

Making Plans: What if Someone Gets Sick?

While your session's careful, informed planning before reopening the building is intended to prevent COVID transmission, knowing what to do if that does happen is essential to minimizing further spread, and is another way of caring for each other and our neighbor.

The Task Force urges all sessions to include in your plans the steps you'll take if someone who has been in your building or on your grounds becomes sick, either testing positive, or coming down with COVID symptoms. This would include outside groups who use your property. Your plan will need to clearly address:

- Who will make the immediate contact to local health officials necessary to receive guidance specific to your situation? (IL local health departments)
- Who and how will you contact your staff, volunteers, members and/or the point person for the outside groups, and how you will advise them? NOTE: It is necessary that you have an accurate attendance record (possibly even a seating chart) for gatherings so you know who has been exposed.
- Who will determine if you will contact your insurance carrier?
- Who will handle any inquiries if contacted by local media?"
- What is your decision-making and communication process should you need to close the building again?
- Who should those who have been in the building or on your property call if they get sick or find they have been exposed to the virus, and when they should do that?
- How will you disinfect your building/property and who will do that? (CDC guidance)
- How will you ensure confidentiality throughout all of these plans?
- How will you tend to the feelings of guilt, grief, anger, and fear that may arise? Clearly these needs will be heightened should someone in your congregation or community die from the virus after having attended a function on your property. The pastor and those in decision-making capacities will be particularly vulnerable to guilt, and possibly the subject of anger by those who disagreed with the decision to open the building.

Knowing how to respond is essential to minimizing further spread and in caring for each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually.