

Having a Meaningful Day during Ohio's Stay-at-Home Order

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<https://dodd.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/dodd/about-us/resources/resource-meaningful-day-coronavirus>

Offering someone a meaningful day means supporting people with developmental disabilities to explore their interests and how they are connected to other people through those interests.

A meaningful day is about self-empowerment, learning, and developing skills, with a goal of helping people realize who they are, what they are capable of, and how they can connect with other people.

Even under the stay-at-home order, a meaningful day made up of planned and purposeful opportunities is possible. An important thing to remember is that these experiences should be goals bigger than just filling time.

Being at home can still offer the opportunity to

- explore new interests, hobbies, and ideas that have never been explored before, via the internet, streaming, phone calls, etc.;
- develop or maintain skills, abilities, and possible opportunities for supported or competitive jobs;
- explore or maintain skills, abilities, and possible interest in post-secondary educational opportunities or volunteer activities;
- experience virtual companionship with friends and peers;
- learn or develop new skills to support and increase independence;
- and find new skills or interests by creating a discovery journal, which can help people express thoughts and feelings, as well as find and define goals and ambitions.

Discover Meaningful Opportunities

- Choosing activities for yourself is relatively easy. You can do anything that seems interesting. But, assisting someone else to find activities that discover and explore their interests may not be as easy to find. The most important part about finding activities is to include the person as much as possible.
- Historically, people with developmental disabilities have often been told what to do by their caregivers or direct support professionals (DSPs). Allowing the person to participate in planning their activities can play a key step toward finding the experience that they want. Person-driven planning can even be a part of their daily calendar.
- Look past what may appear to be limitations in order to find creative and purposeful solutions. For example, someone using a wheelchair can do many active things, such as exploring nature or participating in an exercise class. Certain accommodations may be required, such as planning accessible routes or modifying exercise activities.

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Engage in Physical Activity

The recommendation of getting at least two hours and 30 minutes of aerobic exercise per week applies to everyone. You might need to get creative with the type of physical activity you do, but it is important to keep a person with developmental disabilities moving the best they can.

- Take a brisk walk/roll on accessible paved trails.
- Take a nature walk at one of the 75 [Ohio state parks](#). Check the [Ohio Department of Natural Resources website](#) for more information.
- Explore activities such as walking, fishing, hiking, etc., at local parks.
- [Exercise at home](#).

Try Art and Creative Projects

Art is ideal for people with developmental disabilities because it is an open-ended activity. There are no real rules for creating artwork. Art also goes beyond just coloring and doodling: It is a way to figure things out and to connect with other artists.

People with developmental disabilities who cannot communicate easily in other ways might find that art is an ideal way to express themselves. Gathering lots of art supplies at home is an easy way to get started. Add a socialization element to creativity by interacting with other artists and artist groups online. Talk about what inspires people; what does “art” actually mean to them? Start by exploring what other artists make via the internet. Or, virtually tour museums across the globe.

Here's a sampling of art museums that offer virtual tours.

- [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- [The Whitney Museum of Modern Art](#)
- [The American Folk Art Museum](#)
- [The American Visionary Art Museum](#)

Other forms of creating can be explored via the internet and streaming, including writing poems or stories, listening and making music, and dancing. There are no limits. It all starts with a conversation about what each person is interested in and helping the person discover their interests through investigating and trying out new things.

- Writing - Try writing skills for poetry, short stories, or creating a song.
- Drawing - [Watch “Lunch Doodles” with Mo Wellims](#).
- Arts and Crafts
 - Try different projects, such as
 - stringing beads,
 - making items,
 - sculpting with clay/Play-Doh,
 - using paint-by-number kits,

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- or taking virtual art classes online.
- Music
 - Music can come from many different sources, including
 - Foot-tapping,
 - hand-clapping,
 - or sing-alongs.

Many art classes are now happening online, such as via Facebook Live. Check out local artist events online.

Explore New Interests

Supporting people to figure out what they might be interested in is about “hanging out with intention.” You might assist people to play different board games, build models, or tackle jigsaw puzzles, all to see what skills they have, what they might want to improve, and what they prefer.

Recreational Ideas

- Playing board games
- Building models
- Putting together jigsaw puzzles
- Cooking
 - Begin by touring the kitchen, explaining where items are located.
 - Teach how to use measuring cups and other kitchen tools.
 - Select simple recipes, cook together, and then try more advanced recipes.
 - Take an online cooking class.
 - Start a garden.

Virtual Opportunities

These resources can help engage people socially and creatively online.

- Virtually tour [museums and zoos](#).
- Take daily [self-advocacy and business classes](#).
- Participate in different Facebook groups to which you belong.
- Host videoconferencing meetups with friends and loved ones.
- Take free online [art-making classes](#).
- Take [virtual rides at Disney](#).
- Look at [local and globally virtual exhibits for online learning](#).
- Explore [Ohio virtually](#) to learn more about places to visit in the future.
- Search YouTube, Facebook Live, and other online resources for video tutorials about how to draw, learn a foreign language, and more.