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May 1, 2020

Help Empower and Celebrate our Caregiver Heroes

In these difficult times, the world's healthcare professionals often go as unsung heroes for the amazing work done on behalf of us all. To help bring greater awareness to our [Caregiver Heroes](#), our friends and colleagues over at [Custom Learning Systems](#) have developed a **FREE** website and mobile app for celebrating and empowering these professionals who go beyond the call, everyday, often in highly stressful conditions.

The content includes a video series of micro-webinars and numerous additional tips, resources, and best practices to help bring successes and recognition to our workers on the frontline of this pandemic relief effort. We hope you'll give it a moment of your time so you can help relay it to others could also benefit from this fantastic resource!

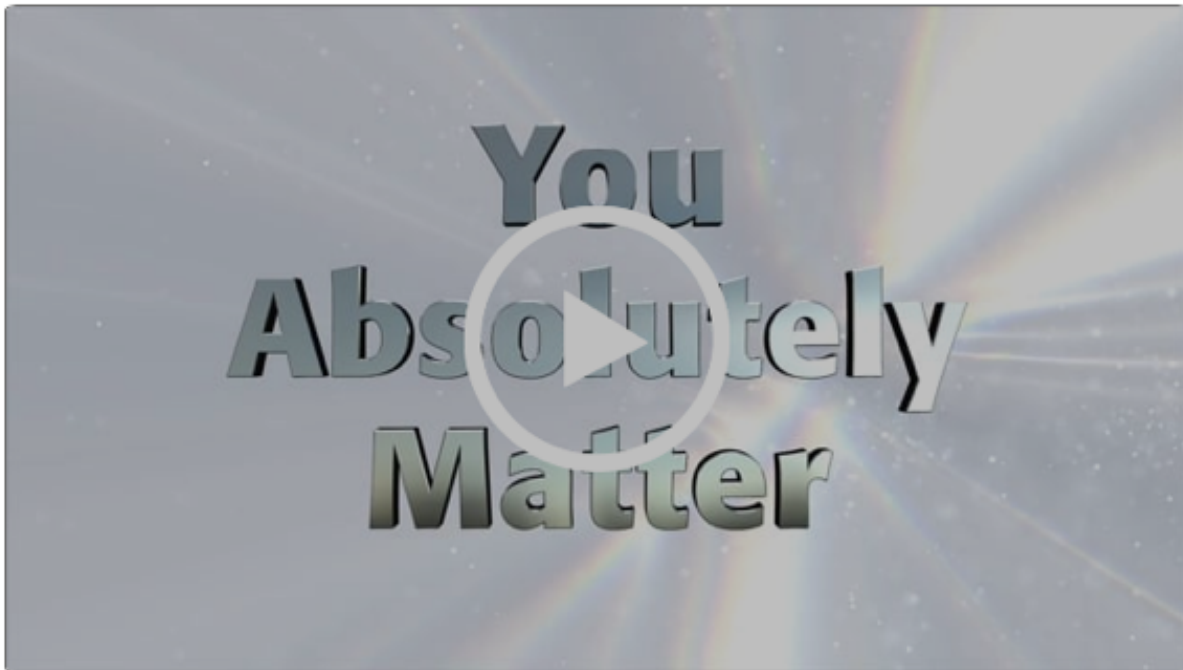


*Everyone's
a Caregiver*

[Visit the FREE website to learn more](#)

Likewise, don't forget that Clint has created a short 5-minute inspirational video entitled "You Absolutely Matter" we would like to share with you to help keep our collective spirits up.

We encourage you to share the video with your staff, colleagues, and whomever you feel might benefit from his message during this crisis.



The Leading Edge

Solid Advice for the Times

In these unprecedented times, nursing homes and long-term care facilities have had to kick contingency and emergency plans into high gear. Several normal day-to-day activities have gone by the wayside as we try to prevent the spread of this terrible virus. While we all certainly hope to return to normalcy soon, there's no way to predict when that may happen. So, in the meantime, you can review and keep the following tips in mind as we navigate through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Keep the communication lines open.** As you know, your elderly residents and patients are highly susceptible to the virus, and as such, facilities have to be diligent with their no visitor policies. But restricting visits shouldn't mean curtailing communication from family and friends. Make sure you're encouraging and facilitating the use of email, FaceTime, Skype, or even old-fashioned telephone calls to check in. It's essential that residents keep in touch and maintain some form of social interaction.

You should also provide open and honest updates to residents and families in regard to your plan to prevent and monitor infections.

- **Evaluate risk with residents and their families.** Most experts, including the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), continue to urge family members not to panic and say it's unwise for them to bring loved ones home to try to avoid infection.

Experts point out that moving an older adult from a long-term care center is risky and could have long-lasting impacts. Moreover, germs are likely to flow more freely outside these communities than inside. Plus, residents are in SNFs and long-term care facilities because they need higher levels of care than generally can be provided at home.

If family members are insistent to move a loved one from your facility, be sure to share these risks with them. If they have the resources to take care of a frail, elderly resident, and moreover, isolate them from the outside world, they can indeed help to protect them from the virus.

- **Share the measures you're taking to sanitize and prevent infection.**

Sanitation processes, memos, and guidelines from agencies like the CMS and CDC have been issued and shared with facilities across the country. Examples include limiting the sharing of medical equipment among residents, avoiding sharing items such as pens and pads, and disinfecting internal communication devices and nursing stations frequently. You can help put families at ease by recording your sanitation processes and efforts and posting it on your website. Sharing what you're doing in such a visible and accessible manner can help build trust and enable reassurance when it's so urgently needed.

You can also share the [CDC guidelines](#) for health professionals with residents and families, so they're aware of the standards.

*"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."
—Oscar Wilde*



Communication Corner

Geriatricians Posit What Post COVID-19 Care Looks Like

Writing in the medical news outlet *Health Service Journal (HSJ)*, geriatricians addressed what post-acute care for elders recovering from COVID-19 might soon look like. The experts shared that while there are many unknowns about coronavirus survivors' future healthcare needs, a discharge model from Britain reveals what post-acute providers might soon be dealing with.

The assessment estimates that about half of these patients will require some form of ongoing healthcare, including rehabilitation. A smaller number, about four percent, will need rehabilitation in a bedded setting.

Among current hospitalized coronavirus patients, clinicians are observing a number of factors that may lead to long-term problems, notably delirium from multiple

causes. In fact, doctors are reporting significant delirium. Some of this is likely due in part to the virus itself and to resulting inflammation. It can also be caused by sedatives needed for safe ventilation or to suppress violent coughing. Meanwhile, drug shortages have forced some hospitals to resort to prescribing benzodiazepines, which can contribute to prolonged delirium.

Among intensive care unit patients in general, most are likely to face cognitive and physical impairment, and anywhere from eight to fifty-seven percent will have varying levels of post-traumatic stress disorder. Many may also experience anxiety and depression.

Meanwhile, **those with acute respiratory distress syndrome** can develop sleep deprivation, bone disease, thirst, delirium, and pain. In addition, long-stay patients are more likely to develop muscle wasting, neuropathies, mobility loss, function loss, and weakness.

Despite these dire predictions, some remain optimistic. Healthcare professionals note that the coronavirus crisis could bring about a stronger support system for survivors of any critical illness. The crisis could pave the way to better long-term planning and support, and the *we're-all-in-this-together* attitude around coronavirus may spawn more community connections and hope that wasn't there before.

*"Isn't it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day
with no mistakes in it yet?"
—L.M. Montgomery*



News You Can Use

Critical Resources During the Pandemic

The American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) said while obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE) continues to be a challenge for long-term care providers in many parts of the country, there are new sources to tap to possibly obtain needed supplies as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Some of those sources include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as state and local governments. All of these institutions are playing a role in the supply and distribution of PPE.

The AHCA/NCAL has also noted that while there are no quick fixes to the national PPE shortage, there are coalitions like [Project N95](#), which have formed to help link PPE suppliers with healthcare providers, including long-term care, in need. Learn more information on [PPE availability, conservation, and what to do when you are running low](#).

Other priorities include COVID-19 testing. The AHCA/NCAL has provided a summary of the challenges LTC providers are facing in gaining access to such testing. And, AHCA/NCAL has been seeking companies that can provide testing for LTC providers with reasonable turnaround times and have put together a [list of credible vendors](#).

This list will be continuously updated as more vendors are found.

In terms of financial assistance, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has rolled out the COVID-19 Accelerated Payment Program. This is a streamlined version of existing policy that allows Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to issue no-interest short-term loan payments in certain circumstances, including national emergencies. CMS officials are strongly recommending that SNF operators take full advantage of the CMS COVID-19 Accelerated Payment Program as a way to help ensure adequate cash-flow during these challenging times.

You can email COVID19@ahca.org for additional questions, or visit ahcancal.org/coronavirus for more information.

*"Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves
come when life seems most challenging."
—Joseph Campbell*



Just For Fun

Simple Things that Can Brighten Your Day

You may find it difficult to laugh or smile these days, but if there was ever a time to try and find comic relief and joy in our lives, it's now. Here are some simple ideas and strategies that can help bring some happiness to your day.

- Re-read a letter, card, or email from someone who thought of you when you were going through a hard time.
- Search your deleted email folder for **thank you**. You probably made a huge difference in someone's life recently—remember that now!
- Text a friend, "What's the funniest thing you've heard today?"
- If you have children, ask them to draw a picture of you and them together.
- Take a break to enjoy a simple pleasure that you often take for granted—like a cup of flavored coffee, or a favorite snack.
- Blast your favorite music and dance around with absolutely no regard for rhythm or appearance.
- Make some type of arts-and-crafts project, just like you would have as a kid, with plans to give it to someone else.
- Make a snack you loved as a kid. Maybe it's peanut butter and banana sandwiches, or a sundae with gummy bears on it.

- Watch a movie or cartoon from your childhood.



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