

Hi Everyone!

There seems to be so much going on with the new Delta variant, first of all, this article was very helpful for me in understanding how this variant is different – and the same. It explain what we know so far: <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2021/08/10/what-we-now-know-about-how-to-fight-the-delta-variant-of-covid-column/>

**So how are we responding at CCS?** Well, we tend to be pretty conservative with a focus on safety for everyone – even if that means a little uptick in inconvenience. We are not waiting for anyone to tell us that we **\*should\*** be masking and keeping our distance from folks – we already know that that is safe. People have been asking if we'll need to return to fully remote services. I sure hope not! But, if we do we know how to do it. CCS is continuing to offer a full array of REMOTE service options (thanks to Morgan for helping us keep this program going). We'll keep ending our remote options as we have them and if we need more – we'll do that.

What else are we doing in the midst of the uptick in the Delta Variant?

1. **Not doubling up** people on the schedule! We had looked at creating a way to get people more direct 1:1 services by doubling up some folks, but we pulled back from this idea with the emergence of the delta variant.
2. We went back **to online daily health screenings**
3. We are asking **everyone to wear a mask** when providing or in services, and we're providing them. (there are some exceptions for people who can't wear them)
4. We are **not supporting group supports**
5. **We're keeping up the tents** and encouraging outside time – at least it's not cold out
6. **Transportation** – right now we haven't pulled back on people driving in cars but everyone should wear a mask and keep the windows open.
7. We have encouraged and provided all our staff time to be **vaccinated**. I believe that about 99% of CCS staff are fully vaccinated.

Today we heard from the state that this Delta variant has already spread quickly across two agencies when people in respite - who were following all protocols - still transmitted the disease. So, we need to be very cautious here folks. None of us wants to look back on this period and think “well, maybe I should have....” And while it's SUCH A BUMMER that we are not dealing with this variant – especially when we're are so tired and we are having frustrating workforce issues! – but we DO know how to do this. We know how to stay safe. We just need to do it for a while longer.

## **A Loss to the System**

(From Amy Roth)

Two weeks ago we very sadly lost a person who was integral to the history of how people with developmental disabilities are supported and cared for in our state: Robert Brace.

The “Brace Decree”, linked below, led to the eventual closure of Brandon Training School. Robert and his peers are memorialized in this 1980 legal settlement compelling

community mental health programs to develop individualized non-institutional services so that Robert Brace and five other residents could leave the institution within the year. A ten-year timeframe was laid out for transitioning all the other residents out into community-based settings.

Brace Decree

<https://ddsd.vermont.gov/sites/ddsd/files/documents/the-brace-decree.pdf>

It took a bit longer for the system to become robust enough to accept the remaining residents, but the state of Vermont under Governor Howard Dean eventually shut the institution doors for good in 1993.

<https://ddsd.vermont.gov/brandon-training-school-closure>

Robert was very proud of his role in these momentous changes that would ultimately impact thousands of Vermonters. His life was not always easy but he was loved and valued, and contributed full-heartedly to his community.

In 2013, we celebrated and remembered the 20 year anniversary of the BTS closure. Robert joined Governor Shumlin for this Public Service Announcement, written below with the attached audio.

[https://ddsd.vermont.gov/sites/ddsd/files/documents/BTS-PublicServiceAnnouncement\\_Script.pdf](https://ddsd.vermont.gov/sites/ddsd/files/documents/BTS-PublicServiceAnnouncement_Script.pdf)

It has been an honor for many of us to work in Vermont's Developmental Disabilities Services system in support of Robert Brace's drive, fearlessness and dreams. His legacy must never be forgotten.

Thanks!

*Beth*

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