

# COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scenarios

DISCLAIMER: All names and events included in these scenarios are fictitious and intended for training purposes only. These scenarios are not based on real people or events.

***The scenarios in this document can be used by trainers and team leads to build skills for contact tracers. Staff in training and newly trained staff can use these scenarios to role-play how they would interview contacts, find out if they have any barriers to self-quarantine, and address those barriers. Specific scripts based on these scenarios should incorporate jurisdiction-specific processes and resources.***

## Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate ability to build rapport with contacts to ensure an honest discussion
- Identify high-risk situations for transmission of COVID-19
- Assess a contact's need for medical care
- Identify challenges to isolation/quarantine
- Demonstrate knowledge of local resources for social supports
- Demonstrate ability to answer questions from patient or contact

***The following scenarios can be used in a variety of ways as a teaching tool depending on the skill set of the audience, time constraints, and level of supervision. The trainer would act as an observer and offer suggestions for improvement to the role-players. Suggestions for how to use the following scenarios include:***

1. Full interview role-play with an experienced contact tracer playing the role of contact while the student uses the locally developed script to practice interview skills
2. Use each scenario as a starting point for discussion of the challenges contact tracers may face
3. Segment interviews where each partner set is assigned a portion of the interview (e.g., demographic, instructions for isolation, contact elicitation) and scenarios to role-play and hone contact tracing skills

## Scenario #1:

### Background:

Janice Simmons is a recent contact of a person with a COVID-19 diagnosis. Ms. Simmons attended a baby shower 1 week ago that her acquaintance Susan also attended, and they sat next to each other at the meal served as a part of the shower. Susan developed symptoms the day after the baby shower. After 3 days with symptoms, Susan went to the doctor and tested positive for COVID-19. The case has just been assigned to the contact tracer.



**U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

### Information for Janice Simmons:

You are a married 30-year-old woman with a 3-year-old son. You work at a clothing boutique and are desperate to get as many hours as possible because your store was closed for over a month because of COVID-19. You returned to work 2 weeks ago. Your husband Arnold was laid off from his job as a chef when the restaurants closed because of COVID-19. Although restaurants have reopened, they are only operating at 25% capacity, so he hasn't been rehired. You are feeling fine and have no signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

Self-quarantine is going to create a burden for your family since you are the only one who is working currently. With your husband out of work and at home, tensions have been running high, and your husband has had problems with anger and violence in the past.

He has struck you on occasion and has told you that if you got COVID-19 he would throw you out. You are worried about how you will be able to distance from him and your son when all the household duties fall on you. Having to physically distance yourself from your son for 14 days will be extremely hard.

### Tips for Observer:

- How does the contact tracer build rapport with the contact?
- How does the contact tracer address Ms. Simmons's concerns about missing work?
- Does the contact tracer refer Ms. Simmons to appropriate resources for intimate partner violence?
- What information does the contact tracer give Ms. Simmons about how to quarantine in her home with other family members?

## Scenario #2:

### Background:

Veronica Alvarez is a recent contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Ms. Alvarez works in a convenience store in southern Delaware, often with her coworker Marcus. Marcus developed a cough and fever a week ago and went to the clinic 2 days later.

The clinician advised Marcus to self-isolate immediately and tested him for COVID-19. Marcus has not been to work in 5 days, and he and the health department were just notified his test came back positive.

### Information for Veronica Alvarez:

You are a 22-year-old woman and live with your boyfriend and his mother and grandmother in an apartment in Maryland, near the border of Delaware. You have been working at the convenience store for 4 years, and it's a good job with steady work and benefits. Your boyfriend Ricardo works in a grocery store stockroom in Maryland. Both of you are fortunate enough to have continued to work through the COVID-19 outbreak since your jobs are considered essential. You and Ricardo support Ricardo's mother and grandmother because they are unable to work.

The mother (Maria) and grandmother (Karla) came to the US from Guatemala on tourist visas that have now expired. Maria and Karla only speak Spanish. You and Ricardo are bilingual and help Maria and Karla with communication. Shortly before the trip to visit Ricardo and Veronica, Karla was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and is running low on her medication.

### Tips for Observer:

- How does the contact tracer establish trust with Veronica?
- How does the contact tracer address Veronica's concerns about Ricardo's family members and their immigration status?
- Does the contact tracer refer Ms. Alvarez to appropriate resources to help her boyfriend's mother and grandmother with medical and legal needs?
- What information does the contact tracer give Ms. Alvarez about how to proceed with quarantine with other household members present and her boyfriend working?

## Scenario #3:

### Background:

Phillip Nguyen is a contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. The person is Mr. Nguyen's wife, Tina Nguyen, and he has regular, ongoing contact with her. After being quite sick for nearly 2 weeks, Tina is feeling much better. She has been fever-free for 4 days, and her symptoms are all resolving. Conversation with Mr. Nguyen is through a language line interpreter over the phone.

### Information for Phillip Nguyen:

You are a 63-year-old man and live with your wife, Tina, who was tested for COVID-19 10 days ago, but just received the news of her positive result. You have been taking care of Tina and have not been out of the house since she became ill. You both speak Vietnamese and see a Vietnamese physician, who explained to you at the time of the appointment 10 days ago that Tina probably had COVID-19 based on her symptoms.

You have done your best to physically distance yourself from her, but you ran out of masks a few days ago. You are both retired and receive Social Security and have adult children who bring food and medications to you, when needed.

### Tips for Observer:

- How does the contact tracer address the language interpretation issues with Mr. Nguyen?
- Does the contact tracer verify Mr. Nguyen's understanding about COVID-19 and quarantine?
- Does the contact tracer identify any challenges to Mr. Nguyen's quarantine?
- What information does the contact tracer give Mr. Nguyen about the length of his quarantine?

## Scenario #4:

### Background:

Monique White is a recent contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. The person diagnosed with COVID-19 is her close friend Renee Wilson. Mrs. Wilson is feeling fine but decided to get a test because there was free testing in her neighborhood, and she knows a lot of people who have been ill. The test was done on Saturday and Mrs. Wilson received the positive result on Sunday. Today is Tuesday.

When Mrs. Wilson was interviewed by a case investigator on Monday, she mentioned that she and Mrs. White were bored with staying at home and decided to meet at their neighborhood park on Saturday afternoon to catch up with one another.

### Information for Monique White

You are a 25-year-old woman who lives in a studio apartment with your husband, Martin, and your 4-month-old son. You recently went back to work after maternity leave, are an essential worker at a local warehouse distribution center and cannot afford to miss work. You cannot physically distance yourself from your husband and son in your studio apartment.

You are worried that if you have COVID-19, you may have exposed your grandmother when you visited her yesterday. Your grandmother is 75, has chronic kidney disease, and is undergoing dialysis. Martin usually works at a gym, but it has been closed for the past 2 months because of COVID-19. He feels lucky because he was able to pick up a part-time job delivering groceries to people's homes.

### **Tips for Observer:**

- How does the contact tracer build rapport with Mrs. White?
- How does the contact tracer address Mrs. White's concerns about her elderly grandmother?
- Does the contact tracer refer Mrs. White to appropriate resources?
- What information does the contact tracer give Mrs. White about how to quarantine in her home with other family members?

## **Scenario #5:**

### **Background:**

Mylie is a 15-year-old girl who was identified as a contact to her friend. This past Wednesday, Mylie snuck off to watch a movie at her friend's place at night; her friend's mother arrived back from work a bit early and asked Mylie to return home. Her friend's mother subsequently contacted Mylie to let her know that her friend was hospitalized over the weekend with COVID-19 after she started feeling feverish and dizzy last Friday.

You contact Mylie to let her know that you will need to speak with her parent. You call the number for Mylie's father, Mike Roman, to speak with him about Mylie.

### **Information for Mike Roman:**

Your daughter Mylie went out last week to hang out at a friend's house. She was sent home when the friend's mom got off work, and now Mylie told you her friend is in the hospital. On Monday, Mylie developed some stomach cramps and diarrhea, but it passed after a day. The next day, her throat started feeling irritated and she soon developed a cough, headache, and muscle aches. She otherwise has no other medical issues.

Your daughter is feeling "unwell" but probably just picked up a "bug." You've been watching the news and you think that all this stuff about COVID-19 is "overblown." You don't need Mylie to talk to anyone from the government and have them make her worried, Mylie will be "just fine" after a few days' rest.

### **Tips for Observer:**

- How does the contact tracer build rapport with Mylie's father and educate him about COVID-19?
- How does the contact tracer build rapport with Mylie's father so that he allows the contact tracer to speak with Mylie directly and answer questions she may have?
- Does the contact tracer refer Mr. Roman to appropriate resources for Mylie to be medically evaluated/tested?
- What information does the contact tracer give to Mr. Roman about how Mylie should be quarantined in the home with other family members?
- Does the contact tracer educate Mr. Roman on possible legal ramifications of refusing to allow Mylie to be evaluated?