



Care first

Eldercare & Support for Carers During COVID-19

Caring for the elderly can be extremely difficult at times like these. Especially because the risk of Coronavirus to the elderly is so high and they are likely to become extremely ill if they catch the virus.

We all know that visiting our elderly relations/friends is not possible at the moment and it's so difficult to know what is the correct thing to do is. If they receive regular care or are vulnerable it is likely at this stage they will have things in place to help them. But what about the person themselves, the ones that do not need the extra care or live alone and don't have any family to support them. What effects can this situation have on individuals?

As previously discussed in other articles Mental Health, loneliness and physical health are huge issues for everyone at the moment.

How can we help the elderly cope?

MIND the mental health charity has a number of excellent tips for those who may be alone or worried about the virus, including putting extra photos up of people you care about, and limiting how long you read the news.

Steps to help prevent loneliness in those avoiding contact or staying at home should make sure they find time to do things they enjoy, such as watching TV, reading, writing, art or cooking. A brilliant way to have something long term to focus on is to set a project, or take up a new hobby for example writing a book, knitting or painting. Talking to people about your worries, about feeling lonely, or simply just about your day, helps. And remember if your elderly friend or relative cannot get online, never underestimate the value of a phone call to them.

Get them to think about going through and organizing old photos and memorabilia, and enjoy the stories and happy memories they inspire.

What practical ways can we help the elderly?

Run errands on behalf of our friends and relatives.

If we are shopping for them ensure they are having a balanced diet, rather than stock piling or having too many treats due to the situation.

Arrange with trusted neighbours to regularly check in with them (if possible), be it through a window or a quick chat from a safe distance.

Always remember, if you are concerned about someone do not delay in getting help because of coronavirus. If you are elderly and you are worried about being a strain on services e.g. A&E remember

you are not. Just because the virus is effecting a lot of people EVERYONE including health services, the police and fire service completely understand that normal life goes on and things can happen at any time. If you need an ambulance call 999 if you need police assistance call 999 but for non-emergency health issues or information about coronavirus please use the NHS 111 service or www.nhs.uk

Older people and their families can also call Age UK Advice for free on 0800 169 65 65.

Remember that even when lockdown is eased and circumstances change over the next few weeks the elderly will still need support, as it is possible that restrictions will still apply to them. Now more than ever they need our support, friendship and kindness.

Support for Carers:

If you are a carer during this time, it is important to know what support is available to you as a carer and for those you look after. There is some brilliant guidance through carers UK. It has all of the information you need in one place. Including links to other support services –

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19>

There is also guidance for anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to a lifelong condition, illness, disability, serious injury, a mental health condition or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. It builds on other guidance published on GOV.UK, including the Stay at home guidance and the Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults.

The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care/guidance-for-those-who-provide-unpaid-care-to-friends-or-family>

If you feel you may need some support, you can also contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and

online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

