



# PACIFIC DISABILITY FORUM COVID-19 UPDATE

26 March 2020

Messaging Guideline

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## **Disability Inclusive Messaging Guidelines**

The points below show some ways that Ministry of Health, WHO, Media and other COVID-19 messaging and advisories stakeholders can ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind:

### **a. For persons who are blind or have low vision;**

- Information to be available in soft copies in Word format, Braille and large fonts not less than 18 font size for those with low vision. (Ask the person their preference)
- When sharing pictures, apart from the caption, describe the picture and any text on the picture using alternate text to ensure that screen reading software can read the pictures.
- Share information on COVID-19 in text formats, not just pictures and pdf documents to provide advisories and messages.
- When sharing information on Television or in videos, speak clearly and describe pop-ups and labels that appears in videos or on TV. e.g. when someone is speaking introduce the name of the person and position before you put the name labels on the screen
- Ensure that you read everything in any forms, presentations, brochure, etc. If the document is big, provide a soft copy in word or power point. Avoid sharing documents in pdf, png or jpeg formats as they sometimes cannot be read by screen reading software's.

**b. For persons who are deaf and/or have speech impairments;**

- Ensure sign languages on any video messaging and television advisories
- Provide texting alternatives, if services are provided on phone lines
- Ensure easy-read formats of information available (Understand that deaf persons do not all speak complete sentences but may instead focus on the verbs, pronouns, and nouns in the sentences)
- Ensure videos are available with closed captioning or sub-titles
- Allow interpreters to accompany the person with disability when accessing services. Sign language interpreters who work in emergency and health settings should be given the same health and safety protections as other health care workers dealing with COVID19
- Ensure updated information is available on online platforms e.g. website and social media

**c. Persons with psychosocial disabilities;**

- Describe contents and concepts in pictures - Use pictures and signage in awareness and advisories – This can include but not limited to hand washing, social distancing, identifying symptoms, how to self-quarantine, and understanding the processes of screening and isolation in COVID-19 Health Facilities.
- Ensure information is available in easy read formats
- Be descriptive when conversing and allow them time to receive and digest information you provide (Focus on the most important points, however, do not withhold any information).

- Messengers and people delivering the messages and advisories need to be calm and exercise patience and reassurance.
- Reassurance – Messaging should emphasize the need for people to act and at the same time reassure people not to panic, fear or be anxious.
- Easy read formats – This involves breaking down complex technical terms and advisories into simple conversational language.
- Be very clear with your instructions and terminologies e.g. lockdown, self-quarantined, self-isolation, etc.

#### **d. Persons with intellectual disabilities;**

- Describe contents and concepts in pictures - Use pictures and signage in awareness and advisories – This can include but not limited to hand washing, social distancing, identifying symptoms, how to self-quarantine, and understanding the processes of screening and isolation in COVID-19 Health Facilities.
- Ensure information is available in easy-read formats - This involves breaking down complex technical terms and advisories into simple conversational language.
- Be descriptive when conversing and allow them time to receive and digest information you provided (Focus on the most important points, however, do not withhold any information)
- Messengers and people delivering the messages and advisories need to be calm and exercise patience and reassurance.
- Be very clear with your instructions and terminologies e.g. lockdown, self-quarantined, self-isolation, etc.

#### **e. Persons with physical disabilities;**

- Ensure information is available in easy read formats
- Ensure updated information is available on online platforms e.g. website and social media

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