

Interventions/strategies to support social connection for people living in LTC homes in the context of COVID-19

- **Opportunities for creative expression, like art, music or storytelling:**

- **COVID-19 Context:**

- Individualized creative activities based on the resident's personhood; including music & art.
 - Individualized Activity Kits (14-day isolation period); using information from completed personhood tools to put together while person remains in hospital/community.
 - **Challenges:** inability to share products; needing to dedicate limited supplies to one resident; architecture of some LTC homes; staffing.

- **Exercise:**

- **COVID-19 Context:**

- Using pre-recorded, freely available online videos to assist with instructing residents in one-on-one exercise (with supervision).
 - Building "activity circuits" inside residents' rooms, incorporating multiple tasks (e.g., bean bag toss, light exercises, folding laundry, etc.).

- **Maintain religious and cultural practices:**

- **COVID-19 Context:**

- Using telephone or videoconference to connect with religious community.
 - Offering residents online or pre-recorded videos of religious observances.
 - In Indigenous LTC homes, incorporating traditional wellness practices, such as residents making cedar tea as an individualized activity.

- **Garden, either indoors or outside**

- **COVID-19 Context:**

- In-Room gardening; use of real and artificial plants
- Outdoor vegetable gardening (individual activity instead of group).

- **Visit with pets:**
 - COVID-19 Context:**
 - Encouraging families to bring pets to window visits.
 - Continuing community-based pet therapy programs through window visits; visits from some larger animals, like goats and horses.
 - Alternative solutions to incorporate animals: robotic pets

- **Use technology to communicate:**
 - COVID-19 Context:**
 - Facilitating videocalls between residents and their families and friends, mostly using tablets; weekly videoconference schedules, with allocated time (e.g., 45-minutes) for each resident.
 - Creating specific email addresses for families and friends to send emails, photos and videos to residents during times where they could not visit. Email messages were printed from inside the LTC Home and delivered to the resident and, in some cases, read aloud by LTC Team Members to the resident. Photos and videos were shared via tablets. Initiating ways for residents to use tablets to respond to emails with short voice and/or video messages.
 - Using projectors and projection systems to engage in interactive virtual activities.

- **Laugh together:**
 - COVID-19 Context:**
 - Adding joy and humour to window visits, such as with a 'kissing booth', games (e.g., tic tac toe with dry erase markers) and parades from local organisations.
 - Using the spaces and activities within homes for fun and enjoyment, such as makeshift ice cream trucks, hallway 'Happy Hours' and decorated 'Tuck Shops on Wheels'.

- **Reminisce about people, places and events**

COVID-19 Context:

- Involving community-based programs providing virtual programming via videoconference or telephone, such as reminiscence programs on specific topics (e.g., travel, hobbies, etc.)
- Creating personalized tools for residents; one LTC home developed a 'Talking Points Key Ring' for a resident, with laminated cards containing favorite photos, art works, sayings and conversation topics and that could spark conversations.

- **Communicate non-verbally:**

COVID-19 Context:

- Facilitating pen pal programs whereby residents to write to one another.
- Encouraging letter mail exchange between residents and family and friends.
- Supporting 'Friendly Letter' programs, whereby individuals outside the LTC home would exchange letter with residents, sometimes in collaboration with organizations (e.g., local Alzheimer Society).