

## Help for families of a person living with dementia during a pandemic



### Background

During challenging times, we acknowledge how difficult it is for the families of someone living with dementia within a residential aged care or hospital setting to stay connected. During times of uncertainty, it is important that you feel supported in your caring role. The following information will assist you in staying connected and provide strategies for continuing to support your family member in the best way possible.

### What is happening for your family member right now?

- They are continuing to receive the ongoing personal care they need.
- Medical treatment for acute and chronic conditions is continuing as required.
- Constant monitoring is ensuring that any changes to health status are acted upon immediately.
- Visit anyone outside of your own home if you are feeling unwell or have cold or flu like symptoms.
- Engage in conversations with your family member that may leave them feeling stressed or heighten anxiety levels. They may not understand what is going on.

### You should not:

- Go against any Government guidelines or restrictions put in place by individual care homes. These have been carefully considered and ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone.
- Put yourself at unnecessary risk of exposure. This will inhibit your ability to stay connected.

## What your family member needs you to do:

- If you are permitted to visit, think about how you are feeling. If you are feeling uptight, stressed or under pressure, give yourself permission to have the day off.
- Avoid conversations within earshot of your family member or other residents about what is happening globally. If you need to talk, try a friend, family member or speak to a staff member privately.
- Be realistic about what you can provide and achieve during this time.
- Look after yourself by developing your own self-care plan. Include, eating well, resting when needed and get out for a walk when possible.

Please be mindful that staff will be overwhelmed with calls from families and implementing extra measures to ensure everyone stays safe. Everyone is doing the best they can during an extremely difficult time, so please be kind and patient with staff and to yourself and we will get through this together.

“During times of uncertainty, it is important that you feel supported in your caring role.”

DSA continues to support your care home, via our normal referral pathways. **We are considered an ‘essential service’ for residential care by the Commonwealth Department of Health** and, as such, our Dementia Consultants remain able to visit to provide direct support, or phone or video conference depending on your preference. Regardless of whether your home is in lockdown or not, we are still available to support.