



Temple University
Collaborative

On Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

www.tucollaborative.org

This document was developed by the Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities, which is supported by a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90RT5021). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this document do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Introduction

We think it's safe to say that 2020 was a year unlike any other. We at the Collaborative started our year out typically, until, in mid-March, we left our offices on campus and started working from home. It was necessary for us to put some of our research projects on hold in order to prioritize the health and safety of potential research participants and our staff.

How does a research and training center focused on community participation continue to do work in a time when it's vital for us to maintain physical distance and limit our participation in the community? We approached this question with earnest and open minds and with the understanding that community participation and social engagement are more important now than ever! In this document, we look back on the work that we've done over 2020 and highlight ways that our team continued to support community inclusion and participation of people with serious mental health issues during stay-at-home orders.

As you reflect on the past year and think about what 2021 will bring, we invite you to take some time to review some of our favorite resources from 2020! As always, let us know how we can help you use these tools to increase community participation!

Supporting Community Participation During the Pandemic

Much of our work in 2020 focused on supporting community participation during the pandemic. Let's take a look back! We hope that these resources will be helpful for you personally, for those of you who may still be supporting individuals in residential facilities, and for those of you who may be supporting individuals through telehealth.

Keeping Connected While Staying Apart

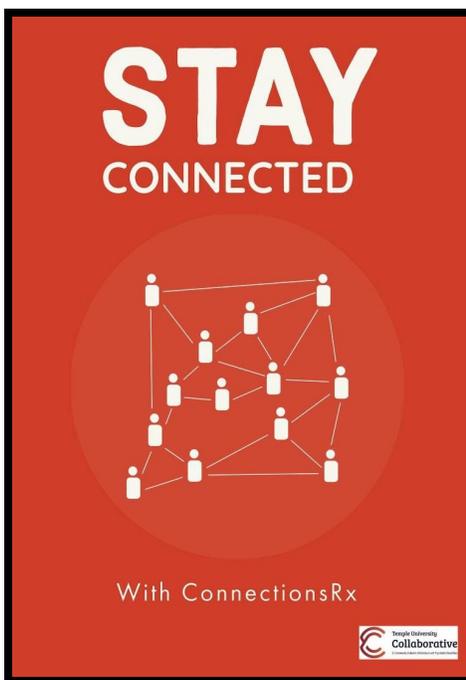
One of our first efforts in 2020 was to develop a document which compiled resources focused on maintaining community participation while practicing physical distancing. This document includes strategies to connect with your community that use technology, are low-tech, and no no-tech. As the months kept ticking by, we continued to add resources to the document, and even developed our 2021 "Community Connections" Calendar based on the strategies shared in "Keeping Connected While Staying Apart." Check it out [here!](#)



StorySlams

A Story Slam is a live storytelling event that is typically centered on a chosen theme. One of the first ideas we had in March of 2020 was to develop a Virtual StorySlam program—it was a great success! Over 100 people registered to attend our StorySlams, and a total of 35 storytellers participated in 4 virtual StorySlams and workshops between May and September. Stories were focused on community participation, rather than illness or recovery narratives, highlighting that people with serious mental health conditions have a spectrum of stories to share about friendship and connection, new beginnings, and hopes and dreams, just like everyone else.

Interested in joining us for a StorySlam!? You're in luck—we'll be hosting another one in February 2021! Reach out to kyra.baker@temple.edu if you are interested in participating in the StorySlam or practice workshops! Or, check out this [video](#) on developing your own story for a StorySlam!



ConnectionsRx is a series of strategies that we piloted in April 2020 to support people with serious mental illnesses to connect with their communities while practicing physical distancing. ConnectionsRx has two main components: an individualized approach and a private Facebook group where participants provide mutual support to one another. For the individualized approach, an interventionist would connect with participants via video conferencing, texting, and even good, old-fashioned phone calls! The purpose of the program was to support people to identify community participation interests and goals—these could range from volunteering, to talking with neighbors, going to the farmer's market, pursuing education, and increasing social engagement. Participants were also supported to increase community participation by using tech and low or no-tech strategies. We connected with a total of 20 participants in the ConnectionsRx program!

National and Regional Conversations

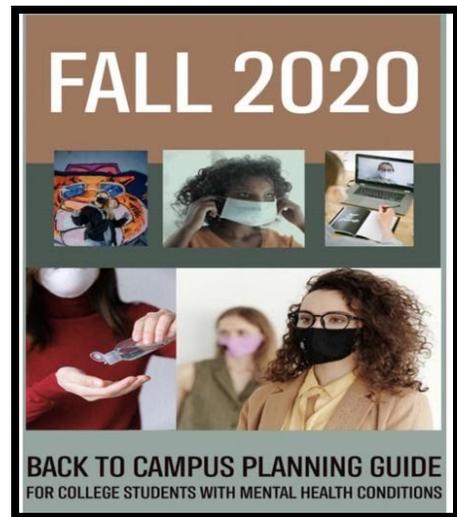
We love encouraging individuals to find resources in their community and participate in meaningful activities—we believe it's a medical necessity! As our beloved communities shut down and we hunkered down at home and practiced physical distancing, we repeatedly asked ourselves: What does that mean for community participation? What does that mean for engaging

in meaningful activities? What does that mean for staying socially connected? What does that mean for supporting individuals with mental illnesses to connect with others?

To help address these questions, we hosted a series of national conversations about maintaining connections while following the distancing guidelines. Experts on community participation and various stakeholders gathered, virtually, to share ideas and strategies for staying connected. In total, we hosted four National Conversations! Interested in what was discussed? Click this [link](#) to access recordings of these important conversations!

Back to Campus Planning Guide

College students across the country experienced unprecedented changes in 2020. From in-person courses being canceled with short notice, to returning to a very different campus life, students were dealing with a lot. Our Back to Campus Planning Guide focuses on strategies to support college students with mental health conditions to not only prepare to return to a very different campus life, but to also develop and maintain campus engagement in new ways. You can read the document [here!](#)



Publications and Presentations

There was no shortage of new publications in 2020! Our researchers published a total of twenty-four new peer-reviewed articles and participated in a number of professional presentations! Check out our [Google Scholar](#) page to see what we've been up to!

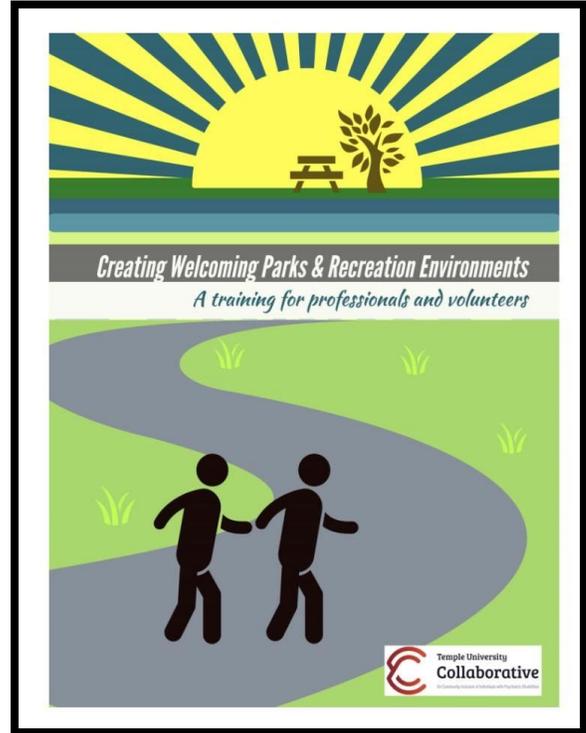
Creating Welcoming Environments



[Welcoming Places Calendar](#) We started out 2020 with a focus on Creating Welcoming Environments! Our 2020 Welcoming Places Calendar shares stories from our research participants about places in the community that they felt welcomed in as a whole person. 2020 may be behind us, but the quotes from these stories will always be meaningful—check out the calendar [here!](#)

Creating Welcoming Parks and Recreation Environments

One of the biggest resources we released in 2020 was our series of trainings focused on Parks and Recreation! “Creating Welcoming Parks and Recreation Environments: A Training for Professionals and Volunteers” consists of 7 learning modules focusing on specific strategies to foster parks that are welcoming to everyone, including people with mental health conditions. We used the TedEd platform to develop the trainings. Each lesson includes a video and a reading, as well as quiz and discussion questions so that you can check your understanding and reflect on the material. While this resource targets parks and recreation professionals and volunteers, the information shared is valuable to everyone! This document was developed with input from parks and recreation professionals and draws upon the life experiences of individuals living with mental illnesses. Check it out [here!](#)



Civic Engagement

Exercising the Right to Vote

While anticipating the 2020 Presidential Election, we released an updated version of the document "Exercising the Right to Vote" which includes important information regarding the importance of voting and the voting rights of individuals diagnosed with serious mental illnesses. Included in the document are a template for developing a voting plan for the 2020 election, and valuable resources to support the right to vote. Read the document [here!](#)

Voting Rights and Access Podcast

We also released a new episode of our podcast, Collab Chats, focused on Voting Rights and Access. Collab member Kyra Baker talked with Miranda Spencer, a Staff Editor at the webzine Mad in America, about her article Voting While “Mentally Ill”: A Legacy of Discrimination. You can listen to the full episode [here!](#)

The image shows a "2020 VOTING PLAN" form with a red border. It contains several sections for voters to fill out their preferences. At the top left is the Temple University Collaborative logo. The form includes fields for registration status, voting method (by mail or in person), date and location for mail-in ballots, address for in-person voting, and transportation to the polling place (get a ride, public transit, walk/bike, or drive). It also has fields for the name and phone number of a person providing a ride, and the time of arrival at the polling place on November 3rd.

2020 VOTING PLAN		
I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE:	YES	NO
I AM VOTING:	BY MAIL	IN PERSON
IF VOTING BY MAIL, I AM DROPPING OFF MY BALLOT ON THIS DATE:	DATE: _____	
IF VOTING BY MAIL, I AM DROPPING OFF MY BALLOT AT THIS LOCATION:	ADDRESS: _____	
I AM VOTING IN PERSON AT THIS LOCATION:	ADDRESS: _____	
MY PLAN FOR GETTING TO MY POLLING PLACE IS:	-GET A RIDE	-PUBLIC TRANSIT
	-WALK/BIKE	-DRIVE
I AM GETTING A RIDE FROM THIS PERSON TO MY POLLING PLACE:	NAME: _____	
	PHONE NUMBER: _____	
I AM GOING TO MY POLLING PLACE AT THIS TIME ON NOV. 3RD:	TIME: _____	

Looking Ahead

We are looking forward to 2021 and developing new resources to promote community participation. We anticipate new documents related to sports, mindfulness, storytelling, just to name a few! If you have ideas about resources that would help support community participation, please let us know! We're always excited to hear from you and develop the resources that will meet your needs. To all of you who followed along on our 2020 journey, thank you! We look forward to engaging with you in 2021 and beyond!

