

## How to support a loved one when you cannot visit them during the pandemic

Many frail people or those with serious medical problems will have been advised to stay at home in order to reduce their chance of exposure to coronavirus. As their loved ones, you will want to keep them safe but find it hard not visiting them in person. However there might be some other ways you can help them feel supported. Here are a few ideas.

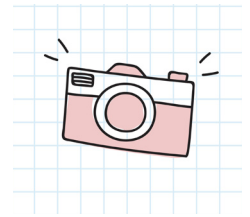


### Use video calling

A phone call to see how your loved one is doing is an obvious way to stay connected. Seeing family and friends may be an important part of your loved one's life rather than just your voice by using video call technology (e.g. WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype or Zoom) can help make you feel closer together. If your loved one doesn't use this technology, perhaps you may have a spare device you could share with them?

### Send pictures

Sending photos from your daily walk or your garden as it blossoms can add to their sense of being connected with the outside world and the change in season. Alternatively sharing old photos that bring back happy memories. These can be sent digitally or in hard copy.



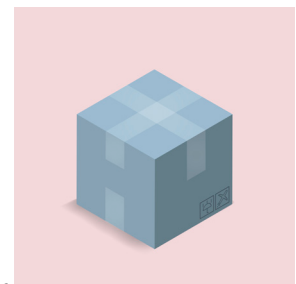
### Use the post

Popping a note, postcard or greetings card in the post – even if the message is a short one – can create a nice surprise for your loved one. If you'd normally spend quite a bit of time together, why not use that time to write a proper letter? Reading a message in someone's handwriting can help create a sense of personal connection. You could include some photos too.



### Send a care package

Putting together a little care package can be a good way to show someone you're thinking of them. You could include their favourite snack, a magazine or a photograph. It doesn't have to be new. Something that reminds you of a shared memory can make it more special. Get any children in your family to create some artwork that could be added. Find a local nursery that is delivering plants to send them some seasonal colour.





### Co-ordinate your TV time

Even if you can't be together, you could agree to watch an episode of their favourite programme or film at the same time – so you can share your reactions in real time over text, or on a phone call afterwards.

### Share recommendations

Share things you've enjoyed reading, watching or listening. It may also help to give you things to talk about when you catch up other than the latest news stories. You could even do a virtual book club where you compare notes together on a video call or over text.



### Ask some questions

Even if you can't be together in person, you can still learn about someone. You could write down some questions you've always wanted to know the answer to and send them to your loved one to consider. You could even create a family tree together. You could 'interview' them over the phone, ask them to write back or even make a recording. Either way, they might enjoy the chance to share in this way. And you may learn something about them – or their family – that you never knew.

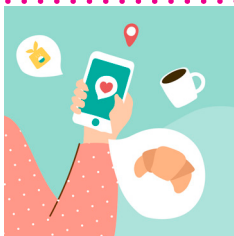
### Smile through the window

If you live close to your loved one, and can 'visit' their property while following current government rules, you could see them from outside their window. You could wave, blow kisses and talk to them on the phone while you're outside. Seeing a friendly face could make their day.



### Be more active on social media

Social media can help us feel connected at the best of times. But if your loved one is an active social media user, now may be an even better time to stay engaged with them. That means messaging, replying, responding and having conversations rather than just looking at what they post.



### Recognise being apart can be hard

It can be hard not to see the people you love and it's okay to feel sad about it. Try to remember that this is not your fault. It may be the best way to reduce the risk of people getting coronavirus. It may help to talk to family and friends about how you're feeling.

