

Helpful hints for visiting

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Much of 2020 has been a difficult time for all of us. COVID-19 has changed the way we do so many everyday things including the way we visit with our elders. Here are some helpful hints whether you are doing an in-person, virtual, or window visit to make the visit more enjoyable for both your loved one and you.

- Try to keep your visit upbeat, hopeful and happy.
- If your visit is not going as you expected, perhaps another day or a different time of day may be better for your loved one.
- For in-person or window visits, consider bringing a lawn chair so you are at eye level with your loved one.
- If you are doing a window visit, bring your cell phone. Paper and a marker are helpful too.
- Talk directly into the phone instead of using speaker phone. It can be harder to hear when using the speaker.
- Look at your loved one. Many people do some degree of lip reading even though their hearing may be fine.
- If more than one person is visiting, limit conversation to one person talking at a time. Too many people talking at a time is confusing and often times overwhelming. Keep background noise and conversation with other visitors to a minimum.
- Jot down some things you'll talk about. It's sometimes hard to think on the spot and some residents can no longer initiate conversation.
- Give your loved one a chance to answer before going on to more questions. This process is new to them and they may need some extra time to process what they see and hear. Also, many times there are things going on around us that can't be helped and may also be a distraction.
- Flipping through your phone showing pictures and talking at the same time can be overwhelming. Consider bringing printed copies of pictures.
- For video visits, make sure you have a strong internet signal. If not, your mouth and words may not match and it will be more difficult for your loved one to hear and process the conversation.

Don't forget about sending a card or letter and include a picture or two. Residents love getting mail from their family and friends and showing the staff pictures of their family.