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***Division of Aging***

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**TO:** Division of Aging Assisted Living Providers for Aged & Disabled Waiver and Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver and Residential Care Assistance Program Providers  
**FROM:** Darcy Tower, MSW, Provider Relations Director  
**DATE:** April , 2020  
**RE:** Helpful Tips to Address Social Isolation during COVID-19

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The Division of Aging recognizes this is a difficult time for providers of congregate locations to balance health and safety of residents while also ensuring positive social connection during the weeks of quarantine. The division understands the work you are doing to keep residents isolated who may not understand the importance of this practice, or who have a difficult time following a new schedule.

The Division has gathered several resources to assist you in planning enrichment activities with residents during quarantine.

- (1) Keep a routine that includes consistent sleep/wake cycles.
  - Incorporate talking to family or friends in that routine. Whether it be writing them a letter or calling them on the phone.
  - Maintaining a schedule and being mindful of self-care are particularly important in times of stress. In making a daily schedule for residents, ensure that there is some social connection.
  
- (2) Create a staggering schedule for outdoor time.
  - Residents benefit from fresh air and sunshine. Create a schedule for several people to spend time outside, while appropriately social distancing from each other.
  - Disinfect areas of use after each small group completes outdoor activities.
  
- (3) Engage in “brain games.”
  - Crossword puzzles and Sudoku are a couple traditional games that older adults may enjoy on their own.
  - Tech-savvy older adults may prefer to play Scrabble, Dominoes or a variety of other multi-player online games.
  
- (4) Enjoy the show.



- Have staff create a list of their favorite movies, share it with residents, and encourage them to add to the list. Share ratings and critiques with one another. From past-and-present Oscar winners, dramas and musicals to romantic comedies and westerns, there's a variety of genres and no shortage of films.

(5) Help residents find a new hobby or project.

- Do residents enjoy perusing cookbooks for recipes that they could improve upon? Whether it's cooking, crafting, woodworking, drawing or another activity –talk with residents about a hobby they are passionate about that will bring them joy and keep them busy.

(6) Help residents learn something new

- Would residents be interested in learning a new language through any of the free language learning websites.
- Visit online exhibits at museums from around the world. A good link to start with is <https://artsandculture.google.com/>.
- Tune in to some of the fun, educational television shows that offer instruction on baking, gardening, painting and more.

(7) Revisit favorite books.

- Whether it's a collection of classic works or that 400-page page biography – there's no better time than the present for residents to enjoy it.

The Division of Aging is grateful for the long-hours staff are working to ensure residents are safe and healthy. The division is hopeful that sharing the above activities used successfully by other facilities will stimulate resident's thinking, problem solving and creativity as well as reduce boredom. Many providers have discovered that the above activities can improve resident's mood and sharpen cognition. Although social distancing is a necessity, remaining active and connected with family and friends on a regular basis is essential for good health. Assist residents with talking on the phone, video chat, text or email. We're all in this together and will get through it.