

DRAFT
COVID Guidelines for the RC Philadelphia Region Community
July 2023

Some points to consider:

- 1) Our COVID guidelines are a draft, as we will update these guidelines as the clinical data and CDC guidelines evolve over time.
- 2) We form these guidelines by taking into consideration: protecting people who are more vulnerable to infection, protecting our relationships with each other, and honoring the commitment of the international RC community to ensuring safety in every setting.
- 3) As these are DRAFT guidelines that contemplate the best clinical data available today, we must continue to keep thinking with our unlimited and intelligent minds, and discharging and amending as we get new information. Please discharge on COVID, your relationships with your co-counselors, and your feelings about the RC community and the Philadelphia Regions' COVID guidelines.
- 4) We know that some people are doing well with online sessions, workshops, and webinars, and some people would much prefer these activities in person. Especially for young people, who were not already having two-way sessions before the pandemic, doing RC activities is more difficult and less connected, and some young people have not wanted to participate as often.
- 5) Our DRAFT guidelines cannot ensure a 0% transmission rate of COVID.
- 6) If you have had a positive test, or close contact with someone with a positive test in the last 7 days, and you have had in-person contact with a member of the RC community during those 7 days, please let them know.

New Proposal:

- *We will continue to hold regional workshops for adults online.
- *We may try having some pods of co-counselors (smaller groups) be in person during workshops.
- *We will continue to have family workshops online or in person.

*We can continue to hold classes online and do sessions online or by phone.

*Co-counselors may consider doing in-person classes and/or sessions.

Rationale: Following some practices that are beginning to happen in the larger RC world, we are hoping to add connection, and contradiction to distress, by allowing people in our region to consider gathering in person. COVID is still here causing illness, death, and long COVID, but vaccinations and improved treatments, as well as our better understanding about how to reduce the risks have made it possible for us to resume some of our usual in person activities. Connecting with other human beings in person, in and out of RC, make a huge difference to our physical and mental well-being.

Guidelines for planning in person RC activities:

All members of the group (class, session) must agree on COVID safety precautions that each member will follow. People will need to consider such things as vaccination status, masking, recent exposures to illness, daily COVID testing, and/or risk factors for the person and the family members in their household. The precautions you take should be based on the needs of the person with the greatest risk factor.

For outdoor in person activities:

* Everyone is asymptomatic

*No one has been knowingly exposed to COVID in the last 7 days

* If someone has tested positive for COVID within the last 10 days, they may join an RC event if: 1) It has been more than 5 days since the onset of their symptoms (or 5 days since their first positive test), 2) They have since tested negative on a rapid antigen test, 3) Their symptoms are resolving, and 4) They stay masked for the entire event.

*If someone has had an illness and is feeling well but has lingering symptoms, that person could come if: they test negative for COVID, wear a mask, and keep some distance from other people.

Rationale: Some people can have a cough or other lingering respiratory symptoms after an illness (especially if they have a chronic condition such as asthma), but they are no longer infectious.

For indoor, in person activities:

* Everyone is asymptomatic

*No one has been knowingly exposed to COVID in the last 7 days

*Use mitigation strategies such as opening windows and doors, turning on fans, and using HEPA air filters

*If someone has tested positive for COVID within the last 10 days, they may join an RC event if: 1) It has been more than 5 days since the onset of their symptoms (or 5 days since their first positive test), 2) They have since tested negative twice, on rapid antigen tests taken 24 hours apart, 3) Their symptoms have completely resolved, and 4) They stay masked for the entire event.

*We are **strongly** encouraging daily testing because if all members of the class or group test negative on a particular day, you could decide not to wear a mask that day. This is because the science is telling us that a negative test indicates that the viral load is not enough to infect another person. There are false negatives, of course, and also the chance that someone tests negative in the morning but could become infectious later in the day. Everyone in the pod must decide that the risk of getting COVID (or another illness) from a co-counselor is worth it in order to get the benefits of being in person together.

Next Steps:

1. Think and discharge about what your needs, wants, and potential restimulations might be around meeting co-counselors in person. Discharge points to consider: on feeling exhausted with COVID and “being careful,” on feelings of rigid compliance or rigid rebellion, on considering the “common good” and your own well-being, and any feelings of fear or denial as relates to COVID.
2. Talk with your co-counselors about what they feel comfortable doing, make a proposal, and discharge on it.
3. Most everyone who can be vaccinated in this community is vaccinated, and most are also boosted. It would be preferable that your vaccination status be shared with all of your co-counselors, so that each person can make their own determination of comfort with the planned environment and potential risk to COVID transmission.
4. RC teachers and leaders, please consult with your ARP about what you want to try regarding in-person classes or support groups. Individual RCers,

please consult with your RC teachers about what you want to try regarding in-person sessions.

5. Michael and Jessica would like to hear from all RC leaders about what you are trying in your classes and support groups and how it is going.

*The bivalent vaccine that offers protection against the Omicron variant, as well as the original COVID strain, is now available to people ages 6 months and older. Check the CDC website link below for information about the type of booster you can get, as well as the timing of the booster, and talk with your doctor, as well.

In case of an exposure: If you have a positive test within the 7 days following a RC gathering, or if you find out after a RC gathering that you had a close contact with someone who tested positive, you should inform those that you were with at that setting.

*Please reach out to Jessica with any questions or thoughts!

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html?s_cid=11709:cdc%20covid%20booster:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN.Grants:FY22