STAYING CONNECTED DURING COVID-19

People in 24-hour care facilities are often the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

How to reduce added isolation?

—Elizabeth Power, M.Ed., The Trauma Informed Academy

1. **PICK UP THE PHONE.**
   Consistency of contact helps, even if it’s short and sweet. Especially sweet if the person you’re calling is in unable to respond, or seems unable to hear or recognize, ask a caregiver to hold and dial the phone. Put it on speaker and coo shamelessly.

2. **WRITE THEM A LETTER.**
   No, not a card. A letter. Wash your hands first. Write it in longhand. Tell them a story about something that will bring back positive memories. Storytelling marks history, evokes good feelings, helps people remember they are part of others’ lives.

3. **USE YOUR CALENDAR.**
   Make appointments for calling the people you care about. Set reminders. The contact is as important for you as it is for them. Seriously. Remember, we’re hardwired to be connected to others.

4. **VIDEO CALL.**
   Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, selfie-video, all depending on the situation. And keep an arm’s length or more (wash your hands and wipe down your device) when you’re showing it. Keep a video journal of your time. Use technology to help you connect.

5. **WAVE HOWDY & SMILE.**
   When you see someone, acknowledge them. Waving is a nearly forgotten art. You can do it from safer social distances, it makes the air flutter, and you smile when you do. Enjoy the feeling of light and air movement across your hand when you wave!

6. **CELEBRATE MILESTONES.**
   Containment efforts are as much for you as for others. How can you create milestones to celebrate? Every three days? Four? What number is special to you? Tell the folks on the other end you’re celebrating. Then do something silly. Did you wash your hands?

7. **SEND FOOD, HAVE REMOTE MEAL.**
   In most places you can have meals delivered to someone by ordering them online. In places where you can’t, nothing about the needs prevents you from washing your hands, cooking and packing a meal, taking and leaving it for them. Or, setting it down and backing up to a safer distance so you can wave howdy.

8. **DON’T SEND FLOWERS.**
   Flowers are handled extensively by many people before they arrive. Any type of arrangement (cookies, pickles, candy) is. Send pictures put them a plant when they set home. Talk about their plant.

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