To address the needs of different communities, red tape around funding and regulations have been removed, allowing for a renaissance of innovation in service provision. Providers must continue to utilize harm reduction strategies, strong partnership collaboration, and continue to advocate for youth at all levels to ensure that during the pandemic, and after, we have innovative and equitable pathways to stability for youth.

Q + A

When we start to ramp back up, what should folks expect and how do we get back to the new normal?
The sooner organizations can ramp up some of their services - Telehealth, outreach, digital communication, the better. It’s possible we won’t go back to the old way of life anyways. The sooner we can adapt to that, the better the outcomes will be. The world will be permanently transformed after this, including a lot more digital services, but we will always need to go back to human connection.

Are there funding sources folks should be aware of during this time?
Legislation has come out that is massively confusing, making providing services harder because it’s impossible to understand. The worst thing that can happen is that there are more deaths simply because the paperwork is so confusing. There is money; call your public health authority because the language is wider than what is being reported.

Telehealth is more important now than ever. Public health advice is to go digital in your service delivery as much as you can. HIPAA compliance around telehealth has relaxed during COVID-19 in order to provide flexibility and allow providers to connect in ways that are accessible for the client. Human connection is vital during shelter-in-place.
IN-DEPTH

What is Telehealth?
Telehealth is the utilization of technology such as calls, texts, video calls, internet streaming, and other platforms to provide services such as healthcare, public health, education, health administration, and case management.

Where can I do telehealth?
Providers should do their very best to provide a private setting for themselves and their clients. If the client cannot be in a private setting, you must align with HIPPA guidelines and safeguards to limit any potential disclosure to others. You must use non-public facing platforms (such as social media or group messaging platforms) in order to conduct a telehealth session.

I have heard HIPPA is relaxed for better access to telehealth to folks in need. What does that mean?
Covered health care providers will not be subject to penalties for violations of the HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Notification Rules that occur in the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.

Why should we continue to prioritize youth and those who are the most vulnerable?
Youth are experiencing homelessness because of poverty, structural racism, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, and all the other -isms. Those factors push young people onto the streets. We are seeing opportunities for changing structural constraints - to have new models that don’t pathologize or criminalize youth. We have to do everything we can to harness the silver lining and protect our youth.

THE BIGGEST TAKE AWAY IS THAT WE ARE ALL ON THE FRONTLINES. YOU ARE ALL FRONTLINE PROVIDERS IN SOME WAY, SHAPE, OR FORM. YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE PUTTING ON PPE TO BE ON IT.
-JOSH BAROCAS, M.D.

1. Build out your digital services - even if they are not perfect. Providing resources for youth is imperative during this time.
2. Review and apply for various types of funding that have lower restrictions, quicker responses, and allow for innovative and effective work.
3. Create programming and actions under the assumption that everyone could potentially be infected with COVID-19 and work according to safety precautions for youth and staff.

You can find more info at pointsourceyouth.org/covid19resources
"YOUTH WON'T BEAR THE BIGGEST BRUNT OF COMORBIDITY AND DEATH FROM COVID-19, BUT THEY WILL BEAR THE BIGGEST PSYCHOSOCIAL COST. HAVING SERVICES WHERE ALL YOUTH FEEL SAFE IS CRITICAL. THAT HASN'T CHANGED AND THE NEED IS MORE NOW. -COLLEETE (COCO) AUERSWALD, M.D., M.S.

RESOURCES & LINKS

- Interim CDC Guidance on Interacting with Clients
- FAQs on Telehealth and HIPAA during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency
- Harm Reduction Coalition
- Rural Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Risk Mitigation
- Grant Opportunities Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Funds for coronavirus relief
- National Academy for State Health Policy

You can find more info at pointsourceyouth.org/covid19resources