



# National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

## Transcript to a short video “Encouraging Independent Living” from NCAPPS’s Pandemic Wisdom series

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ALIXE BONARDI: Hi everyone, welcome to NCAPPS, how to survive change that we did not ask for. Today, we are joined by Nicole LeBlanc who is the Person-centered Advisory and Leadership coordinator for NCAPPS. Nicole, what do person-centered, thinking, planning and practice look like in a time of crisis?

NICOLE LEBLANC: Good question. In my opinion I see this public health crisis as an opportunity to move away from segregated settings, to smaller, more individualized services and supports. This pandemic presents an opportunity to take a look at how technology can be used to support people in distanced capacity or remotely. For example, instead of so much focus on group-homes, let's focus more on models like supported apartment living, explore how we can use various forms of technology like safety-connections, life-alert, and rest-assure, that can reduce the amount of direct assistance for certain things. For example, safety connections is a system that you set at night before you go to bed, and if something happens --like somebody breaks in, or you have a health crisis -- someone can come over the loudspeaker and talk to you, and if you need further assistance a responder can be sent over within minutes. It costs less money than twenty-four-seven shared-living, moving away from segregated settings, is directly in line with physical distancing.

ALIXE: That is true, and there's certainly lots of ways to support people using technology, for sure. Nicole, another question: what lessons, then, can we apply from person-centered thinking, planning, and practice to help all of us get through in this time of pandemic?

NICOLE: Clearly, we have a lot of work to do, in order to improve health outcomes for people with disabilities who are a medically-undeserved population. We need to especially focus on attitudes about ableism that devalue the lives of the disability community -all lives matter. This crisis shows why we need to devote more effort in supporting adults with disabilities prepare for emergencies, and ensure that the community can accommodate our needs during a major crisis like this. It is important that we explore how we use social capital and support folks to develop a mix of paid and unpaid relationships so that we have a robust support network during tough times like this. Safety planning and emergency preparedness is a great need that is clearly lacking in our society.

We need to fight to end stigma and ableism about disability in the area of employment hopefully this pandemic will make more businesses to seeing teleworking as an accommodation for people with disabilities for people in the workforce, and embrace it in-general.

ALIXE: So true Nicole, and I think people are really on their way to doing that. Well, thank you for joining us, I really appreciate you sharing your thoughts. Thanks Nicole.

NICOLE: I'm happy to be on your show today!