

Disability Inclusive Safety Precautions For Persons With Disabilities during Covid-19



NUDIPU is as an umbrella organization of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda is mandated to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in a unified voice. As government is making interventions towards COVID-19 response during and post the pandemic, NUDIPU is continuously advocating for a disability inclusive response plan that caters for the needs of persons with disabilities during and post COVID-19. Therefore, NUDIPU highlights some of the risks faced by persons with disabilities and calls for protection measures as highlighted below;

Risks faced by persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 outbreak

1. Persons with disabilities are at high risk of contracting the virus during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the need for close contact with personal assistants/caregivers, as well as an increased risk of infection and complications due to underlying health conditions and socioeconomic inequalities, including poor access to health care.
2. These risks are compounded by numerous barriers to family crisis preparedness due to displacement and drastic changes in living conditions, a lack of access or obstructed access to public health and protection messaging, risks of increased stigma on the basis of disability, inaccessibility of WASH infrastructure, potentially discriminatory attitudes and procedures of the health workforce and systems, and potentially disrupted protection and social support mechanisms.
3. Physical distancing and/or separation from care givers and support networks could result in disruption of medical, social and rehabilitation care. This could lead to adults and children

with disabilities not receiving adequate assistance for health-related concerns, which may result in life-threatening situations.

4. Potentially increased food insecurity, loss of support mechanisms and protection concerns negatively affect physical and psychological wellbeing (distress, anxiety, negative thoughts etc).
5. The risks and additional restrictions faced by persons with disabilities in times of community isolation may further impede health, safety, independence and autonomy of individuals.

Protection measures for specific groups of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 outbreak

1. Persons with disabilities should avoid crowded environments to the maximum extent possible and minimize physical contact with other people. Consider making necessary visits outside of peak time periods.
2. Ensure that assistive devices, are disinfected frequently; these include wheelchairs, walking sticks, walkers, transfer boards, white canes, or any other product that is frequently handled and used in public spaces.
3. Follow the WHO guidance on mental health considerations and guidance on managing existing noncommunicable diseases during the COVID-19 outbreak.
4. All surfaces need to be disinfected, and everyone in the household monitored for symptoms. If possible, anyone with an underlying health condition or reduced immunity needs to be moved to a separate location until the completion of isolation periods.

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