

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



During challenging times, we understand how difficult it is for the families of someone living with dementia in aged care or hospital to stay connected.

It is important that you feel supported in your caring role. The following information will provide strategies that allow you 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 by professional healthcare staff ensures any changes to their health are acted upon immediately.

What you can do:

- Adhere to Government guidelines or restrictions put in place by individual care homes. These have been carefully considered and ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone.
- Protect yourself from unnecessary risk of exposure. This will inhibit your ability to stay connected.
- Don't visit anyone outside of your own home if you are feeling unwell or have cold or flu like symptoms.
- Avoid conversations with your family member that may leave them feeling stressed or anxious. They may not understand what is going on.



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 gentle exercise.
- Treat yourself. It might be as simple as a cup of tea in the garden, catching up with friends over the phone or online chat, or reading a book.
- Seek medical attention if you are unwell or to manage ongoing conditions.
- When leaving a visit, avoid long farewells or goodbyes. These may lead to increase stress levels. Maybe consider saying something like “I need to pop up to shops before they shut, is there anything I can get you?” OR “It’s getting late and I feel tired. I need to go to bed now”.

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

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.

DSA continue 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.



**DSA
is here
for you**

**Dementia Support Australia is here to help 24/7.
You can phone us on 1800 699 799 or visit dementia.com.au.**