

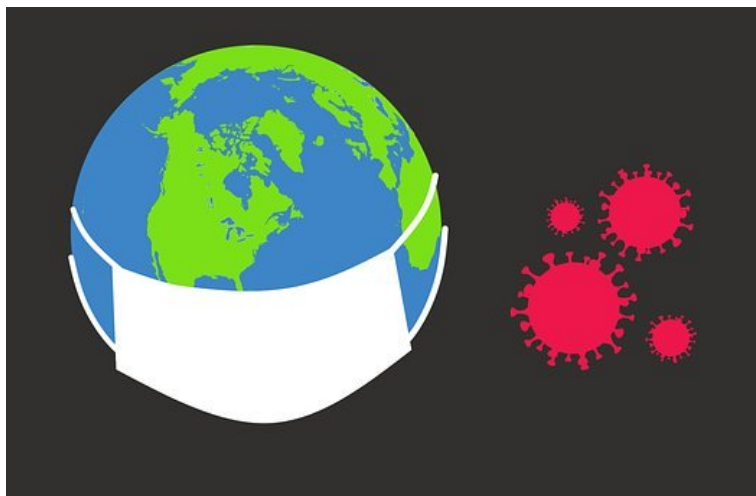


LEADERSHIP
CORVALLIS

CLASS OF 2020

**MEETING GUIDE:
Navigating the COVID-19
Crisis**

**Thursday, May 14, 2020
(Stay at Home: Day 53)**



[leadershipcorvallis.com](https://www.leadershipcorvallis.com)

The worldwide community is currently responding to a pandemic (global outbreak) of a respiratory disease that is spreading easily from person-to-person. This public health threat is caused by a new (novel) coronavirus and is named COVID-19. Symptoms range from mild illness to severe illness resulting in death. As of early May, over 70,000 people had died in the U.S. as a result of this pandemic.

With no vaccine nor treatment medications the most important response strategy is physical distancing, good hand hygiene, and covering coughs to reduce the risk of exposure. In a rapidly changing landscape, Oregon's Governor declared a state of emergency on March 8th, mandated school closures on March 13th, and on March 23rd issued an Executive Order that closed non-essential businesses and mandated that Oregonians stay home except for essential needs.

The situation continues to evolve with stressors and challenges on all sectors of our community. Today's session is designed to provide you with an overview of the on-going actions being taken in the community and direct you to additional information and ways you can support the professionals guiding us through this unprecedented emergency.

Leadership Corvallis Program Outcomes

Graduates of the *Leadership Corvallis* program will...

- Help continue to advance Corvallis into a great and unique community in which to live, work, grow, and play.
- Be effective, creative community leaders and act as mentors for emerging leaders.
- Create and strengthen personal and professional networks and use them to find and use resources well.
- Be assets in community groups and consider the diverse elements of the community in their actions and decisions.

Day Nine Objectives

As a result of this session, participants will . . .

- Understand the challenges of providing the community with accurate information during a crisis and learn about reliable sources of information.
- Learn how emergency response and recovery is coordinated across the community. Understand what actions can be taken to support this work.
- Remember the importance of self-care and learn what community resources are available to support positive mental health.



Day Nine Class Location

This month's program will be conducted over the video-conferencing platform ZOOM. Ben Danley, Program Host, will be emailing you an invitation to the ZOOM meeting with links to join the session. If you have not participated in a ZOOM meeting before, be sure to download the app before the class session starts. May's Zoom link to the session is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/96155438944>

NOTE: Leadership Corvallis may record this session to share with the broader community. By participating in this session, you give us permission to share this with others. If you do not want your image recorded, you can turn off the video and still participate.

Agenda

Navigating the COVID-19 Crisis

TIME	ACTIVITY / SPEAKER
09:00	Welcome and Agenda <i>Ben Danley, Program Host</i>
09:05	Navigating Information About COVID-19 <i>Patrick Rollens, City of Corvallis Public Information Officer (PIO)</i>
09:15	Community Emergency Response: An Overview and Status <i>Bryan Lee, Emergency Services Manager, Benton County</i> <i>Kate Porsche, representing EOC Operations Section & Economic Recovery Team</i>
09:45	Question & Answer
09:50	Coping, Self-Care and Community Resources <i>Kevin Higgins, Special Services Manager, Benton County Sheriff's Office</i> <i>Ashley Talamantes, L.P.C., Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinical Program Manager, Benton County Mental Health</i>
10:00	Session Ends

Navigating Information

A challenge during any emergency is providing the public with accurate, consistent, and timely information. Messages can change rapidly as new information is learned. Today this challenge is increased by the widespread use of social media.

Recognizing that coordinated and timely communication is critical to effectively help the community, on February 28th, the City of Corvallis and Benton County activated a Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC is part of the Incident Command System in which public information personnel gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate information about our community's response to COVID-19.

During a crisis, well-intentioned individuals can inadvertently spread misinformation. This can alarm or put other people at risk or can create situations that divert important resources/energy. Here are some things to consider before sharing information...

1. Don't Believe Everything You Read

Have some basic skepticism. Watch out when you receive information from a friend you trust who "got it from someone he/she trusted." Also, don't assume that what may be happening in another community is also happening in our community.

2. Pause and Take a Breath

False news travels faster than real news. Pause before reposting.

3. Act Like A Journalist

Look for an authoritative source. Then confirm what you've learned with multiple sources.

As a Leadership Corvallis class member, you have a unique opportunity to provide informed support to the community. Your broad understanding of the various aspects of our community and the breadth of the personal and professional networks you are developing can help provide needed support without adding additional stressors to the situation.

References

When searching for news and information about the pandemic, here are some authoritative websites to access:

Health Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov

Oregon Health Authority (OHA): www.oregon.gov/oha

Local Response Information:

Benton County COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Information: www.co.benton.or.us/coronavirus

City of Corvallis information: www.corvallisoregon.gov

Business Information:

Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Resources: www.yescorvallis.org

School Information:

Corvallis School District Information: www.csd509j.net

Philomath School District Information: www.philomathsd.net

Donation & Volunteer Information:

Benton County Recovers: www.bentoncounty.recovers.org

Most of these organizations also post on social media platforms such as Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A local PR firm has been working with community non-profits to share the impact of COVID-19 on their organizations. Video interviews with local Executive Directors are posted on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/bentoncountycovidconnection/

Community Emergency Response

To understand how our community has responded to, and continues to respond to, the COVID-19 pandemic, it helps to have some background information on the discipline of emergency management. Entire college degree programs focus on this discipline so what you are about to read is a very high-level summary.

BACKGROUND: Emergency Management

Disasters, by their very nature, are chaotic and unpredictable. A community's ability to weather and recover from a disaster often depends on the effectiveness of its emergency management program. These programs look at preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery in an effort to lessen the negative impacts of disasters.

In Oregon, response to emergencies or disasters takes place at the local level (cities and counties) with support from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management ([OEM](http://oem.oregon.gov)). In a large incident, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, OEM supports a coordinated response.

Any response must be in compliance with Oregon law. During a state of emergency, the Governor has complete authority over all executive agencies of state government. For more information refer to Chapter 401 of the Oregon Revised Statutes, [ORS Chapter 401](http://ors.leg.state.or.us/orsc/chapter401.htm).

BACKGROUND: NIMS and ICS

Our understanding of how to respond to emergencies has developed and been refined as a result of our experience with actual events. Evolving out of disasters such as the World Trade Center attacks and Hurricane Katrina, the Department of Homeland Security developed, and continues to refine, a comprehensive national framework for managing emergency incidents. That framework is NIMS, the National Incident Management System.

In NIMS, the model for on-scene incident management is ICS – the Incident Command System. ICS helps organize field-level operations during an event. When organizations use ICS as the basis for their disaster planning, they adopt predefined processes and protocols that come into play during an emergency. This common approach ensures that different agencies are on the same page and using the same systems for communication, command, and control.

A key challenge in any disaster is responding to both “hazard-generated demands” and “response-generated demands” at the same time. For example, with COVID-19 the hazard-generated demands include evaluating and treating victims while controlling the spread of the disease. Simultaneously, response-generated demands are created. They include the need to coordinate disparate resources, to gather and process accurate epidemiological information, to coordinate the public message, and to protect healthcare workers.

By using NIMS/ICS as an organizing structure, responders at all levels are able to work together more effectively. Additionally, in order to receive reimbursement from FEMA for disaster recovery, local jurisdictions must be NIMS compliant.

LOCAL RESPONSE: Emergency Declaration

Early modeling by OSU scientists indicated that COVID-19 could have a devastating impact on our community. With a well-traveled population and international institutions housed in the Corvallis area, the potential for spread of the infection was significant. When it became apparent that COVID-19 represented a threat to our community, officials activated our emergency management system.

“At the end of an event it will be impossible to know if we over-reacted or did too much, but it will be glaringly apparent if we under-reacted or did too little.”

*--Charlie Fautin
Benton County*

Health Department Co-Director

In order to access state and federal resources once local resources are depleted, local jurisdictions must formally declare an emergency. On March 17, 2020 the Benton County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to declare a county emergency. On that date they also activated a joint Emergency Operations Center with the City of Corvallis.



LOCAL RESPONSE: Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The joint City/County Emergency Operations Center is the hub for this event. It is the central coordination point for all emergency operations, for information gathering and dissemination, and for coordination with government, business, and volunteer organizations.

The EOC operates on the NIMS/ICS model. Since both city and county employees are trained in this method it gives them a common language and organization to help them work together effectively.

The joint commanders for the EOC are Bryan Lee, Benton County Emergency Services Manager, and Dave Busby, Corvallis Fire Emergency Planning Manager. Because the Incident Command System is flexible and scalable as needed by the event, the joint EOC has been able to adjust to this unfolding crisis. Initially, the EOC was set up with a 20-person team and a trade-off of command every two days. They quickly outgrew that structure and moved to a 5-day rotation with as many as 50 people working on the team.

The EOC is organized into five sections with the following responsibilities:

- COMMAND:** Manages the overall response.
- OPERATIONS:** Coordinates tasks need to meet operational goals.
- PLANNING:** Collects, evaluates, and disseminates information and coordinates the writing of action plans.
- LOGISTICS:** Procures personnel and equipment to support operations.
- FINANCE:** Tracks expenditures and monitors costs. Required for responsible use of resources and for possible federal reimbursement.

Two additional sections report directly to command. They are:

- JIC:** The Joint Information Center (JIC) coordinates and distributes accurate, consistent, timely public messages.
- LIAISON GROUP:** Works directly with community groups such as neighborhoods, churches, schools, and volunteer organizations to coordinate response.

LOCAL RESPONSE: Examples of Work Being Done

The EOC is liaising with government agencies at both the state and local levels, with the schools, with business, and with volunteer groups. They have teams looking at contact tracking, health care capacity, sanitation, vulnerable populations, etc. Here are just a few examples of projects or activities being coordinated through the EOC:

- Launch [Benton County Recovers](#), a website dedicated to coordinating donations and volunteers for COVID-19 pandemic response.
- Gather, inventory and distribute critically needed personal protective equipment to healthcare workers and other essential staff in the area. To ensure an equitable and transparent process, a distribution community makes decisions about how to distribute the supplies. Includes coordinating with [Corvallis Sewing Brigade](#), a group of volunteers self-organized to sew face masks and gowns.
- Support Benton County Businesses through sharing information on loans, programs, and support via the Economic Development’s website and twice-weekly online forums for [businesses](#).
- Support the TRACE (Team-Based Rapid Assessment of Community-level coronavirus Epidemics) testing project, a partnership between OSU, Benton County Health Department, and Willamette Valley Toxicology Lab, designed to better understand how prevalent the virus is throughout out community. This project is the first of its kind in the U.S.
- Increase support and services for people experiencing [homelessness](#).
- Partner with OSU to retrofit vans to be used for safe transport when it looked like we might not have enough ambulances to transport sick individuals.

Coping, Self-Care, and Community Resources

In addition to the impact this pandemic is taking on the physical and economic health of the community, it’s also taking a toll on our mental health.

Feelings of concern and anxiety are natural and normal reactions to this unprecedented event. They should be acknowledged and not ignored, while understanding that we do not all respond in the same way. The degree of our stress response might range from very mild to extremely severe. A good analogy floating around social media is that we’re all in the same storm, just riding it out in different boats.

“The issue facing each and every one of us is how we manage and react to the stressful situation unfolding so rapidly in our lives and communities. Here we can draw on the remarkable powers of strength and cooperation that we also fortunately possess as humans. And that is what we must try to focus on to respond most effectively to this crisis as individuals, family and community members, friends and colleagues.”

*--Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge
WHO Regional Director for Europe*

Mental health professionals worldwide are concerned about the long-term impacts caused by the necessary public health measures taken to flatten the curve of infection. Social (physical) distancing, school and business closures can lead to isolation and job loss and expose people experiencing these situations to potentially poor mental health outcomes. There will likely be an increased need for mental health and substance use services in our communities.

Coping with COVID

Taking care of yourself both mentally and physically can help you navigate this event and help others as well. Remember that not everyone reacts to stressors in the same way so don't compare yourself to others. Recognize your feelings and the feelings of those around you and validate them. It's okay to feel whatever emotions you are experiencing. Here are some tips that might help you cope...

Take Breaks from COVID News

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories or social media posts about the pandemic. While it's important to stay informed, repeatedly hearing about the crisis can be upsetting. Try limiting your exposure to once or twice a day. Make sure you are getting credible, accurate information so that you can take practical steps to plan and protect yourself and your family.

Double Down on Your Physical Health

Focus on taking good care of your body. Exercise, eat nutritiously, rest, sleep, and drink plenty of water. Avoid using alcohol or other drugs to help you cope.

Give Yourself a Break

Your family life and day-to-day routines have been disrupted. Recognize that it will take some time to adjust. Try to keep to your regular routines and schedules or create new ones. Navigating these changes can take a toll on your mental health, especially if you set high expectations for yourself. Give yourself permission to just get through the day.

Set Healthy Boundaries

You may need to step back from some commitments or from people who don't give you the support you need. This is not being selfish; it is being self-caring.

Unwind & Connect with Yourself

Try to do activities you enjoy. Paint and create art. Dance. Make music. Take a moment to be still with yourself. Try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation. Write in a journal. Even a few minutes a day can be helpful.

Connect – Safely! – with Others

Humans are social animals, so while we can't get together in the normal way right now, it's helpful to plan other ways to connect. Call, write, text, or video-chat with someone you can share your thoughts and feelings with. Try engaging, remotely, in a collaborative project like a group game or art project. If you can do it while adhering to physical distancing guidelines, engage in acts of service.

Get Help

When your stress feels overwhelming, get some expert help. The CDC recommends that you call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

The CDC also encourages people with pre-existing mental health conditions to continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.

Resources

In addition to tips on ways to cope with stress, the following site includes information about the Disaster Distress Helpline and the National Domestic Violence Hotline, as well as some excellent information for parents on ways to support your child.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 Stress and Coping Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Locally, this site provides information about the Sheriff's Office Crisis Response Team and includes information about critical incidents, reactions to critical incidents, and self-care for stress management. It also lists a variety of local and critical resources for support and help.

Benton County Sheriff's Office, Special Services, Crisis Response Team (CRT)

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff/page/crisis-response-team-crt>

The Benton County COVID-19 site includes Guidance and Resources for dealing with stress, anxiety and depression. This site includes crisis response hotlines.

Benton County, Coronavirus, Guidance and Resources

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/coronavirus/page/stress-anxiety-and-depression>

The Corvallis-Benton County Public Library has posted an online guide to mental health resources with links to free online yoga and meditation, free online depression and anxiety support groups, and free substance use disorder recovery meetings.

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library/Mental Health Resources Online

<https://cbcpubliclibrary.net/mental-health-resources-online/>

The World Health Organization has released a list of considerations to address the mental well-being of the general population as well as specific high-risk groups such as health care workers, children, and older adults. This information is particularly valuable for community leaders and those sharing information with the public.

World Health Organization, Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During the COVID-19 Outbreak

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf>

Planning Team/Speaker Bios

Day Nine Planning Team

Ben Danley – Executive Director, Community Outreach Inc./Leadership Corvallis Program Host

*Ben Danley is an alumnus of the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2002** and has served on the Leadership Corvallis Board, including a term as the Board President. He worked at the OSU Alumni Association for almost 15 years. When the travel bug bit him, he quit his job in 2014 and spent several years volunteering and working for charities in Thailand, Vietnam, and Bangladesh (where he was bitten by many bugs in a more literal sense). He is now back in Corvallis working for Community Outreach, Inc., a homeless shelter for families and individuals.*

Stacy Mellem – Instructional Designer and Community Volunteer

*Stacy Mellem has been actively involved in Leadership Corvallis since 2005, serving as Chair of the Curriculum Committee for three years, Board President for one year, and Board Secretary for two years. She has been a member of several of the day facilitation teams and is a proud graduate of the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2006**. Stacy's professional career has always centered around helping organizations improve performance through training, facilitation, and communications*

Speakers (in order of appearance)

Patrick Rollens, City of Corvallis Public Information Office (PIO)

*Patrick Rollens is a transplant to Oregon, having relocated to the area from Chicago at the end of 2015. He is the Public Information Officer for the City of Corvallis, where he works diligently to de-mystify the inner workings of local government. As a former journalist, Patrick is a strong supporter of open and transparent communication, and an equally strident believer in the ability of communities to make a difference at the local level. He is a graduate of the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2017**, is a Leadership Corvallis Board Member and has led the design team for “Government and Public Services” day.*

Bryan Lee, Emergency Services Manager, Benton County

Bryan Lee is the Emergency Services Manager for Benton County and works out of the Benton County Sheriff’s Office. He joined the county in 2018 as an Emergency Services Planner and was promoted to manager in 2019. Before moving to Oregon, Bryan worked in California for the Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office. There he worked on disaster plans, community outreach, Emergency Operations Center readiness, and grants. He is also a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and in California he was an instructor for the EMT class and the Wilderness EMT class for Search and Rescue. Bryan takes a “Whole Community” approach to planning for emergencies. This FEMA approach involves including community members, businesses, schools, organizations, media, and all levels of government in the process of developing plans and clearly defining roles and responsibilities.

Kate Porsche, Economic Development Manager, Corvallis/Benton County

*Kate Porsche serves as the Corvallis/Benton County Economic Development Manager where she works to help businesses in Corvallis and Benton County prosper. Prior to joining Benton County and the City of Corvallis, she worked as the City of Albany’s Economic Development and Urban Renewal Director and, most recently, as the Community Development Director for the City of Redmond. Her background in the public sector paired with her work in communications, real estate, and as an analyst and database designer in the private sector have helped her to create strong public-private partnerships. She is a graduate of the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2019** and holds a Master’s degree in Public Policy from OSU.*

Kevin Higgins, Special Services Manager, Benton County Sheriff’s Office

*Kevin Higgins is the Special Services Manager for the Benton County Sheriff’s Office where he has worked since June 2015. The primary focus of his division is Search and Rescue and also includes oversight of the agency’s Unmanned Aerial Systems and the Crisis Response Team. Prior to joining the Sheriff’s Office, Kevin spent 13 years at Hewlett-Packard, was a small business owner, and worked as a Systems Analyst for Samaritan Health Services. Kevin has spent over 20 years volunteering with Adair Rural Fire & Rescue where he is currently a Fire Captain. He is a graduate of the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2016**.*

Ashley Talamantes, L.P.C., Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinical Program Manager, Benton County Mental Health

*Ashley Talamantes is a Licensed Professional Counselor and holds an M.S. in Counseling Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy. Originally from California, she started her career as a Crisis Response Intervention Specialist and Youth Advocate for the Coalition for Family Harmony in Oxnard, California. She relocated to Oregon in 2013 with her husband while he pursued his Ph.D. at OSU. She became a Lead Therapist at ShelterCare in Eugene, a supported housing program, before joining Benton County Mental Health in 2015. She is currently participating in this year’s class, the **Leadership Corvallis Class of 2020**.*

Final Thoughts....

It is with humility and appreciation that we extend our thanks to all in the community helping to navigate this unprecedented crisis. To our health care workers, our first responders, our essential workers, to our school personnel, our non-profits pivoting and finding new ways to meet community needs, and to all those staying home and following distancing protocols to flatten the curve, we thank you. As the t-shirt designed by Curtis Wright (**Leadership Corvallis Class of 2007** ☺) says... “Corvall**US**: Better Together”!

Although you missed Arts Day this year, never have we seen a better example of the value of art to help bolster and heal the human spirit than during this crisis. We thought it appropriate to end this guide with art. The following poem was written in 2008 by Sharon White as part of the [Write Around Portland](#) project.

The Cusp of Change

Let me fully know this moment –
For within this moment lies all moments.
Let me feel the tension pull me to fear and peace,
Let me know the uncertainty of the future,
And the future of my world.
Let me hold the anxieties and the worries in the same hand as the
Character of repeated history:
Storms and chaos hold possibility and opportunity.
May I fully feel this moment –
For as the seasons go and come and go again –
So the changes will come and go
And I will find peace on the cusp of this change.

*“The Cusp of Change” was written by Sharon White,
A Write Around Portland writer at Willamette Falls Hospice in fall 2008.*



Photo by Stacy Mellem.