

## Services and Organizations – Opportunities to Support

Resources Corner

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At this time, everyone's focus is on COVID-19. Our passion to provide dementia awareness and skills to facilities and organizations has taken a back seat to finding ways to support those organizations, residents, and staff who are affected while adapting our own needs.

### No Visitors Allowed!

With restrictions on visitors and outside guests, training sessions have been postponed. Current needs in those facilities are on providing care, containment of the virus to keep it from spreading further, and protecting staff from exposure as they deliver services. Staffing ratios have not been adjusted as schools have closed and healthcare workers who parent young children must find ways to cover their responsibilities.

So, what can PAC do, both as an organization, and as individuals? Actually, a lot!

**“Life is short, but it is wide-This too shall pass.”** (Rebecca Wells)

As an organization, we understand that this is a temporary situation. Our team has agreed to respond actively and proactively rather than have a *knee-jerk*, frantic reaction. Yes, it will impact us financially. Yes, there is uncertainty about how long this will go on. Yes, there are still a lot of unknowns. Remaining calm, and thinking objectively and creatively show our true colors as an organization with opportunities to *get busy* in new ways.

### What's New?

We are planning additional options to offer our services virtually rather than in person. This is not as easy as it sounds—think of the visual limitations of *showing* physical approaches and *zones of awareness* on a computer screen—but it gives attendees the information and training they have been anticipating without physically being in a group setting. We are brainstorming together about new services and products that organizations can use to meet their training needs. The launch of our Online Group Learning is perfect timing for home health and hospice groups, staff working from home, on different shifts, or those in self-isolation. Streaming online content means that groups do not have to congregate together for training and can still meet their training requirements while making good use of any *down time*.

In response to canceled events, we are gearing up teams to deliver services in a tighter time frame once it is safe to do that. Flexibility with rescheduling will be key and we will do the best we can to accommodate the needs of our clients.

### Who Me?

Our response as individuals revolves around the understanding that there are many in need of new types of support. With opened eyes and ears, we can be attuned to the elderly, those who are socially isolated, parents of young children who need help with

childcare, and vulnerable care partners for people living with dementia (PLwD) who would appreciate a word of encouragement, a meal, or a bit of respite.

It's great to find activities that combine benefits, such as fun activities with purpose. Here are a few ideas for a personal response that can help while still maintaining *social distancing*, with acknowledgement and permission of the recipient, of course. Involve all ages for maximum benefit.

- Fill up a bird feeder and hang it in front of a neighbor's window. No birdseed at home? Find a pinecone in the yard and fill it with peanut butter!
- Have a porch-side musical concert: Do you sing or play an instrument? Consider making a phone call to a friend or visit a neighbor and sit on the porch while they listen from the other end of the porch or near an open window.
- Food. Comfort food! Consider ordering groceries or meals from an online restaurant delivery service to be sent to another person. Prepare mac 'n cheese, baked cookies, a loaf of banana bread, soup, or baked potatoes with the toppings. Assemble a bag of non-perishable groceries they could use at another time and leave it at their door.
- Order a digital photo frame for someone and load a variety of photos on it remotely.
- For the tech-savvy, use Zoom or Skype to make *video visits*.
- Write colorful notes and cards and send them in the mail to brighten someone's day. If someone has a care partner, consider a batch of notes, with one to be opened each day. No stamps at home? You can leave money (including a check) for stamps in the mailbox.
- One *surprise* a day. Email a poem, sing a song, text a photo or a goofy video, send a note, relive a memory, or read a story. Mix it up and Repeat.
- Do a crossword puzzle or word jumble with someone over the phone. One person reads the clues, then work together on the answers.
- One more thing, and this is important. We appreciate connections from others regardless of our age or circumstances. This is a trying time for all, not just our partners in healthcare and our elderly population. Whether it's the stress of the economy and job security, having a husband suddenly start working from home, teens and college kids under your roof again, or worry about parents' care in a facility with visiting restrictions, this affects us all in some way.

Focusing on serving others reduces our own level of anxiety and stress, helps us feel a little more in control, gives us a feeling of purpose, and brings joy to others. Involving children provides an example that, even in times of uncertainty, there are others we can attend to and help. It isn't always about the act of kindness itself, so much as the caring behind that act. That brings optimism and hope to us *and* to those who receive our kindness.

Who can you support today? A weary healthcare employee at the end of a long day? An older couple in your church who don't have local family? Someone who attends an adult day program which has been suspended? A co-worker, friend, classmate, teacher, pastor, restaurant owner, coffee barista...the list is endless.

Have you identified at least two people who would find hope and optimism in your kindness? What do you know about their likes and preferences to help in a way they would most appreciate? Ok, time to get busy...