

# Connecting during a time of Social Distancing

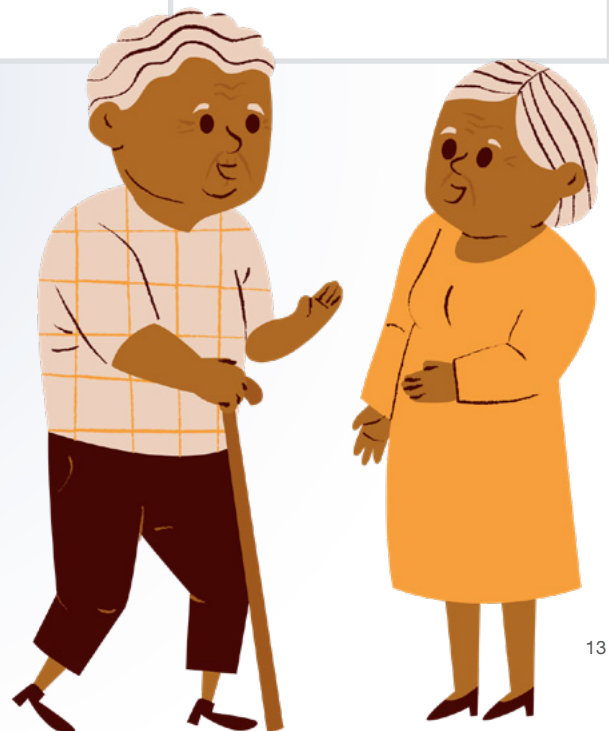
The impacts of COVID-19 and social isolation on older people has had detrimental effects on the quality of life and premature mortality. Socialising has effects on our risk for illness and death along with our overall health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>.

Social distancing does not mean or should result to isolation or loneliness. With COVID becoming our new norm, strategies and regulations have been put in place to protect our elderly. It is our duty as service providers to adhere to government regulations to ensure everyone’s safety.

The aim is to ensure that all people have access to easily comprehensible information to be culturally safe. Here are some examples of barriers Diverse Older people may experience.

## BARRIERS

PERSONAL RESOURCES	MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE	CULTURAL FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited personal resilience</li> <li>• Limited access to internet</li> <li>• Limited Education and ability</li> <li>• Limited money</li> <li>• Geographical isolation</li> <li>• Disability and sensory impairments</li> <li>• Limited confidence</li> <li>• Limited social networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge of benefits of engagement</li> <li>• Limited knowledge of engagement activities</li> <li>• Limited interest of the subject</li> <li>• Limited trust of decision makers</li> <li>• Unmet expectations</li> <li>• Consultation ‘fatigue’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minority groups</li> <li>• Language and literacy</li> <li>• Values and beliefs</li> <li>• Community division</li> </ul>



1. Smith, Steinman & Casey, (2020)

# Topic 4: Connecting during a time of Social Distancing

## ACTIONS DURING COVID-19 AND ONWARDS:

1

### TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

Utilise methods such as Telehealth to support communication with clients. Have community health workers, social workers, clinicians, and other personnel contact clients do a well-being assessment and find their needs during challenging times via phone calls.

2

### VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

- Video calls should be implemented into their day-to-day activities.
- Connect elderly clients to digital literacy programs/ services<sup>1</sup>.
- Set up online communication accounts such as Skype, Face time, MS Teams, Zoom, etc.

3

### SERVICE DELIVERY

- Once you have made a connection using technology, consider shared online activities like reading, exercising, or playing an online game together.
- Go back to basics and write hand-written letters to stay connected.
- Before doing a home visit, make sure to check state and public health orders and follow COVID Safe plans<sup>2</sup>.
- If you live close to an elderly loved one or neighbour, leave a care package on their doorstep or offer to pick up essential items, such as groceries, for them<sup>1</sup>.

## RESOURCES

Australian Institute of Family Studies (2020). *Families in Australia Survey Life During COVID-19: Report 2, Staying Connected when we're Apart*. Australian Government. [http://www3.aifs.gov.au/institute/media/docs/x8YeUlkf/Covid-19-Survey-Report-2\\_Staying-connected.pdf?\\_ga=2.185129454.637053534.1645506110-1407501199.1640044278](http://www3.aifs.gov.au/institute/media/docs/x8YeUlkf/Covid-19-Survey-Report-2_Staying-connected.pdf?_ga=2.185129454.637053534.1645506110-1407501199.1640044278)

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1. Australian Institute of Family Studies, (2020)

2. Department of Health, (2022)