

- 1. Don't Forget About Your Loved One: Stay in Contact in Some Way**
- 2. Extra Doses of Patience and Empathy Will Be Needed**
- 3. Be Ready to Provide a Simple Explanation for the Precautions & Lifestyle Changes**
  - Provide a brief, simple, truthful, and not overly alarming explanation
  - The explanation that you will use will vary from person to person
  - Consider using a written version of the explanation (visual cue)
- 4. Keep the Person Engaged Throughout the Pandemic**
  - Examples: in-room one-on-one activities, group activities (if allowed), in person visits (if permitted), video calls, phone calls, letters, etc.
  - Drop off "Engagement Kits" tailored to your loved one
- 5. Be Ready to Deal with Issues Related to Mask-Wearing Issues**
  - Be ready to provide an explanation for mask requirements (Tip #3)
  - If your loved one has hearing problems, consider writing down your questions (use large font)
  - You still need to smile—more widely than usual!
- 6. Follow These Steps to Have a Successful Video Call (see next page)**
- 7. Use "Threading" When Communicating with the Person**
  - Encourage discussion by asking questions (examples as needed)
  - Ask follow-up questions and listen carefully to his/her responses
  - Allow the conversation to proceed in a way that your loved one wants it to
- 8. Don't Quiz the Person During Conversations**
- 9. Be Mindful of Your Body Language**

## Before the Video Call

- Use a good video call service that has “screen sharing” (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Skype)
- Ask if your loved one can use a laptop or a computer connected to a large monitor for the video call – if not, use a tablet (screen size / volume of audio)
- Make sure your loved one will be in a good location (quiet, not too big)
- Make sure YOU are in a good location: good lighting (not back lit), quiet, contrasting background, and a small room is better
- Make sure you have a decent microphone (if not, get webcam or headset with mic)
- Get close to the webcam—but not too close!
- Connect to the internet via ethernet, if possible (check speed at [www.fast.com](http://www.fast.com) – 3+ Mbps recommended)
- Arrange for someone else to sit with your loved one (you may need their help)
- Do not wear a mask (if possible/safe)
- Plan ahead: what will you do or talk about?

## During the Video Call

- Say your name (do not quiz your loved one!)
- Have a conversation about the topics you preselected and/or do preselected activities
- Be flexible: if he/she would rather talk about or do something else, adjust as needed
- Ask the person who is with your loved one to “echo” what you are saying (repeat loudly)
- Stay focused on the video call (do not get distracted, check email/texts, etc.)
- Use the screen share feature to ask questions, show photos, play a game, read a story, etc. (or, if no screen sharing is available, ask questions using a dry erase board)
- If your loved one isn’t engaging, ask the staff member to take a more active role
- If your he/she asks your name, wear a large name badge, or show name on the screen
- Do not let the call devolve into you just talking with the staff member (schedule a separate phone call if you want to talk to staff)

### **Things to Talk About During a Call**

Ask for advice  
 Ask for their opinion  
 Discuss the long-term past (early-stage)  
 Tell them short anecdotes, get their reaction  
 Ask how they are feeling now (redirect if needed)

### **Things NOT to Talk About During a Call**

What did you eat for breakfast?  
 What did you do today?  
 Did you take your pills?  
 Have you spoken to other family members?  
 Do you have any plans for today?

### Activities to Do During a Video Call

- Look at and discuss photos/art
- Read a short story/article\*
- Read one-line jokes
- Watch short video clips
- Play a game (search online for “would you rather,” “finish the phrase game,” “free online bingo,” etc.)
- Adult coloring books
- Fold clothes or sort items

\* 8 free books at [www.hearthsidebookclub.com](http://www.hearthsidebookclub.com)