Everyone Needs a Break

*Respite isn’t just for emergencies!*

*Advice from all of the Chapters of The Arc in Colorado*

When your friends ask you how you are faring, you just shrug your shoulders and say “fine” don’t you?  We know you’re resilient and strong, but let’s face it, our world has changed, and you may be at a point where you need to take a break.

We’re all dealing with a surreal day-to-day right now. Does this sound familiar?

Marie has been working out of her house for several months due to COVID-19.  When John, her adult son with Down syndrome, started staying at home all day because his day program had closed, she thought, “How can I possible do this?”  She couldn’t really focus on work because of the demands of caring for John, and John could never get her full attention.  She felt like she was both a terrible employee and a terrible parent.

Or maybe you have school age children:

Jason is a single dad who has two kids ages 7 and 9 in Special Education classes and two older children in middle school regular education classes.  Jason is trying to work from home and home school all four children and he is at his wits end.  First he has to understand each teacher’s learning objectives and then support each of the kids to achieve them.  By trade, Jason is an engineer and feels woefully unprepared to teach four kids while trying to hold down his job.

Or you are a host home provider:

Julie and Don, caring host home providers, just need a little time to themselves.  They’ve been supporting Betty and Alice 24/7, which has been extremely challenging due to both women’s anxiety and behaviors.  Julie’s mother was diagnosed with COVID-19, which adds a layer of fear for all of them.  Processing her own fears about her Mom while trying to calm Betty and Alice is incredibly difficult.

**What’s your plan for taking a break, safely and with peace of mind?**   It’s time to think about a plan ***before you get too stressed out***.

**There is help available.  You do not have to manage everything yourself, nor should you.  Caregivers need to care for themselves in order to care for others.**

Marie called her son’s case manager and shared her situation.  The case manager was able listen to Marie’s needs and arrange with a provider to have one person to come into the house and keep John engaged for 17 hours a week while Mom worked.

Jason called the case manager for his 7-year-old.  The case manager arranged a virtual meeting with the school to discuss the contingency plan for the 7-year-old but concerns when facilitating the learning for all children.  The elementary school and middle school helped Jason define a schedule that allowed each child to receive instruction. Care was taken to make sure that assignments were ones where ones that the child could complete independently.  The family schedule was built to allow Jason to complete his work.  When school went on summer break, the family continued to follow a schedule that allowed for play, to practice reading and writing skills and down time so that Jason could continue to work from home.

Julie and Don talked to their provider agency and they were able to provide a person to come and take both Betty and Alice for a walk twice a week for a couple of hours.  This provider provided all the masks and ensured that the walk practiced appropriate social distancing, so the other clients in the Host Home were as safe as possible from infection.

**To start developing your plan, do the following:**

1. Think about what would be most helpful to you.
2. Call your case manager at your CCB, the agency that currently provides services for your family, your Family Support coordinator, or another person who has helped in the past: school district staff, a private therapist, The Arc of Adams County 303.428.0310 or your local Arc chapter.
3. Tell them what’s happening in your life and be detailed
4. Ask them what resources are available to you

**Don’t hold back information - help them to be able to help you!  If you minimize the stress you are under, you may not get what you need.**

If you’re not successful with any of these calls as stated above, please call your chapter of The Arc: <https://thearcofco.org/about/the-arc-chapters>

We’re here to problem solve with you and ensure that you have access to essential support.  Everyone needs and deserves a break.  When you get one, your loved one gets a break from you too!

**FAQ**

**When you say respite what does that mean, overnight or a couple of hours, my home or out of home?**

Respite is a short break for caregivers. Respite is the opportunity for a caregiver to step away, knowing that their loved one is well cared for, by bringing in professional care. It can be for a few hours, all day, overnight, in or outside of your home. Different respite providers offer different options

**My son or daughter doesn’t have a case manager, how do we get one?**

The case manager at a CCB (Community Centered Board) coordinates service for people who have an intellectual/developmental disability. The link below will explain what a CCB is and how to apply for eligibility in Adams County.

<http://www.nmetro.org/Intake_Eligibility.html>

If you live in another county here is a complete list of all CCBs

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/community-centered-boards>

**What if my adult child’s SLS plan is maxed out, how do I get respite?**

One resource is a voucher program through the Colorado Respite Coalition whose link is below.

<https://www.coloradorespitecoalition.org/our-programs/family-voucher-program>

We would also recommend reaching out to your case manager for suggestions of other possible resources. Another option is to visit our webpage and access our resource guide which includes other options for respite and funding. Discovery Club Respite Progam through Easter Seals is included in our guide. It is a great resource which will be starting up again in the fall. Please watch for updates on our website.

<https://www.arcadams.org/adams-county-resource-guide>

**Can I private pay for respite if my child/adult child doesn’t have a case manager or isn’t working with an agency? How do I find a provider?**

Yes, you can private pay. Below is a link to help you locate a provider.

<https://www.coloradorespitecoalition.org/resource-finder/index>

You may also visit our webpage and access our resource guide which includes other options for respite.

<https://www.arcadams.org/adams-county-resource-guide>

**We are working with an agency, but they say no respite providers are available, how can I get respite?**

Below is one resource.

<https://www.coloradorespitecoalition.org/resource-finder/index>

As stated above you may also visit our webpage to access our resource guide which includes other options for respite.

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**I do need a break but I am fearful of who is coming to care for my child, what safeguards are in place?**

As a caregiver, to ensure your loved one is safe and you are informed, ask the respite provider what precautions they take, are they adhering to CDC guidelines related to covid-19? If it is through an agency, ask for their policy, especially related to covid-19.

There is no standardized or statewide certification or training requirement to be a respite provider in the state of Colorado.

Most respite care agencies have mandatory staff trainings. Some agencies have State-required trainings associated to certain licensure, for instance Child Care Licensing. However, these requirements and regulations are not respite-specific, or universal for all respite providers.