

Vaccine Confidence Talking Points

These talking points can be used as a guide by anyone doing work to support and encourage people with and without disabilities to get their COVID-19 vaccine. These talking points may be used either in-person conversations, on social media, or through written materials. This guide is set up in a “question and answer” format and gives sample responses to common questions people in the disability community might have about the COVID-19 vaccine. Although a general structure and sample responses are provided, we encourage individuals and organizations to tailor these messages to meet the needs of the people they serve and plug in relevant local resources. This guide is written in plain language and has been created and reviewed by several people with intellectual disabilities.

Why get the vaccine?



If a person with a disability asks: “Why should I get the vaccine?”



You can say...

- The COVID-19 vaccine is a shot, like the flu shot. It will protect you from getting very sick from COVID-19, just like the flu shot protects you from getting very sick from the flu.
- It is important that all people who can get the shot, get it. Getting the shot will help keep you healthy.
- Getting the shot can also help keep your family, friends, and the people you care about healthy. It is very unlikely that you give someone else COVID-19 after you get the vaccine.
- We know that people with some disabilities are more likely to get COVID-19 or get very sick from COVID-19 because of their type of disability or disability-related medical conditions. If you have one of these disabilities, it is extra important that you get the shot to stay healthy.
- Getting the shot can help you safely do the things you enjoy, like spending time with other people, going to work, and going out in the community.



If a family member of a person with a disability asks: “Why should I get the vaccine?”



You can say...

- It is important that all people who can get the shot, get it. Getting the shot will help keep you healthy.
- It is very unlikely that you give someone else COVID-19 after you get the vaccine. Getting the vaccine will help protect your family members with disabilities.
- We know that people with some disabilities are more likely to get COVID-19 or get very sick from COVID-19. If your family member has one of these disabilities, it is very important that you get the shot to help them stay healthy.



If a Direct Support Professional asks: “Why should I get the vaccine?”



You can say...

- It is important that all people who can get the shot, get it. Getting the vaccine is the best way to protect your family and friends.
- It is very unlikely that you can give someone else COVID-19 after you get the vaccine. Getting the shot will help keep you healthy.
- You may be more likely to get COVID-19 because your job requires you to work in-person and very close to other people. Getting the vaccine is extra important to keep yourself, your family, and your friends safe.
- The people with disabilities who you support could be more likely to get very sick if they get COVID-19. Getting the vaccine is the best way you can help keep them healthy.
- Getting the shot can help you safely do the things you enjoy outside of work, like spending time with other people and going out in the community.



If a person asks: “If I already had COVID-19, do I still need the vaccine?”



You can say...

- Yes. Everyone who can safely take the shot, should.
- Medical professionals are not yet sure if having COVID-19 means you are safe from getting it again. Getting the shot will help you stay safe from getting COVID-19 again.



If a parent or guardian of a child with a disability asks, “Should my child get their COVID-19 vaccine?”



You can say...

- All children, with and without disabilities, over twelve years-old can get their COVID-19 shots. Children younger than twelve years-old cannot get their vaccine yet, but might be able to soon.
- Getting the shot can help keep your child, family, and your child’s friends and classmates safe from COVID-19.
- Some children, with or without disabilities, cannot get the vaccine for certain medical reasons. It is important to check with your child’s doctor first if you are not sure.
- Getting the vaccine will help your child stay safe for a return to school, activities, or events with other people.
- We do not know how many children with disabilities were included in the first checks to make sure the vaccine was safe for children. But now many children with disabilities have gotten their shots safely.

Vaccine Safety

 **If a person with a disability* asks: “Is the vaccine safe for me?”**

You can say...

- The vaccine is safe, and it works. You should contact a trusted doctor if you want to learn more about if the vaccine is safe for you.
- The medical professionals who worked on the vaccine made sure it was safe for people from every background, age, and gender.
- To be safe, everyone is asked to stay at the place for ten to fifteen minutes after they get their shot. This is so that a medical professional is nearby in case anyone has a bad reaction to the shot.
- We do not know how many people with disabilities were included in the first tests to make sure the vaccine was safe. But now many people with disabilities have gotten their shots safely.
- Some people, with or without disabilities, cannot get the vaccine for certain medical reasons. It is important to check with your doctor first if you are not sure.

**Note: The answer to this question will depend on age or disability of person asking. These are general responses that can be tailored based on the person asking.*

 **If a person asks: “I am worried that the vaccine was made too quickly. How do I know it’s safe for me?”**

You can say...

- Researchers were able to do the safety tests for the COVID-19 vaccine more quickly than usual because so many medical professionals were given the money and time to work on it.



If a person with a disability asks: “How do I know the vaccine is safe for my type of disability/health condition?”



You can say...

- If you are unsure if the vaccine is safe for you, you can talk to a doctor you trust.
- If someone feels like the shot made them feel sick or hurt, they can tell their trusted doctor, or ask a trusted family member or friend for help.
- It is safer to get the shot than to get sick from COVID-19.
- Some people, with or without disabilities, have medical conditions that mean they cannot get the vaccine. It is important to check with your doctor first if you are not sure.

Getting the Vaccine



If a person with a disability asks: “Is the vaccine free for me?”



You can say...

- Yes, the vaccine is free for everybody.
- The vaccine is still free even if you do not have insurance.



If a person with a disability asks: “Do I need to give my insurance information to get the vaccine?”



You can say...

- No. Even if you are asked for your insurance information, you do not have to give it.
- If you chose to give your insurance information, the shot will still be free for you.

Will need to fill in at state/local level with information regarding id requirements – some states and pharmacies require; others require birth date and full name; others do not require anything. We raise this as a point to consider in 1-1 conversations.



If a person with a disability asks: “I am scared of shots and/or needles. Is there another way to get the vaccine?”



You can say...

- The only way to get the COVID-19 vaccine is with a shot. A shot is the best way to protect your body from getting sick from COVID-19.
- Before you get your shot, you can ask the person giving the shot if it is okay to have your family member/friend/support staff with you.
- You can ask to get the shot in a quiet, private space.
- You can ask the person giving the shot to tell you what the shot will feel like, how long it will take, and to tell you when they are about to give the shot.
- Some places giving the shot have a practice needle you can look at before you get the shot.

It is important to know you can always ask for what you need to help you feel better when getting your shot.



If a person with a disability asks: “Will the vaccine site be accessible to me?”



You can say...

- Places to get a shot should be accessible to people with disabilities. But we know that many places are not.
- Many pharmacies and grocery stores are now giving the shot. These are good places to get a shot if you are worried about accessibility.
- You, or a family member or support staff, can call a vaccine site before you go to ask questions about where you will get the shot, if there will be a wait, who will give the shot, or other questions you may have.



If a person with a disability asks: “Do I need to go somewhere to get a shot?”



You can say...

- It depends on where you live.
- In many places, a medical professional can come to your home to give you a shot.
- Many areas now have mobile vaccine clinics. To find one near you, text the zip code of your home to 438829 (GETVAX), visit www.vaccines.gov, or Call 1-800-232-0233.
- There is also a new vaccine help service just for people with disabilities. It is called DIAL. They can help you find where to get a shot, how to get there, and with any other questions you have. You can email them at DIAL@n4a.org or call at 888-677-1199.

Vaccine Side Effects



If a person with a disability asks: “Will I get sick from the shot?”



You can say...

- The COVID-19 vaccine cannot give you COVID-19.
- Every person can feel differently after getting the shot. Many people had a sore arm. Some people had headaches, felt tired, or felt achy. Some people also had a fever.
- It is normal and okay to feel these things after getting the shot. If you feel sick after the shot, it should go away after a day or two.
- It is also normal and okay to not feel sick after getting the shot.
- Some types of disabilities might make you feel sicker after getting the shot. You can talk to your doctor if you feel worried about getting sick after the shot because of your disability.
- If you get a vaccine that requires two shots, you might feel differently after each one. Some people feel sicker after the first shot, and other people feel sicker after the second shot. Some people feel fine after both! All are safe and normal to feel, and depend on your body.
- Whatever you feel or don't feel after taking the shot, your body is still safer from getting very sick from COVID.



If a person with a disability asks: “I heard some people got really sick after getting the vaccine. How do I know this won’t happen to me?”



You can say...

- Every person feels differently after getting their shots. Some people may feel worse than others. Most people feel better after one or two days. You can contact a trusted doctor if you are worried and want to learn more.
- It is safer to get the shot than to get sick from COVID-19. Many types of disabilities can make it more likely that people will get very sick or even die from COVID-19. Getting the shot will protect you from getting very sick from COVID-19.
- Medical professionals have been working on vaccines like this for many years and will continue to make sure it is safe.

Life After the Vaccine



If a person with a disability asks: “Can I still get COVID-19 after getting the shot?”



You can say...

- Yes, a small number of people might still get COVID-19 after getting the shot. But it’s important to remember that the shot will protect you from getting very sick or dying from COVID-19.
- Some people with disabilities have a hard time fighting off sicknesses. This can be because of a health condition or because of a medicine they take. This can make it harder for their body to protect itself against COVID-19, even after getting the shot. It will be important to work with your doctor on a plan to continue staying safe from COVID-19.
- Everyone will need a new COVID-19 shot called a “booster shot” which helps continue to keep you safe from getting sick over time. Ask your doctor when you should get your booster shot.



If a person with a disability asks: “Do I still need to wear a mask and keep a distance from other people after getting the shot?”



You can say...

- Yes, you may still have to follow some safety rules, like wearing a mask or staying away from crowded places. Every state, town, and even store can have their own rules. You still always need to wear a mask when using public transportation, like a bus, plane, or medical transportation.
- Safety rules may be different for people with certain disabilities or those who live in group settings. Please speak to your doctor if you have questions about the safety rules.
- **Insert state and local information and resources here**

Other Local/Regional Questions to Consider



If a person with a disability asks: “Where can I get a shot near me?”



You can say...

- Vaccines are available at many locations such as doctors’ offices, pharmacies, grocery stores, and other public places.
- Vaccines can be scheduled at different times throughout the day and days of the week.
- Many places will also let you walk-in to get a shot without an appointment.
- Many areas now have mobile vaccine clinics that come to your home. To find one near you, text the zip code of your home to 438829 (GETVAX), visit www.vaccines.gov, or call 800-232-0233.
- There is also a new vaccine help service just for people with disabilities. It is called DIAL. They can help you find where to get a shot, how to get there, and with any other questions you have. You can email them at DIAL@n4a.org or call at 888-677-1199.
- **Insert state and local information about how to find a vaccine site near you**



If a person with a disability asks: “How do I make an appointment for a shot?”



You can say...

- Vaccine appointments can be scheduled in many different ways such as over the phone, online, and in a walk-in or drive-thru clinic.
- There is also a new, national vaccine help service just for people with disabilities. It is called DIAL. They can help you find where to get a shot, how to get there, and with any other questions you have. You can email them at DIAL@n4a.org or call at 888-677-1199.
- **Insert state and local information and resources here**
- **Insert info if/where services exist to help people schedule appointments**
- **Can add information about what your center may offer**



If a person with a disability asks: “I do not drive. How can I get to a vaccine site?”



You can say...

- **Insert state and local resources here (e.g. uber/lyft, public transport, medical transport)**
- **Can add information about what your center may offer**



If a person with a disability asks: “Where can I find more information?”



You can say...

- **Insert state and local resources here**
- **Can add information about what your center may offer**
- Examples of national resources from CDC:
 - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html
 - www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/evalwebs.htm