

### Suggestions to Ensure Consistent, Compassionate Communications

**Recommended:** Diagnosed with COVID-19

**Not recommended:** Tested positive for COVID-19

**Reason:** The phrase “tested positive” can unintentionally promote stigma.

**Recommended:** Stay at home or Stay home, stay healthy

**Not recommended:** Shelter-in-place

**Reason:** Shelter-in-place is an action associated with natural disasters such as hurricanes or imminent threats such as active shooters or a radiological hazard. It means we are ordering people to stay in their home or another secure location until they are told they can exit. Because people are already feeling fearful and confused, the phrase “shelter-in-place” can activate impulses such as overstocking (hoarding), and feed harmful behaviors such as substance abuse.

**Recommended:** Physical distancing

**Not recommended:** Social isolation; quarantine

**Reason:** Physical distancing does not mean isolation—in fact, a lot of the state public information messaging is aimed at reducing isolation and increasing support and connection. Quarantine has a specific medical meaning.

**Recommended:** COVID-19 pandemic

**Not recommended:** COVID-19 crisis; COVID-19 outbreak; COVID-19 emergency

**Reason:** Pandemic is the most accurate description of the situation.

**Recommended:** COVID-19 or coronavirus

**Not recommended:** Any other name, particularly ones that identify a geographic location

**Reason:** COVID-19 is the official name from the World Health Organization

**Recommended:** Consumer overstocking

**Not recommended:** Hoarding or panic buying

**Reason:** Try not to use judgmental or dramatic terms.

**Recommended:** People over 60 or older adults

**Not recommended:** Seniors, elderly

**Reason:** Many people over 60 do not identify as senior or elderly

**Recommended:** Super-spreading event

**Not recommended:** Super-spreader

**Reason:** Refrain from assigning blame to a person; rather explain the event that caused a high number of transmissions.