



COVID-19 Protocols for In-Person Gathering

Goals

- We strive to create a space in which all fellows, staff, consultants/contractors, and partners will feel able to fully participate, with priority to folks with significant health risks to themselves and/or their loved ones at home.
- We commit to moving with deep respect and gratitude to the communities we visit, who have agreed to partner, share, and build with us. This includes minimizing the possibility that we will bring disease to any communities we visit, especially those that are vulnerable to COVID-19 with limited medical resources.

Travel & Testing

Guidelines for participants before and during travel. We ask that you take the following steps:

- Pre-Travel
 - A PCR COVID-19 Test with negative result within 72hrs of travel
 - International Travelers
 - For entry requirements to the U.S., visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>
 - Minimize risk of exposure as much as possible for 3 days before travel. Avoid spending time indoors in public places if possible.
 - Practice COVID-19 safety including wearing a high-quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94) when indoors with people outside of your family or pod.
- During travel
 - Wear a high-quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94) on the airplane and in the airport, unless actively eating or drinking.
 - Wear a mask in shared vehicles and public spaces including ground transportation to and from airport
 - Avoid touching your face
 - Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly
- Arrival
 - Take a rapid COVID-19 self-test (provided by Castanea) upon arrival
 - Take a rapid self-test (provided by Castanea) each morning of a gathering, before meeting with local partner organizations and communities.
- Departure
 - Take a rapid self-test (provided by Castanea) before departing gathering to travel home

- Ongoing Screening
 - If a participant is feeling unwell or experiencing any symptoms that may be related to COVID-19, we will ask that person to self-quarantine, take a rapid test and/or PCR test, and confirm a negative result before rejoining the group.

Lodging & Accommodations

- Castanea will provide:
 - Separate rooms for each person to minimize potential the spread and exposure to COVID-19
 - High quality masks (N95, KN95, KF94) for fellows to use during indoor gatherings and in public spaces
 - Hand sanitizer for each participant
 - As available, a wellness kit with immune boosting supplements
 - As needed, AV equipment to assist in hearing each other clearly during gatherings while wearing masks
- We will ask participants to agree to:
 - Wear a mask indoors at all times unless in your own private space
 - Practice social distancing as much as possible - 6 to 8ft, especially when removing a mask for drinking or eating
 - Wear a mask in group settings outdoors unless
 - 6-8ft apart, or
 - Everyone within 6ft agrees to remove masks
 - When using shared bathrooms (in a shared housing situation)
 - Be considerate and try to keep your time in shared bathrooms to a minimum (e.g. showering).
 - Clean up after yourself to keep the next person as safe as possible
 - Open windows to allow for circulation as possible
- Participants may choose to “pod” with each other, in various configurations
 - If participants would like to change these agreements and form a pod, in which you agree to share indoor space without wearing masks, it must be done through a consensus process in which everyone in the group consents to the new agreements
- ***We ask that you prioritize the wellness and access needs of those with the greatest risks either to their own health or the health of close loved ones.***

Transportation

- In shared ground transportation, such as vans, buses/trains, etc., we ask all participants to agree to:
 - Wear a mask at all times inside the vehicle
 - Open windows for ventilation whenever possible

Participation & Decision-Making

- Practice consent with each other. For example, ask before assuming someone else is comfortable with your distance or before you decide to remove your mask near others. Ask for consent before hugs or other close physical contact - even when you are really excited to see each other!
- If participants would like to change these agreements, it must be done through a consensus process in which everyone consents to the new agreements. This includes Castanea staff, consultants/contractors, and local partners.
- Participant groups, such as those in shared housing or other groups, may have a consensus decision-making process to decide how you want to pod together. We ask that you prioritize the wellness and access needs of folks with the highest risk.

Programming

- Wear a mask during all indoor sessions
 - If you need to remove your mask for a moment, please move to another room or at least 10 ft away from the group before doing so
- Try to maintain 6ft of distance from other participants, unless engaged in an activity together. Ask for consent when sharing space closely with another person.
- Open windows for ventilation whenever possible

Food and Meals

- When eating together, eat outside or indoors with your house pod or other pod (with consensus) and unmask only when eating or drinking.
- Maintain at least 6 feet distance from each other unless you are eating with your pod or people who consent to be closer while eating.
- During your free time, you agree to only get take-out/delivery or eat outdoors. You agree to not eat indoors at a restaurant.

Scenario Planning in Case of a Positive Test

- If someone tests positive on an at-home rapid antigen test, Castanea will support them in getting an official PCR test ASAP, and they will be asked to quarantine directly after that.
- If one fellow tests positive, everyone will mask up and take the highest level of precaution until we can get everyone a PCR test with negative results.
- Fellows who test positive on either test will quarantine from the rest of the group. This may involve:
 - In a shared housing situation, asking participants to move so that people who tested positive can isolate
 - Castanea paying for a hotel room for up to five days of isolation per CDC guidelines, and flight change if a fellow or fellows need to delay their departure to be cleared of COVID-19 for travel

- Keeping interactions with the group to an “only if necessary” basis, using high quality masks for all interactions, ideally keeping all interactions outdoors or with access to circulating fresh air. (e.g. when we bring you food and medicine, do wellness checks, or transport you to medical care or a testing site)
- Castanea supporting those who test positive to access the resources needed for your care and recovery as much as possible.
- ***Please note that per our contract, you are responsible for your own medical expenses that may be incurred during Castanea activities, so we are unable to cover your medical care and expenses. Please plan accordingly.***
- Fellows who test negative on the PCR and antigen test will continue with our scheduled programming as much as possible. We should all plan for the possibility of:
 - Checking in/renegotiating as a group regarding overall COVID-19 protocols
 - Revisiting agreements about internal podding
- Even one positive case of COVID-19 may impact our programming and interaction with local partners. We may have to shift plans in the moment to respect the needs and wishes of local communities.
- CDC recommendations:
 - [CDC - Guidance for small and large events](#)
 - [CDC - Quarantine and Isolation](#)

Potential Cancellation

- Castanea Fellowship may make the decision to cancel in-person programming in the case of a surge of COVID-19 cases, whether widespread or local to the region we intend to visit. We do not take such decisions lightly and will consult with multiple stakeholders any time we consider a cancellation.
- We live in unpredictable times, with minimal leadership and guidelines at the federal level. We will continue to do our best to listen to those most impacted and center our communities’ needs as we weigh the need for travel and in-person programming.
- As COVID-19 and the recent emergence of Monkeypox have shown us, the world is unpredictable and we must stay flexible. We hold that select cancellations and programming pivots are to be expected as we try to move responsibly in these uncertain times.