

COVID-19 Resources for Elderly Population

Source: Florida Department of Health
September 2, 2020

People 65 years of age and older, whether living independently or in either a nursing home or long-term care facility, are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Social distancing and isolation as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are in place to protect the health and safety of everyone, including those living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. It is important to consider safety precautions and mitigation measures as community transmission of the virus continues to spread, and the number of cases continues to rise. Unfortunately, the responses that have been put in place to keep our Senior population physically healthy may have a negative impact on their mental well-being. This is especially true for those who might be feeling disconnected due to no longer living in their own home and/or not having support from relatives or others who provide important social contact. While there are many challenges, there is also hope; there are numerous opportunities for older adults to support themselves and make positive connections with others.

Helping Older Adults Overcome Loneliness

Communication tips for caregivers, family and friends that include the use of technology:

- Set up and maintain virtual tele-behavioral health appointments.
- Help those in your care to connect with their faith community's virtual setting.
- Enjoy sharing activities virtually (e.g., eating meals together, watching TV programs, listening to music).

Communication tips for caregivers, family and friends that do not include the use of technology:

- Limit or avoid exposure to news coverage if it appears to cause additional stress and anxiety.
- Keep stress under control by assisting with exercising, encouraging healthy eating and introducing relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and meditation.
- Promote practicing gratitude and focusing on positive things that can be controlled.
- Support the emotional and physical wellbeing of the staff who are caring for our Seniors. Give thanks for the work they are doing through both words and thoughtful gestures of kindness.

Free Online Mindfulness Apps and Other Resources

- Calm Together: <https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath#meditations>
- Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>
- Eldercare Locator: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>
- Veteran's Affairs – Maintaining Your Mental Health during COVID-19: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coronavirus/>

Get Immediate Help in a Crisis

- Call 911
- Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](https://www.suicideline.com/): 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or visit [Lifeline Crisis Chat](https://www.suicideline.com/).

COVID-19 updates from the Florida Department of Health are available here: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov>. The COVID-19 Call Center is also available 24/7 at (866) 779-6121. The COVID-19 Email Center can be reached at COVID-19@flhealth.gov. Please share these important messages and resources with members of your community.