

Tips for supporting older relatives post lockdown

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Information, tips and advice on supporting older relatives who may be shielding, feeling isolated or struggling with social distancing.

Many of us are still trying to support our parents and older relatives while they're on their own, and we're learning how difficult it can be if they're not confident with phones and tablets. While lockdown measures have eased, older relatives may still be fearful of going out, especially with the social distancing measures that exist to protect us. This new way of living may be daunting for older relatives, and they may need additional support during this time.

One piece of good news on the horizon is that the [BBC is working hard on new TV programmes to support our older people](#). The programmes will include how to keep moving and fit with some gentle exercise. We know that TV is a vital part of many older people's lives so this is great to hear.

In the meantime, we've put the following tips together based on advice from the [Matia Foundation - Recommendations for emotional care in an isolated situation](#) and research from University College London about [how older people use smartphones and tablets](#):

- maintain a daily contact routine through a phone or video call. Frequency may matter more than the content of your calls. Knowing that people are interested enough to get in touch is often more important than what you talk about
- use a service like Facetime or WhatsApp if your relative is able to use it, and in a way they are comfortable with. For example, a person might be okay with Facetime, but only if you call or text first so that they are prepared
- encourage acquaintances and friends to call. This provides some variety for the person and some support for you and your family

- respect their wishes about how you keep in touch and how often. Your relative may appreciate being in constant contact, but it's also important to respect their independence and dignity
- encourage them to stick to their usual routines. Encourage the person to get showered, get dressed, do some exercise and other activities, like light housework, if they can
- make sure they eat well and take their medications. Deliver food your relative enjoys, if necessary, already prepared
- listen to them and answer their questions. Give your relative the information they request. Try to maintain a positive and affectionate tone and reassure them that you and your friends and family are okay
- remind them of their strength in dealing with past situations. Older people carry a large rucksack of experience with them and many have overcome difficult situations in the past
- encourage them to contact friends and neighbours. Many will be in similar situations and they can share their experiences and concerns with each other.

Services to help relatives who may need support

[Age Cymru's Check in and chat service for people aged over 70 who live alone.](#)

Your relative can sign up to receive a regular phone call in English or Welsh.

[The Silver Line.](#) Your relative can call the Silver Line if they are worried or need to talk to someone. This support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 0800 4 70 80 90

If your relative is living with dementia, you can also access help from Dementia UK helpline 0800 888 6678 - a specialist Admiral Nurse will answer your call or visit [Dementia UK - coronavirus advice.](#)

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect support line on 0333 150 3456 (in English) or 03300 947 400 (in Welsh). Dementia advisers offer support and advice including on coronavirus and can connect people to the help they may need. Phone support is available seven days a week. Or visit [Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect](#).

Contact us

If you have a question or if you can't find what you are looking for [get in touch with us](#).