

- 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**



Steps to Having a Successful Video Call with a Person with Dementia

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 – 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) – be ready to redirect to something positive

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 lately?
Do you have any plans for today?