with these practices.
- Seek spiritual support from faith-based organizations, including religious leaders and congregations, if applicable.

HR Contact List

(603) 228-9680

Ann Malburne	ext. 1151
Andrea Keenan	ext. 1156
Cindy Walsh	ext. 1166
Linda Tsantoulis	ext. 1106
Kelsea Moyse	ext. 1611

Leave of Absence:

Ashley Truong
Francis Carrasquillo Lopez

HR Re-organization

Submitted by: Linda Tsantoulis, VP of HR

During the month of January, the HR department embarked on a complete reorganization with the goal to better serve our employees and consumers. Team restructures are meant to align strengths, streamline processes and create synergy and we believe this will help us to achieve our goal.

Andrea Keenan has joined the HR Team as our HR Coordinator. She comes to us with many years of HR experience and a plethora of HR knowledge. She will be a great addition to the HR Team.

Some of you may have already spoken to Kelsea and/or Francis; our new part-time recruiters. Kelsea is located in the North Country; specifically the Littleton office. Francis, who is located in the Manchester area, is currently on a leave of absence, but we hope to have her back soon. Please call Kelsea for your recruiting needs. We are also hoping to have Ashley back soon from her leave of absence.

On the other hand, restructuring is always disruptive and fraught with challenges and adjustments. Unfortunately, Cynthia and Stephanie are no longer a part of the HR Team. They had been with GSIL for 7 years and 6 years respectively and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Cindy, Ann and I are here to answer any questions you may have. Give us a call and if we can't answer the question, we'll make sure we get you to the right person.

We appreciate your patience and support.



Linkables: *Submitted by: Melissa Borowski, LTS Service Coordinator*

Link from the CDC on dealing with stress/anxiety during COVID 19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Getting outside for even 20 minutes a day reduces stress/anxiety/depression

<https://camillestyles.com/wellness/why-you-should-go-outside-at-least-20-minutes-a-day/>

Agencies that work with people with disabilities - Get out and have fun!!

Adaptive sport partners of the North Country:

<http://adaptivesportspartners.org/>

Northeast Passage:

Veteran friendly-Ice skating, winter cycling & competitive Nordic skiing

<https://www.nepassage.org/>

CMARS: Crotched Mountain Area Recreation and Sport:

Hiking, Kayaking, cycling & snowshoeing/skiing/snowboarding

<https://crotchedmountain.org/programs-and-services/accessible-recreation/>

Link to the latest info for the vaccine roll out:

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid19-vaccine-allocation-plan-summary.pdf>

Human Resources Corner

Submitted by: Cindy Walsh, Human Resource Specialist

Winter - It can rear its ugly head. We would like all employees to remain on their feet instead of their head, bums or other assorted body parts. Ice cleats are still available to Attendant Care Employees! They can be requested through your GSIL coordinator or by a visit to any GSIL office location. Call ahead to be sure that someone is there to assist you.

Benefits – Reminder that the eligibility criteria for enrollment in GSIL benefits requires a 12-month employment measurement period with an average 30 or more hours of work per week throughout the measurement period. Existing employees will be assessed for eligibility each year during the autumn open enrollment process for benefits effective January 1st.

Unable/Able to Work – Attendant Care Employees (ACEs) must notify their Coordinator and HR if s/he is unable to work for medical reasons. HR will assess if the absence qualifies under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). If the absence qualifies for FMLA, a letter outlining the request process and eligibility requirements will be sent to the employee. The letter will also state that a doctor’s return to work document will be required irrespective of whether the employee elects to use FMLA for a qualifying absence. Any restrictions to work capability must be noted. HR will review the documentation and determine the ACE’s return to work.

ACEs unable to work while their consumer is hospitalized, for example, should contact HR for temporary reassignment if possible. Our goal is to keep ACEs active and working.

Congratulations on ACW Anniversaries!

We appreciate the commitment and dedication of long service attendant care employees at GSIL. Thank you for all that you do in service to consumers. You are valuable members of the team. Congratulations on your service milestones!

Name	Years of Service
Patricia Alexander	15
Joyce White	10
Sherri Farrell	10
Jaymie Bouchard	10
Debbie Stinson	10
Leticia Costa	10
Lorrie Byrne	10
Lisa Rodrigues	5
Julie Whittemore	5
Douglas Rieck	5

Program Info

(603) 228-9680

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

Program & Personal Care Services Program (PCSP)

x1153 or contact us at LTSinformation@gsil.org

Cheryl Pinheiro, RN, CCM
Statewide Director of PCA Services

x1158 or cpinheiro@gsil.org

Donna Potter, Director of Consumer Directed PCSP Services

x1609 or dpotter@gsil.org

Kristy Sias, Statewide Senior LTS Coordinator

x1602 or ksias@gsil.org

Leadership

Chris Purington
Senior VP of Programs
cpurington@gsil.org

If you are an ACE looking for more hours, please contact your Long Term Services Coordinator.





Granite State Independent Living
 21 Chenell Drive
 Concord, NH 03301

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit
 Organization
 US Postage
 PAID
 Concord, NH
 Permit #1426



You Could Win A \$25 Award!

Answer these 5 questions correctly, then send your completed quiz to GSIL by mail to 21 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH 03301 or via email to dbailey@gsil.org no later than April 1st. Submit your answers and be entered to win a \$25 Award (taxes applicable).

Your Name: _____ Phone/Email: _____

QUIZ

1. What is available to all ACEs to help them stay on their feet during the icy wintertime?
2. How long do ACEs have to be employed with GSIL to be eligible for benefits?
3. Name at least 3 different ways to deal with grief during COVID. There are more but name 3.
4. What did GSIL use the CARES Act funds for?
5. What are 3 skills training guidelines to practice during COVID? There are many, you only need to name 3.