

The background features a network of stylized human figures in various colors (yellow, blue, green, purple, red) standing on a white surface. Dashed lines connect the figures, suggesting a social or communication network. The figures are rendered in a simple, rounded style with a slight shadow beneath them.

Bullying Prevention Consulting Newsletter

Contact Tracing For COVID-19 and the Invasion of Privacy

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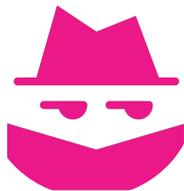
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In the age of COVID-19, the government is trying to find solutions to decreasing the spread of COVID-19 amongst the population. One of the tools that public health agencies are considering in order to slow down the spread of the virus,



is by identifying those who test positive, contacting those who were in contact with, or physically near the person who tested positive, and then diagnosing these people, who were associated with the original person who tested positive. This process is called **contact tracing**. This means when a person tests positive to having a highly contagious disease such as COVID-19, public health workers must act quickly, to identify the individuals with whom this person was in recent contact. Once the possible contacts have been identified, public health workers will be called to identify, from these possible contacts with whom the person who tests positive to COVID-19, has been in close proximity with, to determine who needs further testing or hospitalization.

Sounds great on paper. This process that we've described would truly help stop the spread of COVID-19. But let's inquire further as to what is really happening.



Health care workers upon identifying people who test positive may be gathering the following information: Social Security Number, Property Assets, Comprehensive Person Reporting, Lists of Known Relatives and Colleagues, Date of Birth, Workplace Records, Sex Offender Records, Arrest Records and Records of Individuals Failing to Appear in Court, Social Media Searches.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/principles-contact-tracing.html>

Perhaps there will be other items of personal nature added to this list. **Are we losing focus of ridding our communities of COVID-19?**

According to the Center for Disease Control it is important to trace and monitor contacts of infected people and to help assure the safe, sustainable and effective quarantine of contacts (with no effects on job security, etc.) to prevent additional transmissions.



But is all this private information needed, to curb the transmission of COVID-19? Is it possible for a person who tests positive to say that he/she was in contact with someone, when they really were not-maybe a boss they don't like?

Contact tracing must be timely, and implemented and managed effectively, and must not invade the privacy of an individual in order to sustain infection control. Businesses that are now reopening may ask their employees to take coronavirus tests, report symptoms, to wear masks on the job and to work with sensors, apps and cameras that can detect COVID-19.

Will this be an invasion of privacy?

1. *Should our phones be tracked to identify and isolate people infected with COVID-19?*
2. *Should we use GPS location data, credit card payments, travel documents and medical records to track those possibly infected?*
3. *Are the methods used by contact*

tracers (swabbing) effective ways to detect whether one is positive to COVID-19

4. *Is the process of contact tracing trying to control our movements and actions? Is individual liberty at stake?*
5. *Will the vaccine for COVID-19, that is currently under discussion by health providers become mandatory for all?*
6. *When do the independent decisions of an individual become ethical concerns of a community, as determined by public health officials?*
7. *Are our inalienable rights such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness under our Constitution being challenged over health concerns and government surveillance of the community?*
8. *Why do we need to give up private information in order to help our communities?*

These are questions that we need to face as we train thousands of contact tracers in our cities, to combat infection control and the diseases brought about by COVID-19.

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