



Isolation Activity of the Week: Pen Pal Letter Writing

Items Needed:

- Stationery kits, purchased or use items you have on hand (paper, envelopes, cards, postcards, note pads, stickers)
- Markers, pens and/or colored pencil kits (have an assortment for each resident to use with no sharing)
- Place kits in individual plastic zip bags with letter writing ideas. (To: friends, staff, family, grandchildren and/or other residents)
- Have color sheets or scribe for those with a cognitive impairment to join in the activity too
- Stamps and addresses

Procedure:

- Deliver kits to residents with instructions and ideas to give them a way to reach out to their loved ones and friends
- Residents can wear gloves while writing and place all letters back in zip bag for pick up
- Staff can leave letters on clean surface for a few days before placing in another envelope for mailing or handing out
- Staff can mail or deliver letters for residents

Idea Credit: Sagely Webinars 3/26/20

COVID-19 Clinical Update: Neurological Involvement

Several studies have indicated that approximately one-third of patients with COVID-19 display neurological symptoms including acute cerebrovascular diseases, impaired consciousness, and skeletal muscle injury. Based on these findings, it is possible that the disease may infect the central and peripheral nervous system and skeletal muscles as well as the respiratory tract.

In a review of medical records, researchers identified the following neurologic manifestations:

- Central Nervous System: dizziness, headache, impaired consciousness, acute cerebrovascular disease, ataxia, seizure
- Peripheral Nervous System: taste, smell, or vision impairment, nerve pain
- Skeletal muscle injury manifestations.

It's important for health care providers to recognize these symptoms in those residents who are being treated at the facility in order to quickly identify and treat any neurologic injury and prevent rapid clinical deterioration in those patients.

Source: Journal of American Medicine: Neurologic Manifestations of Hospitalized Patients With Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Wuhan, China; April 10, 2020

Tips for Caregivers

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can bring about:

- Feelings of fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to this outbreak may look or feel differently from others around you. **It is extremely important to keep in mind that the residents we serve are affected by our reactions to every situation. Calm is contagious!**

How can TMC help?

Taking care of yourself, your family and friends, and the residents you serve can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their own stress can also make your community stronger. **Here are some things you can do to support yourself and to reduce stress in yourself and others:**

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals. Exercise regularly. Get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. 4-5 slow, deep breaths can reset your limbic system and allow your mind and body to relax.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Spend time outside when you can.
- Connect with others. Make time to FaceTime, Videoconference, or have phone conversations with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Most importantly, if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row, please call your healthcare provider.

Coping with stress in the appropriate ways will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

**If you would like more information about stretches or deep breathing techniques for relaxation, or if you would like for someone to pray for or with you, please contact your Therapy team, or email tmcprayerrequests@therapymgmt.com.*

