

# COVID - 19 & Care Coordination Organizations



## Our Champions II

*Another look at the making of a  
Care Manager Champion*

As the coronavirus crisis continues its rampage across the country, the seven Care Coordination Organizations continue to support over 105,000 lives in NY collectively, having joined forces in an unprecedented collaborative effort, ultimately placing each individual in the center of outstanding care.

This second edition is a deeper glimpse at our dedicated Care Managers as they provide relief, support and the necessary aid for every individual and their family.

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Late in the day last Friday, an **ACA/NY** Care Manager reached out to an individual they supported because they mentioned they had not been feeling well the prior week. The mom shared that they both tested positive for COVID-19, and the Care Manager could hear that Mom was having difficulty breathing. The Care Manager was very concerned about the parent and convinced her to call an ambulance—she was eventually taken to the hospital due to potential respiratory failure and had no choice but to leave her adult child alone, something she had never done before.

This person was not considered independent but fortunately, the Care Manager had a great relationship with this person and was able to provide support while the mother was taken by ambulance.

The Care Manager immediately contacted the supervisor who informed Care Management, Clinical and Executive Leadership about the pertinent details of the case. The DDRO and other government agencies were notified about the situation and the need to support this person while the mother was in the hospital.

As the hours began to pass, it was evident that emergency respite may not happen. The Care Management team immediately

implemented a support schedule (including the care manager, supervisor and director) to provide support through the night. The person remained calm through this guidance, while sharing that they were scared because the last time an ambulance took another family member, they never came back...

At 10:45 pm on Friday, ACA leadership was notified by a deputy commissioner of OPWDD that a crisis respite placement had been secured for the following morning.

On Saturday morning, the Care Manager called the home to begin preparations for the transition and much to the Care Manager's surprise and relief Mom answered the phone and explained that she was released from the hospital in the early morning. The emergency respite was cancelled.

This is an example of true dedication, resilience, creativity, and teamwork on the part of the Care Management and Clinical teams at ACA. They demonstrated true commitment to a person that they support, proving again how Care Management positively impacts people's lives every day. Thank you to all our Care Managers who continue to find ways to support people with compassion during this crisis.

## **Respite**

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## Care Management Outreach Discovers Individual's Prescription Perilously Low

Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) often have some types of co-occurring chronic medical conditions. Depending on the level of support they require, their quality of life and survival can depend upon the daily assistance of care givers to meet their most basic needs and provide critical supports and services. The unprecedented Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is exposing cracks in the health care system designed to protect individuals with I/DD. Such is the case of an individual that **Care Design NY** supports.

This member's stepfather tested positive for COVID-19. The household was mandated to a two-week quarantine. Like so many individuals with I/DD, this individual requires many medications to manage chronic conditions. His supply of one prescribed drug to help control seizures would run out in one week and vital to his safety and well-being. While renewing prescriptions is generally a simple process, with his caregivers ill and the entire family under COVID-19 quarantine orders, the Care Manager uncovered this very dire situation in her outreach. She discovered that not only was the medication's supply within days of running out, but the prescription also could not be renewed. Apparently, the prescribing physician was recently unavailable.

A desperate medical emergency was about to play out with his mother also very ill and unable to contact others. The Care Design NY Care Manager asked her Senior Supervisor to intervene.

Within a matter of hours, this perilous situation was escalated. She advocated vigorously that without this prescription to control epileptic seizures, he was at great risk. These efforts successfully resolved the situation with the prescribing doctor and within two days, the seizure medication was prescribed and delivered.

The family is grateful for Care Design NY coming to their son's aid and addressing this crisis to ensure his most basic supports and services were met.

# Impact

The impact of the care provided by **Tri-County Care** to our individuals is constantly felt especially during trying times like these.

Joe, (name has been changed to protect privacy) was still in the intake process when an emergency cropped up to find him a home to live in. His Care Manager DeAnna Bizzaro, stepped up to the plate to assist him during the crisis.

Joe was assigned to DeAnna on 4/10/20, homeless and without food. The Care Manager promptly called his mom to introduce herself and offer assistance. His mom informed her that Joe cannot reside at home any longer as he was staying at a friends house the past 2 days, and has been exposed to COVID-19; she was immunocompromised and would not let him in. Even after he was evaluated by the police and EMT and was found healthy, his family wouldn't allow his entry.

Upon learning this, the Care Manager submitted an emergency respite application with OPWDD, but the individual's PPD form and physical were not updated for the past 2 years and were unavailable due to the situation. There were no vacant places at the DSS emergency shelter because of COVID-19 as well.

The Care Manager continued to reach out to all natural support that Joe had, including his mentor from a children's residential agency. The mentor assured her that Joe can stay in the Motel for the weekend and paid for a ride to the Motel.

The Care Manager then ensured that Joe had enough food and medication for the weekend, and negotiated with his mom to agree to

the plan. The Care Manager promised his mom that Joe will have where to live by Monday.

On Monday morning, Care Manager DeAnna spoke to the school transitions coordinator at OPWDD who requested DDI to approve Joe's residential application. He received approval for seven days hence.

Thus began another round of convincing Joe's mother to let him stay home for another week until he can start the residential placement. The Care Manager worked hard to persuade her that as his only support and prime caregiver, she must let him live at his legal address. She agreed as long as PPE would be supplied and if Joe quarantines himself during his stay.

Care Manager DeAnna collected more than 2 weeks worth of food and PPE for Joe (mask, gloves, and other equipment) from different organizations and brought them to Joe.

Now, Joe is back home, confident and assured that after the week is up, he will have a safe place to live.





# Food Security and Health Safety Come First

In mid-March, Greater Mohawk Valley Care Manager Sue Osterhoudt received a phone call from her member “Jill” (name changed), just as COVID-19 began affecting her duties. Jill was already facing some drastic changes in community habilitation services that resulted in limited support for her daily needs.

Part of the services provided by Jill’s community habilitation worker included help accessing the local food pantry once a week. Since the Com Hab worker could no longer transport Jill in her car, Jill’s food supply quickly dwindled. Thinking out of the box, Sue talked to the community habilitation staff about transportation options so Jill could get to the food bank, but soon realized this would be too difficult for Jill as ‘social distancing’ measures became more stringent.

Sue then learned about an Oneida County program offered by the Rescue Mission that provides meals to people in need. Sue was happy to find out that the Rescue Mission program sets up and delivers meals right at the apartment complex where Jill lives. So, she called to find out their schedule and told Jill they would be at her apartment complex the following Tuesday at 1:15 pm.

While Jill was happy to learn about this new service, she soon encountered another barrier. The delivery schedule was limited to 20 minutes per day, and with such a restricted time period, Jill struggled getting to the food delivery truck at the right day and time.

When Sue learned about this, she made a point to call Jill at the exact time the Rescue Mission

food truck arrived at the apartment site. Jill was happy that Sue called, but was hesitant to leave her apartment to search for the truck as she couldn’t see it from her window. Not giving up, Sue kept Jill on the phone, encouraging her to walk out of her apartment into the hallway, down a set of stairs and find the lobby where she could meet the Rescue Mission staff who were waiting for her.

**“Sue kept her on the phone, encouraging her to walk out of her apartment, down a set of stairs and find the lobby where she could get her meals...”**

With Sue actively guiding her, Jill walked right to the meals delivery table, picked up her meal and called Sue to tell her how excited and relieved she was. Before the Rescue Mission staff left Jill’s apartment complex, they brought more food items to Jill to make sure she had enough until the next scheduled visit.

With the help of Sue and the Oneida County Rescue Mission, Jill now has a regular and easily accessible source of food while staying safe in her apartment, avoiding the risk to her health and the health of others by going out in the community. Three weeks into the COVID-19 crisis, Jill reports her daily meals to Sue and is more at ease knowing she doesn’t have to worry about where her next meal is coming from.

Like so many of her colleagues at this difficult time, Sue is doing awesome things for her members and others in the OPWDD system. She can be proud of the role she plays in the battle we are all facing to get through the Coronavirus threat.

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At **Person Centered Services**, Care Coordinators and the individuals they serve both remain equally committed to helping others during this time.

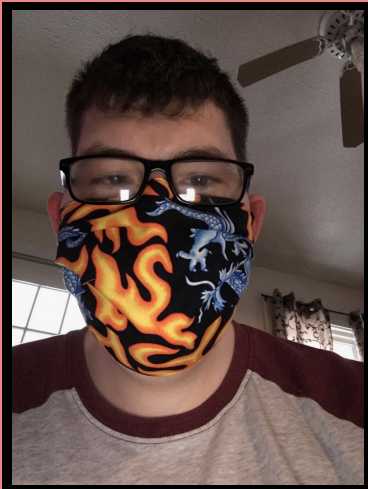
One of the company's Care Coordinators has multiple family members with underlying health conditions, so she began crafting homemade face masks to help protect them. She quickly learned that some of the people she provides Care Coordination for live in settings where their direct support staff also have a great need for protective masks.

The Care Coordinator began creating extra masks to make sure that those who receive Care Coordination from her are well-protected. She donated a batch of masks to a family with a particularly vulnerable individual that she supports. Now these masks can be used by anyone who comes in contact with the person to keep the individual safe.

***“No matter how small an act of kindness is, go ahead and do it,” says the Care Coordinator, “It just might make another person’s day more than you may ever come to know.”***

In addition, one of the individuals supported by Person Centered Services is also creating face masks for people in his community. This young man, who has Prader–Willi syndrome, is known for crafting items he sells at local fairs. He has chosen to use his talents to help others during these uncertain times.

This individual's Care Coordinator at Person Centered Services is proud to support him in his important work. She continues to provide check-ins throughout the COVID-19 crisis to make sure he is reaching his full potential!



**Creativity**

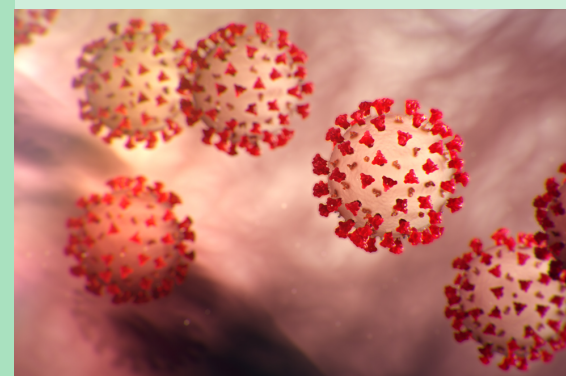
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# Research

One of the dedicated Care Managers at **Southern Tier Connect** works with a family who has multiple needs. The mom was really worried about having enough food for her two teenage boys that are home all the time now and being able to accomplish her errands.

The Care Manager researched the information for the boys' school lunch program and she set up school lunches for both of the kids. Even though one of the boys doesn't have a regular CH/respice staff at this time, the provider they have been working with to find new staff found someone who can assist the family with errands.

Additionally, the Care Manager arranged video conference meetings between this boy's mental health counselor and an aid from the Family Stabilization program until face to face visits can resume.



## Follow-up Care

While the rest of the world continues to encounter COVID-19 and the new territory that comes along with it, **Prime Care Coordination** and especially our Care Managers, continue to go above and beyond the call of duty for those we support.

One Care Manager shared her story of an individual who has remained successful living in her own home with the assistance of her Direct Support Professional and supports from PCC. This individual benefits from food that was donated and organized through PCC employees and is advocating her needs to her Care Manager daily. Her Care Manager ensures she has enough medication, and reviews safety precautions with the individual prior to her getting groceries and heading to upcoming appointments.

The individual continues to receive Community Habilitation services over the phone and through hard work and open communication, her needs are consistently met. She mentioned that she is following recommendations to preserve her own health and safety while the nation continues its fight against COVID-19.



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**LIFEPlan CCO Ny**  
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**1-315-565-2612**



**Person Centered Services**  
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**Prime Care Coordination**  
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**Southern Tier Connect**  
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