

engAGED
The National Resource Center
for Engaging Older Adults

Staying Connected at Home During COVID-19

For many, the COVID-19 crisis has upended lives and social connections. Physical and social distancing have left many people, including older adults, feeling isolated and lonely with their normal routines disrupted as senior centers, places of worship and local businesses are no longer available. And while physical distancing is important to maintaining health during the crisis, as time at home has lengthened, loneliness has set in for many older adults. Research shows that prolonged social isolation can lead to an increased risk of heart disease, depression and anxiety, and other negative health outcomes.

Given these negative emotional and health impacts, the Eldercare Locator and engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults have developed this flyer to help older adults find ways to stay engaged in mind and body—and connected to their communities. More suggestions for ways to connect with others can be found at www.engagingolderadults.org.

Creating Connections Without Technology

Reach Out

- **Pick up the phone.** Try to call a family member or friend every day. Whether you swap book, meal or TV recommendations, read a book to a child or plan fun activities for the future, just making the connection is important.
- **Write a note or send a card.** Mailing a short note to a friend or family member is simple to do and can bring a smile to someone's

face while cheering you up in the process.

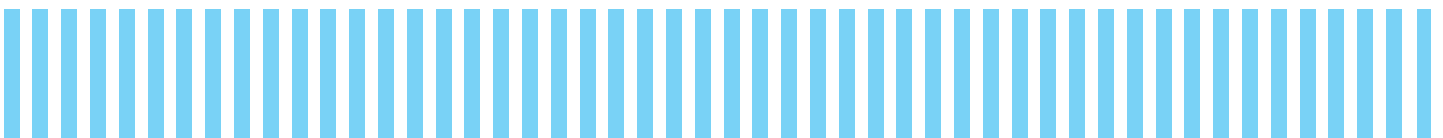
- **Need extra compassion and support?** Many organizations have developed call lines that provide a friendly voice who can offer emotional support. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn whether one is available in your community. If not, call one of the telephone services listed below.
 - Institute on Aging's Friendship Line: (800) 971-0016
 - AARP Friendly Voices: (888) 281-0145 (English) or (888) 497-4108 (Spanish)

Stay Active, Mentally and Physically

- **Move more and sit less.** Make a point to move frequently during the day, even if it's just a few gentle stretches or laps around your home. If you can walk outside, keeping a 6-foot distance does not exclude talking to neighbors and enjoying the sunshine. Or, turn on the radio and dance!
- **Flex your brain.** Feeling creative? Draw a sketch, write a poem or short story, or start journaling. This is a great time to record what you are seeing, thinking and feeling through different mediums. Why not send a sketch you've drawn to a friend or family member and ask for one in return?

Ways to Create Connections Using Technology

The list below contains just a few of the suggestions that are posted at www.engagingolderadults.org. Visit the





website for additional ideas.

- **Use online tools to connect with friends and family.** Need help getting started? “Stuck at Home Guide: How to Get Online,” a guide from engAGED partner Senior Planet, contains helpful tips for getting started online, on social media and on Zoom meetings. Visit www.seniorplanet.org/stuck-at-home-guide-get-online.
- **Attend events and concerts or tour museums from home.** During the COVID-19 crisis, many museums have developed virtual tours that help visitors see world-renowned artwork. Theaters, both large and small, are taking music, dance and other performances online.
- **Read a book online.** Visit www.USA.gov/libraries to find your local library’s free offerings. Want to discuss the book? Start

an informal book club with friends or family members.

- **Want to help others?** Volunteer and share your skills from home. Develop a virtual mentoring relationship with a student through a local college or connect with your local Area Agency on Aging to find opportunities to help others during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Stay fit.** Take a virtual exercise class. Many Area Agencies on Aging provide fitness classes. In addition, the YMCA (www.ymca360.org) provides many pre-recorded and live fitness classes that allow you to take things at your own pace.

Looking for assistance with staying engaged and safe at home during the COVID-19 crisis? Your local Area Agency on Aging can help. Area Agencies on Aging provide a direct connection to home-delivered meals and groceries, in-home help with daily needs, transportation, caregiver support and more. To find your local Area Agency on Aging, contact the Eldercare Locator, a national call center that supports older Americans in connecting to local resources, at (800) 677-1116 or eldercare.acl.gov.

In your community, contact:



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Connecting You to Community Services



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