

Suggestions & Strategies to Facilitate Peace of Mind for your Loved One

At this time of uncertainty everyone is a little anxious and rightfully so. At Pathfinder Village our priority is to provide a semblance of normalcy through establishing new schedules and routines in this time of social distancing.

Fortunately, social distancing does not mean social isolation. Social connectedness and camaraderie are hallmarks of the Pathfinder way of life. There are many ways to stay connected with your loved one including: phone calls, video calls, and letter writing.

As you know we like schedules at Pathfinder Village; schedules provide certainty, decrease anxiety, and provide peace of mind. We suggest you work with house staff to schedule weekly phone calls or video chats, so your loved one knows when he/she will hear from you. We can support your loved one with a call calendar too.

When speaking on the telephone or connecting through video, we suggest the strategies described below to help your loved one remain calm and confident at this challenging time.

Be a role model: Anxiety is contagious. Maintain a calm and positive attitude during communications.

Acknowledge and validate concerns: These are uncertain times; listen to your loved one's questions and concerns, validate, and then redirect the conversation to another topic.

Focus on the facts: Clear and factual information about day-to-day life is reassuring. When we take another person's perspective, anticipate their questions, and provide factual answers, the likelihood that individuals will arrive at erroneous conclusions decreases.

Reinforce healthy practices: Social distancing, good handwashing, cleaning of surfaces, and getting exercise and a good night's sleep – acknowledge that these are all good things and that you are doing them too!

Send good wishes and love – no tips needed 😊

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: When can I come home?

Answer: I know you are disappointed that you can't come home, but right now we want you stay at Pathfinder to stay healthy.

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"... that each life may find meaning."®

Question: What about Easter?

Answer: I don't know if social distancing will be over by Easter. We have to wait a little longer to find out. We can have an Easter celebration in May or June if we have to.

Question: I want to go to my day program/work.

Answer: I'm sorry that all day programs are closed right now. Everyone is at home.

It's hard to wait but try to stay busy.

I am sorry that your day program is closed. I know that is important to you.

(House Name) is doing your day program now.

My work is closed. I'm staying home too.

Question: Am I going to get the Coronavirus/sick? (Or statements about worry/concern).

Answer: Everyone at Pathfinder is healthy. You are doing lots of things to stay healthy.

It's okay to be upset/worried/afraid, but don't let it get you down. You are healthy. There are so many other things to think about or talk about. Let's go check on your friends, play a game, do a puzzle, read a book, sing, dance, exercise.

Conversation starters to encourage:

Tell me about the activity you did today with your staff.

Did you go to the gym this week? I went for a walk to get some fresh air.

Tell me about the activity you did today/craft you made/game you played/movie you watched.

Conversations about being a role model:

It is hard to remember not to touch my face, but I know it is important to keep germs away from my mouth and nose.

I am washing my hands and cleaning our house too.

Additional tips for video calls:

- Create a new way to say hello, a silly wave or a virtual "elbow bump."
- Wear crazy socks (at Pathfinder every day is World Down Syndrome Day) and show them off.
- Contact Monica Clark to order a new Pathfinder T-shirt (Be Healthy, Be Kind, Be Patient) and coordinate a day for you and your loved one to wear your shirt.
- We are doing lots of arts and crafts at Pathfinder Village – create something at home and show it to your loved one.
- Ask about a card or gift you sent.
- Share how proud you are of your loved one.