



Remember the good old days when we had chicken pox parties so our children were exposed and got them so they had their immunity and when taking a “sick day” was only for one breath away from dying? Well those days are over! Now we have the coronavirus COVID-19 and hysteria has hit the ground running. Fast. So how do we protect our residents, staff, and families, AND stay sane?

Here are a few quick tips on just getting *BACK TO BASICS!*

LIMIT ACCESS TO YOUR HOME AND SCREEN ALL VISITORS

Follow the CMS guidelines for screening and visitor limitation. ([QSO memo](#))

WASH YOUR HANDS

You know the drill. Attached is great signage from the CDC to post around your home to remind staff to make handwashing a priority. ([CDC flyers](#))

GET UP, DRINK UP!

STAY HYDRATED

1. Set up “hydration stations” on every nursing unit with cups and a drink people enjoy (like SF lemonade or water with fruit slices)
2. Set up a routine to freshen the water or other fluids, have staff follow through to be sure the supply is fresh at least every 12 hours.
3. Offer an enjoyable drink between every meal and at activities.

GET MOVING AND GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION AND ACTIVITIES

Laying around isn’t good for anyone and worsens the effects of any respiratory disease. Get your residents up and moving. Walk-to-dine, walk-to-walk—remember those fads? Time to get back to it. For those who can’t walk, incorporate active sitting activities—bowling, swimming, chair kicks, chair tai chi, arm swirls... if you need ideas check with the Activity Directors Association of Missouri (ADAM)

<https://www.activitydirectorsofmo.org/index.html>.

SOME THINGS TO TRY:

- ✚ Face-time with Families/story-time
- ✚ Invite families who can sing, dance, to perform virtually
- ✚ Try virtual gaming for family and friends with residents
- ✚ Celebrate your staff by treating them as *Superheroes*—dress up, give snacks, PLAY!
- ✚ Remember, our elders have survived worse!

(Adapted from the Eden Alternative conversation 3.13.20 Combatting Isolation, Boredom, and Loneliness with Coronavirus)

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EAT WELL

It's almost spring time! Time to break out those fruits and veggies and get psyched for warmer weather. Instead of prepackaged peanut butter crackers, try offering things like lemonade and apple slices with yogurt dip or iced tea with fresh mint and carrot cake muffins. Get creative and nutritious!

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

The last thing you need is anyone getting UTI's or other "regular" infection. Now is the time to ramp your infection control practices with peri-care and housekeeping. In other words, clean those handrails and rinse out those nebulizers! Check out the resources for a great infection control checklist for nursing and housekeeping.

CONTROL THE ANXIETY

If all you're doing is sitting around watching reports of the coronavirus, you're bound to get down and overwhelmed. Turn off the tv and keep your residents engaged!

In a pandemic situation, fear becomes paramount for everyone affected. However, knowing how to handle the fear can help alleviate stress and trauma for residents, staff, and families. The biggest fear in a pandemic is simply fear of the unknown—how bad is this? How badly will it affect me? Will I lose my loved one? Will I lose my job? And so on. Here are some tips to mitigate the fear and help bring a little stress relief to your care team, including your family members.

1. **PROMOTE SENSE OF SAFETY**—Increase a sense of safety - supplies at the door, a friendly staff member to screen. For staff, incorporate skills for "new normal" to maintain changes in behavior and routines that are safer. Emphasize that using these precautions are a good thing.
2. **PROMOTE CALM**—Talk about good, normal things. Don't focus solely on the pandemic. Focus on the positives. Turn off the news in common areas and encourage movies or favorite shows instead of news broadcasts. *For exceptionally worried staff and residents*—use deep breathing techniques and therapeutic grounding by saying things such as "you are in a safe environment right now. We're well-prepared to protect and assist you."
3. **GIVE THEM A JOB**—People worry less when they're busy. Give them a useful job. Tell them how they can help. Remind them of their strengths (e.g., "You're eating great! Keep drinking—that's really going to help you stay healthy. Thanks so much for washing your hands—what you're doing is really helping us keep our residents safe.")
4. **STAY CONNECTED**—Keep everyone informed in a positive way (try a star board—30 days without corona—or something fun like a little jingle on the overhead—Good morning! Just letting everyone know we're checking in All Safe today! Thanks for all you're doing. Keep up the great work!) Utilize the public information officer in your emergency plan to keep families informed at least weekly. A little communication goes a really long way.
5. **INSTALL HOPE**—Again, focus on your community's strengths. "We've got this! ABC Corporation has ALWAYS put our residents, family, and staff first and this is no different." Remind staff members that

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the risk to them is low and recovery is high in terms of serious illness. Offer support services for mental wellness including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Crisis Counseling Program (CCP), if available, community mental health centers, American Red Cross (ARC), other Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) agencies, and local religious organizations.

(Adapted from MO DHSS Psychosocial Services Preparedness Annex, September 2018, Pandemic Influenza Plan. <https://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pdf/panfluplanpsychosocial.pdf>)

KEEP A BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Quarantines and social distancing are often necessary in a pandemic to protect the most vulnerable populations. However, the mental impact on healthcare workers and those who are in the quarantine is especially taxing. Here's a few tips for keeping a bright outlook and helping your staff keep coming to work.

1. Keep the timing of the quarantine and social distancing as short as possible.
2. Say THANK YOU! Aside from the stressors at work, staff are possibly dealing with fear and stigmatism from their family and friends as being possible carriers. Staff want to do the right thing and we need to remember the psychological burden added to their already physical, possibly short-staffed jobs.
3. Give as much information as possible.
4. Stay supplied. Not having to worry about their own personal safety is a HUGE burden lifted.
5. Give them a break—even 5 or 10 minutes for a mental health break, especially for those working overtime can really make a difference (do not make it part of their regular break—make it special). Show your staff you're aware of the sacrifices their making and that you care just as much about them as you do about your residents.

(Adapted from Brooks, S.K., Webster, R. K., Smith, L.E., Woodland, L., et. al. The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*. February 26, 2020. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30460-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30460-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30460-8/fulltext))

REMEMBER

- + CONVERSATIONS will not be cancelled
- + RELATIONSHIPS will not be cancelled
- + LOVE will not be cancelled; SONGS will not be cancelled
- + READING will not be cancelled
- + SELF-CARE will not be cancelled
- + HOPE will not be cancelled

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES (DHSS) activated a statewide public hotline for citizens or providers needing guidance regarding the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. The hotline is now open and can be reached at **(877) 435-8411**. The hotline is being operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

QIPMO - nursinghomehelp.org/educational/important-information-helpful-links-on-coronavirus-covid-19/

CDC - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

NLTCORC - theconsumervoices.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19

MODHSS - health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/

COVID-19 Healthcare Planning Checklist - www.phe.gov/emergency/events/COVID19/Documents/COVID-19%20Healthcare%20Planning%20Checklist.pdf

MU Preventative Measures for COVID-19 - nursinghomehelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/4-MU-Preventive-Measures-COVID19.pdf

Caring for Patients with COVID-10 - nursinghomehelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/caring-for-patients-H.pdf

Infection Control TOOL checklist - nursinghomehelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/6-Infection-Control-TOOL.pdf

As always, feel free to reach out to your QIPMO nurse or leadership coach by visiting our website: www.nursinghomehelp.org

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