

**BROWN TAKES CARE** ❤️

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# A GUIDE TO FORMING YOUR POD

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BROWN

## Brown Takes Care | FORMING YOUR POD

By limiting your physical contacts to a consistent group of students — your pod — you can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 on the Brown University campus and more easily manage contact tracing if you or your friends test positive for COVID-19.

Your voluntary pod should be a small (5 or fewer is best) and consistent group of students who share agreed-upon practices. This pod is effectively your trusted “household” while you’re at Brown, whether you live on or off campus.

When forming your pod, aim to choose members of the Brown community who provide you with social support and observe similar personal behaviors and activities as you do. While there is currently no scientific guidance for how large a social group should be, public health leaders have indicated that reducing social contact through pods and other means may be an effective strategy for curbing the spread of illness.

Please note: If you have an underlying medical condition (i.e., are immunocompromised or at risk for severe illness) you automatically have a lower risk tolerance, regardless of your preferred social behaviors and activities, and should plan your pod accordingly.

This exercise will help you decide how to form your pod at Brown.

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### PART I: IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONAL BEHAVIORS AND ACTIVITIES

The Brown community is committed to taking care of each other by following the core public health guidance on the [healthy.brown.edu/prevention](https://healthy.brown.edu/prevention) website and as listed on the Tip Sheet in your Quiet Period Kit. Consider how you’ll approach the following behaviors and activities when forming your pod.

Do you hold an essential role that may require you to be in regular contact with people outside of your pod?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Are you likely to dine in at local restaurants at least once a week?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Do you plan to participate in organized social gatherings, such as club meetings, worship services or other events that involve long conversation or singing?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Are you likely to attend informal social gatherings of up to 15 people?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Do you plan to work out in a gym or fitness studio at least once a week?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Are you likely to shop in person at local retail stores at least once a week?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Are you likely to leave campus regularly for self-care appointments, such as haircuts, manicures or health visits?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|

Are you likely to attend outdoor demonstrations or protests?

|    |     |       |            |
|----|-----|-------|------------|
| NO | YES | MAYBE | DON'T KNOW |
|----|-----|-------|------------|



If most of your answers are in the first column (no) — or if you have an underlying medical condition — you have a lower risk tolerance. This means you are not comfortable with personal behaviors that assume a range of acceptable risks.

If most of your answers are in the second column (yes) — and if you do not have an underlying medical condition — you have a high risk tolerance. This means you are comfortable with personal behaviors that assume a range of acceptable risks.

If your answers fall across a range of columns or include mostly “maybes,” you have a medium risk tolerance. This means that you may be comfortable with some behaviors that assume health risks, but not others.

What is your risk tolerance: high, low or medium?

**Ask potential podmates to fill out this rubric so you can share and discuss risk tolerance.**

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## PART II: MAP YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Your social well-being depends upon the quality and diversity of your support network. You may have others, including those outside your campus network, who provide these supports virtually. If you're new to Brown, you can meet potential podmates by participating in Orientation, joining the Bruno Beginnings online community and engaging with others on your class Facebook page.

When forming your pod, consider people at Brown from whom you receive some of these types of social support:

- **Emotional support** meets an individual's emotional needs. It bolsters self-esteem and the ability to overcome challenges.
- **Practical help** tangibly assists an individual in completing tasks in their daily life, such as cooking and studying.
- **Sharing points of view** affirms an individual's perspective and shares ideas on how to handle a present situation or task.
- **Sharing information** enables an individual to make the best decisions moving forward.

Which people in your campus network provide you with each of these four types of support? In what ways?

|                               |  |                            |  |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Emotional Support</b>      |  | <b>Practical Help</b>      |  |
|                               |  |                            |  |
| <b>Sharing Points of View</b> |  | <b>Sharing Information</b> |  |
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### PART III: CREATING YOUR POD

Once you have identified your potential Brown pod members, plan to have a group conversation. Pod success depends on honest and frequent communication, so consider how you will talk about risk and the use of primary prevention strategies. Together, your pod should come to an agreement about the strategies that you will use.

→ Based on behaviors, activities, risk tolerance and social support needs, who are the potential members of your pod?

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→ What form of social support do you offer each other?

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→ What shared behaviors, activities and public health practices have you agreed upon?

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