



**Learning Disability  
Professional Senate**

**Resources to support families / carers of people with  
learning disabilities through the Coronavirus  
restrictions**

## Introduction

The Learning Disabilities Professional Senate has put together this collection of resources that may be useful to support families/ carers of people with learning disabilities during the coronavirus restrictions.

The material contained in this resource has been developed by individuals or organisations and we have acknowledged these wherever possible. We thank everyone for their swift response in developing information.

The Learning Disabilities Professional Senate does not accept responsibility for any of the information in these documents, but hope that they are useful in supporting people with learning disabilities and families and carers who support them.

Different resources may be more appropriate for different people, and we are not recommending any specific resources. Please look through all the resources and choose the ones that are appropriate for your situation.

The guidance in the attached documents is valid at the time that they are developed, but may need amending as government action changes.

Please keep safe

Karen Dodd

Co-Chair – LD Professional Senate

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Corona Virus: A trauma-informed care approach to supporting people with learning disabilities. A guide for families and carers

## Corona Virus

# A trauma-informed care approach to supporting people with learning disabilities

## A guide for families and carers

By the clinicians of CTPLD East (Dr Elisabeth Goad, Clinical Psychologist, with advice from Lindsey Mosley, Occupational Therapist and the rest of the Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy Team)

### What is 'normal' anxiety right now?

- With constant news stories about Corona Virus overwhelming our daily lives most of us will be living in a state of heightened anxiety.
- Daily conversations, radio, TV and social media make it difficult to 'take a break' and give ourselves moments of calm from the anxiety that this experience is inevitably causing.
- Many people are worrying about who will and how many will get ill and possibly die; the impact on families, finance, education, employment and housing is likely to take its toll.
- People are experiencing some **difficult but very normal feelings** such as anxiety, fear, anger, irritation or sadness.

### Corona Virus as a traumatic experience

- Relationships are extremely important to human beings because without them we could not survive.
- When relationships are threatened in some way, we have an inbuilt and intense psychological and emotional response (think about all the things that upset you deeply, how many of them relate to something between you and another person?).
- If threats are intense or prolonged in some way, we can get stuck in 'fight, flight or freeze' responses.
- People are more likely to feel traumatized when they feel helpless or have a lack of control over a situation.

### Corona Virus feels like a constant threat to relationships because...

- People are having to self-isolate from those who they care about or whom they depend upon on.
- People fear the impact of illness and death for themselves and others.

- ❑ There is a reduction in ability to engage with activities outside of the home where social connectedness may have played a key role.
- ❑ Strained relationships where families are forced to self-isolate together with limited opportunity for personal space.
- ❑ There is a disruption from normal social networks, schools and friendships for children, employment and social groups for adults.

## **Our threat systems are likely to be activated all of the time!**

### **Corona Virus and people with learning disabilities**

In addition to the anxiety experienced by the general population, people with learning disabilities will also have additional issues and needs:

- 1) The fact that people they may depend on to meet their health, social and emotional needs may not be able to support them anymore.
- 2) If social care providers start to struggle with staffing their services; people with learning disabilities may be cared for by people they do not know and find hard to trust.
- 3) It may be harder for people with learning disabilities to understand what is happening in the world and what Corona Virus means for them.
- 4) Their routines that are often so important to them may have been disrupted.
- 5) Substitute activities may not be practical or accessible.
- 6) Transition and change is often very difficult for people with learning disabilities.
- 7) Access to activities that are specifically regulating for people may be reduced.
- 8) As colleges, day services and opportunities for other meaningful engagement close, loneliness and its associated mental health problems become a real concern.
- 9) Strained relationships may occur as families rearrange their lives to provide more of their own support to people with learning disabilities whilst managing their own anxieties around health, housing, employment and finance.

## What might family and carers notice in themselves?

- Being preoccupied with the news, constantly 'checking' for updates.
- Finding it difficult to focus on day to day activity.
- Feeling 'uptight or tense'.
- Increased muscle tension, increased heart rate, chest tightness, increased breathing rate, fatigue, changes in sleeping patterns.
- Losing their own self-care routines to prioritise the care of others.
- Feeling less patient and more irritable than you typically would.
- Normal but increased feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, sadness, anger.

## What might we notice in people with learning disabilities?

- Preoccupation with the news, constantly checking for updates.
- Finding it difficult to focus on day to day activity.
- Feeling 'uptight or tense'.
- Increased muscle tension, increased heart rate, chest tightness, increased breathing rate, fatigue, changes in sleeping patterns.
- Increased health anxiety, worry about getting ill, increases in 'checking' behaviours.
- Experiencing (normal) feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, sadness, anger.  
**AND**
- Withdrawing and disconnecting from others, feeling frightened to go outside.
- An increase in behaviours that challenge, often anger and associated anger may be an external representation of underlying fear.
- An increase in psychosomatic symptoms (physical symptoms without a physical cause).
- Seeking more reassurance than normal to help manage the constant daily changes evident in their lives.

## What can we do to help?

### What does the person understand?

- How much does the person understand what is happening at the moment?  
Think about what and how much might be useful to share with them. **Use**

easy read or visual resources to back up communication if needed (see resources below).

- ❑ **Offer time** for the person you support to talk to you about their concerns regularly. Providing open but containing communication will help them feel less alone.
- ❑ **Consider how much 'Corona Virus' talk there is around the person with learning disability?** Is it helpful information giving or is it escalating anxiety?

## Managing mental health

- ❑ **Limit time spent watching news stories**, set a time of day when you will catch up with what is happening and try to support the person to engage with other activities during the rest of the day.
- ❑ Help the person make a **'worry box'** where they can write down or draw their worries and put in the box to help them feel that their worries can be 'held' outside of their own minds. Encourage the person to share what's in their box with you once a day if they want to.
- ❑ Try to avoid conversations about Corona Virus just before bed to encourage sleep.
- ❑ Develop your own **self compassion**, you may experience difficult feelings that make you act in ways you wouldn't normally. Be forgiving.
- ❑ **Relaxation and mindfulness-based activities** can help calm busy minds AND calm the physiological reactions of trauma and anxiety. Practicing regularly, even when you feel calm will increase their efficacy. See resources below for free links to online exercises.
- ❑ **Update and review support plans** to reflect the changing and dynamic support needs people are likely to have.
- ❑ **Support the plan to take individual control over whatever they can to reduce feelings of helplessness.** Control over hand washing, opportunities to help others and so on can help to help people feel more in control

## Regulating activities

- ❑ When we are **stuck in 'threat' mode** all of the time, we all have certain activities that help to **calm us down**.
- ❑ Focus on activities that use muscles and get the person moving. Day to day tasks that can be regulating include hoovering or carrying the laundry. Leisure activities might include stretching or yoga.
- ❑ Think about what activities usually calm the person and more specifically what it is about that activity that calms them.

## Staying connected

- ❑ **Body language and facial expressions are important and help us to feel more connected to each other than** just hearing a loved one's voice on the phone. As such, find ways to use platforms such as **Skype, Teams, Facetime or Zoom** to maintain connects where face to face contact is not possible.
- ❑ If the person with a learning disability is self-isolating away from their family encourage **sending cards in the post, sharing of photos or 'thinking of you' parcels to help combat loneliness** and reassure the person that those who are not with them are thinking about them.

## Structure, routine and meaningful engagement

- ❑ Create a home time daily structure and routine (see resources below).
- ❑ Are their opportunities within the home to learn new skills or do valued activities together?
- ❑ Ensure activities are a mixture of pleasurable, achieving and socially connecting.
- ❑ Developing meaningful roles for everyone at home can help raise self-esteem and maintain purpose at a time where purpose may feel as though it has been lost.

## Staying fit and healthy

- ❑ **Get fresh air when you can, walks and runs are still acceptable as long as you keep your distance from others.**
- ❑ **As best you can, support the person to keep eating healthily and keep moving. Walking and running is still acceptable as long as you keep your distance from others. There are lots of exercise classes free online.**
- ❑ **Develop a wellbeing plan with the person, how can you support them to maintain good physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health in creative ways?**

## Look after yourselves

- ❑ **Put on your own oxygen mask before you start putting on everyone else's!**

- ❑ You are important too. Try to maintain your own self-care routines as much as possible. If this is a marathon not a sprint you will need energy at the end.
- ❑ If you have not had a recent carers assessment, please request one from your local social care team if you would like too.
- ❑ Please also follow the guidance below, managing your own routines, social connectedness and mental health will be vital in helping you to stay well and continue being able to support the person you care about.

## **Resources**

### **Advice for carers**

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Easy read leaflets on corona virus**

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/1.%20Wellbeing%20%26%20mental%20health?preview=Easy+Read+-+advice-on-the-coronavirus-v1.pdf>

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/1.%20Wellbeing%20%26%20mental%20health?preview=Easy+Read+-+Information+about+Coronavirus+.pdf>

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/1.%20Wellbeing%20%26%20mental%20health?preview=My+Name+is+Coronavirus.pdf>

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0606/1553/files/Coronavirus-Poster-2-Photosymbols-UK.pdf>

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0606/1553/files/Coronavirus-Poster-3-Photosymbols.pdf>

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0606/1553/files/Coronavirus-Poster-1-Photosymbols-UK.pdf>

### **Social story templates about Corona Virus**

<https://www.flipsnack.com/KeshetChicago/coronavirus-social-story/full-view.html>

<https://aaccommunity.net/2020/03/covid-19-board/>

<https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-.pdf>

### **Developing a routine during Corona Virus**

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>

<https://sensoryproject.org/2020/03/16/sensory-stuck-at-home/>

Google, 'boredom busters Corona Virus' to get some great ideas of things you can do together at home.

### **General mental health support**

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

### **Managing OCD during corona virus**

<https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/>

### **Relaxation and mindfulness (for families, carers and people with learning disabilities)**

**Compassionate Mind exercises:**

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources/audio>

**The Happiness Trap App** is free for the next three months due to the corona virus outbreak. Download the App from Apple app store and then enter the code: TOGETHER on the subscription page to unlock all the app contents.

**Free audios:**

<https://jackkornfield.com/compassion-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>

<https://jackkornfield.com/steady-heart/>

**Mindful exercises for everyday life (Solent NHS Trust) FREE**

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFbeQITqQPGTLAmNgKs0srX9Vau7mc\\_tFf](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFbeQITqQPGTLAmNgKs0srX9Vau7mc_tFf)

A series of mindfulness, ACT and compassion-based exercises on you tube.

**Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World (Danny Penman) FREE**

<http://franticworld.com/resources/>

Includes recordings of the body scan, 3-minute breathing space, chocolate meditation, mindfulness of the body and breath, befriending meditation etc.

[The https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources](https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources)  
[Compassionate Mind Foundation website \(FREE\)](#)

Recordings of addressing self-criticism, building the compassionate mind, posture, faces and tones, soothing rhythm practices.

### **Apps**

- **Headspace** - free trial and then subscription required after that
- Calm** -free trial and options to pay for additional functions if you want to)
- Aware** - free (you can pay for additional functions if you want to)

Top tips: supporting someone with a learning  
disability when you need to stay at home due to  
Covid-19



Camden

### **Camden learning disabilities service**

5 Pancras Square

N1C 4AG

Tel: 020 7974 3737

Fax: 020 7974 3787

[camden.gov.uk/clds](http://camden.gov.uk/clds)

### **Top tips: supporting someone with a learning disability when you need to stay at home due to Covid-19**

- Routine is still important: Try to get up and go to bed at the same time. Try to break up the day at similar times for breakfast, lunch, dinner.
- Use a visual timetable, make a to-do list and plan what you will do in the day
- Try to keep busy – make sure to do physical activities throughout the day (like shaking out sheets, hanging up laundry, whisking and mixing when baking, kneading bread, scrubbing and wiping dishes and tables, cleaning the bath, hoovering, or an online exercise class).
- Be mindful of screentime – it's easy to get too much of this.
- Try to get some fresh air into the house – open blinds and curtains and let the light in
- If you have your own garden or balcony you can use this to spend some time outdoors. If you and the person you support are well, you can take a walk but make sure to keep a distance from other people.
- Have a look at what you can hear and see outside, wildlife can be a good one, such as birdwatching. You might have some seeds you could put out for the birds, or water for a birdbath.
- Try mindfulness and focusing on the 'here and now' – what you can see, hear, smell, taste and touch
- You may need to remind the person you support why you are not going out – you can use social stories to help with this. You may need to offer an alternative suggestions.
- Validate people's feelings around staying at home.
- Don't tell the person you support what they CAN'T do, but focus on the activities that they CAN do
- Support the person to make choices around activities so they still have some control – make sure you only give options that are available to

them and remember to use symbols, photographs and objects to support choice making

- Try to involve the person you support where possible in anything that you need to do around the house – even involvement in small steps of an activity is good.
- Try to do calming activities before bed, keep the same bedtime routine
- If possible encourage the person you support not to use the bed apart from at bedtimes so that this is associated with sleep
- Support the person you support to reach out to others via phone, email, skype and social media.
- You can encourage good hand hygiene at home by making this fun – this could be by doing more water based activities like washing up, handwashing clothes, water play (use colanders, funnels, recycling containers, different sponges and scrubbers). Try using different scented soaps, lots of bubbles, singing songs together whilst washing your hands to ensure the person you support is washing thoroughly, or setting a timer, competing about who can make the most bubbles or squelchy noises!

Thank you for your support – it is invaluable in keeping the client and community well! Please contact the team using the number above if you have any queries we may be able to support with.

Hilary Low

CLDS OT

19/03/2020

Supporting people who use our services as the COVID:19 response  
increases- A Guide for our staff

# Supporting people who use our services as the COVID:19 response increases- A Guide for our staff

**CONFUSED?  
SCARED?  
FRIGHTENED?**  
These are strategies  
people use to cope,  
NOT behaviors.



As measures have increased to inform and support people to understand the seriousness of this situation it is likely that many of our service users and staff may be worried about COVID-19.

These anxieties can be also be very infectious. Caution should be exercised in not exacerbating an already difficult situation.

This blog offers some good insight into coping and support needs: [open future learning blog](#) and why we might see changes in people's behaviour.

These are very difficult times for people who use our services to understand for a number of different reasons: many regular routines are affected,

- Possibly potential changes of staff with new colleagues on the units
- People possibly moving from one area to another to accommodate isolation areas
- Changes to the environment to protect from or control the virus.

If we are going to help people understand the situation then we need to think about how to 'chunk up information'. Some people may not have heard of COVID 19 but they might know what germs are, they may remember having a cold or someone else having one.

## HELLO!

**I am a VIRUS,  
cousins with the Flu and  
the Common Cold**



**My name is Coronavirus**

MANUELA MOLINA - @MINDHEARTKIDS  
WWW.MINDHEART.CO  
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 INTERNACIONAL PUBLIC LICENSE

**Understanding what a person knows will help you to help them understand more.**

Be aware that some individuals may have communication difficulties so may not be able to tell you that they are feeling unwell initially e.g. with a sore throat. The person may show they are in discomfort through a change in their behaviour or level of interaction – this needs careful monitoring and always consider a possible underlying physical cause for any changes seen first



- Only get information about Coronavirus from places you can trust

These places are:

- The UK coronavirus (COVID-19) page
- The NHS coronavirus (COVID-19) page
- NHS 111 online
- If you are planning to travel abroad check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice page
- Follow Public Health England or The Department of Health and Social Care on Twitter for regular updates

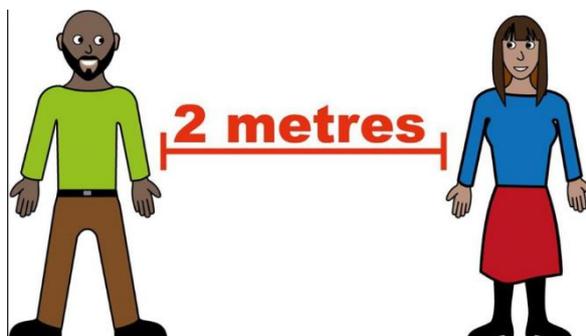
The pictures in this summary are from Photosymbols: <https://www.photosymbols.com/>

Once we know what the person knows, this can help us think about how to give more information to prepare for potential changes and the impact on them. Using credible sources to provide facts and information is really important.

[There is a COVID:19 facebook group](#) set up to specifically support sharing of appropriate, accessible information for people with learning disabilities. There is wide representation from multiple disciplines and providers as well as people with learning disabilities, parents and carers.

### It is really important that we continue to encourage preventative measures

We want to help people stay healthy in our services. We need to promote hygiene and follow the governments advice.




**Coronavirus**  
You must stay at home

We must stop the disease spreading. Only leave home for :

- Shopping essentials
- Exercise once a day
- Medical or care needs
- Travel to work if you have to

**Stay at home**

- No more meeting friends.
- No visiting family in other places.
- No groups of more than two people in public.

**Closed**

Most shops are closed. Events are cancelled. Funerals are allowed.

**CALL 111**

If you are ill  
**Stay at home for 7 days**  
If you feel worse  
**Phone NHS 111**  
or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

## Coping with isolation and restrictions

We know that many people who use our services may feel disconnected from wider society and may not have insight for the need to self-isolate and decrease physical contact with others. This [Wuhan article](#) highlights some of the lessons learned and makes recommendations about inpatient mental health areas.

Balancing the level of information we give to our service users is important so that we can inform in a way that they can make meaning of but not induce further panic or fear. Be aware that news on in the background can be a source of anxiety for some people, particularly if the person has limited language skills.

Trying to maintain some sense of or a new sense of normality while there are restrictions in place on how we can move around and live our lives may mean trying to replicate some of the basics that we are all try to maintain, support people to try to stay calm:



**Tips to keep calm**

Ideas of things to do and what not to do!

1. Keep in touch with friends and family.
2. Talk about your feelings.
3. Know the facts! Only listen/watch websites/TV programmes you trust
4. Don't keep looking at the news etc
5. Be active
6. Stop! Do some breathing exercise
7. Relaxation.
8. Sleep
9. Learn something new.
10. Listen to music
11. Stay Positive.
12. Stay Safe

- Waking up and going to bed- trying to keep to the same schedule
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Taking exercise, we can leave the environment once a day to do this, there may be changes to the support we have to do this. We may also want to access some you tube videos or have our own exercise videos that we can do in an area at home
- Some preferred in house activities can continue, craft, listening to music, watching our favourite films or things on TV, jigsaws, mindfulness etc.
- Calling, face time or Skyping our friends and family
- Limit access to social media and the news

It is really important that if somebody does develop the initial symptoms of COVID:19 that they can self-isolate. For people already in our specialist services, we need to help them do that. We need to help people to understand why they must stay inside.



## Isolation areas

### Coronavirus is not serious for everyone

People can get better by:



- Having Rest



- Taking tablets for pain – if told



- Drinking plenty of water

In our specialist services, we have created an isolation area.

This might be on the same site that the person is in now or it may mean that the person needs to transfer to an area where they can be carefully observed and assessed.

If a person needs to move to the isolation area they will continue to be supported by staff from our services. Our staff will need to wear protective equipment to reduce the chance that they might also get COVID:19.

This might look different for the person and it might be frightening. Try to help them understand.

[This social story has been developed for a specific person](#) and explains what happens when people get poorly with COVID: 19. If you want to use it in your areas then do not use page 9.

Our Speech and Language therapists have developed a range of resources for individuals and you could ask them to develop something specific with you for a person who you need to communicate with.

It is always best to have a personalised story for the individual, written in a way that specifically meets their needs.

While the person is in the isolation area they will need to be kept safe, monitored and as far as possible be supported to continue to do things that are important to them, including activities and safe engagement with others. Thinking creatively about using social media, face time/skype etc.

If the person does not get better after 7 days or becomes very unwell then the clinical decision for them to go to an acute hospital for escalated treatment will need to be made. The decision to escalate care will be evidence based and reasoned and the person's wishes will need to be considered in relation to this.



People looking after you in Hospital might need to wear **personal protective equipment**.

This is sometimes called **PPE** and includes:

- Face masks or FIT Mask
- Glasses
- Gloves
- Aprons

It is important people working in the Hospital wear these because it stops germs and coronavirus spreading.

Our staff will continue to support the person in hospital and give advice about their specialist needs.

If the person becomes well enough, they will be supported to return to a ward area.

**Supporting literature and webpages as of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

<https://www.vodg.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-response/>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Meaningful engagement during time of social distancing due to corona virus outbreak



**Surrey and Borders  
Partnership**  
NHS Foundation Trust

**Intensive Support Service**

Ramsay House  
Richmond Crescent  
Epsom, Surrey  
KT198PB  
Tel: 01372 206305

### **Meaningful engagement during time of social distancing due to corona virus outbreak**

The Government has advised that all people adopt the guidance on social distancing

The people we support in the community, inpatients and residential settings will experience disruption and changes to their usual routines, meaningful activities and interactions due to social distancing. ***Please see latest government guidance.***

These individuals (and anyone self-isolating) are at risk of occupational deprivation. Occupational Deprivation is “the prolonged restriction due to circumstances outside of the person’s control” which affects mental and physical well-being. (Whiteford 2000)

Therefore we need to start being creative in how we support the individuals we work with to participate in meaningful activities, and routines as much as is possible (within the guidance), directly and through their supporters to promote physical and mental well being. Please see RCOT guidance on staying well when social distancing  
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>

The individuals that we work with may have difficulties with:

- Changes in routine
- Not being able to see people who are familiar and important to them
- Not understanding why changes are happening around them
- Managing worries about what they see and hear on the news etc
- Difficulties initiating, sequencing or continuing activities independently and may need support to do this.

**STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTIONS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL AT THIS TIME:**

- Predictability and routine –
- Having visual information of what is happening and ensuring it is up to date with any changes
- Using an up to date activity timetable / now and next board etc,
- Communicating what are staff on shift and updating for changes and new staff – could there be photos sent with any agency / bank staff used?
- Using social stories to explain changes and managing concerns (see attached for examples)
- Building handwashing into the start and end of activities where ever possible (see attached for examples of handwashing guidance)
- Continuing as many elements of usual routine that are possible whilst still following latest government advice.
- Promoting choice and control where ever possible, but this may need to be adjusted to what can be chosen at that time. – ie only offer choices of what they can actually do at that time
- Remove (from choice boards , timetables etc) activities that are not accessible / possible in current climate to avoid disappointment and frustration. (ie.place is closed)
- Think about about actively supporting the person
- Individual risk assessment will be needed - Ensure that activity items are cleaned after use – You may wish to have individual (labeled) activity boxes at this time to reduce risk of cross contamination.
- Anything that cannot be used safely without supervision put away after use.
- Keep information about what is happening simple, this means that it is easier to change if necessary.

*It may be helpful to have individual (labelled) activity boxes with items that meet their interests, items should be cleaned and returned to the box after use as the virus can stay on objects for many hours unless cleaned). Items in the box should be reviewed and rotated to ensure that activities are varied.*

Suggestions for other activities:

### **Activities of daily living**

Food preparation by the individual client may need to be for individual consumption during social distancing

- making drinks / smoothies
- sandwich making
- making dips / salads
- puddings
- pizza
- bread making
- baking
- taking part in meal preparation
- laying table for themselves,
- doing laundry
- washing up
- filling dishwasher
- sweeping / mopping
- Gardening, digging , planting , watering plants

- Making bed,
- Doing laundry ,
- Cleaning room

### **Exercise / movement**

- Dancing - make up your own, take it in turn to copy each others or learn a new dance
- Stretching , yoga type moves
- Following exercise videos (see attached for some ideas – there are many available)
- Obstacle course
- Trampoline or Swing
- Bean bag target
- Running races
- Running, jumping, stomping,
- Stretches, wall pushes
- Treasure hunt
- Skittles
- Football and other ball games – throwing and catching
- Balloon volley ball

### **Outdoors**

- Where there are facilities in garden use them
- Circuits in garden (eg, target games with bean bags, going through hula hoops, running back to point etc, sports day like activities)
- Nature / bird spotting / cloud watching
- Outdoor gyms
- Muddy / hill walks eg box hill – national trust sites are currently free, there are also many parks in Surrey
- Dog walking

### **Creative**

- Making pictures for room / door name plate
- Painting, hand, finger, brush or object
- Colouring – free or guided
- Card making
- Junk modelling
- Collage
- Paper mache
- Play dough modelling (can mix and make own – not to be shared or kept)

### **Music**

- Singing
- Karaoke
- Making up songs,
- Singing and playing instruments along to music ,
- Making a playlist of favourite songs

## **Games and puzzles**

- Word games (crosswords, hangman)
- Board games (ludo, connect 4, snakes and ladders, pairs etc)
- Card games (snap, play your cards right to more complex games)
- Dominoes
- Quizzes
- Picture matching
- Memory games ('Kim's game')
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Word search
- Find items (eg where's Wally)
- Learn a new skill

## **Interaction –**

- Phone calls
- Making a album of who / what is important to me
- Making cards including thinking of you cards, notes and postcards (mothers day soon),
- Debates /discussions
- Writing about your day
- Discussions about topics
- Story making
- Reading together
- Emails, Skype, social networks
- Explore places on virtual tour, find out about a place you are interested in
- Watch tv programmes, films, previous sporting events – talk about what you like and don't like
  
- There is an increasing wide range of resources online including exercise / dance videos, singing, art / creative, activities and virtual tours.

## Activity ideas for when you need to stay at home



### **Camden learning disabilities service**

5 Pancras Square

N1C 4AG

Tel: 020 7974 3737

Fax: 020 7974 3787

[camden.gov.uk/clds](http://camden.gov.uk/clds)

### **Activity ideas for when you need to stay at home**

When we need to stay at home it can be hard to know what to do with our time. Here are some suggestions of activities you could try. These will not be appropriate for everyone, so pick and choose based on your knowledge of the person you support and previous guidelines and recommendations from health care professionals. Lots of resources and ideas can be sourced online.

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#### Personal care tasks

Have a vigorous shower – use different sponges and scrubs and different soaps

Teethbrushing and flossing

Hairbrushing – trying different hairdos, plaits, ponytails (ideas online!)

Have a shave, use a brush and shaving foam

Massage (head, shoulder, feet, hands)

Bubble bath

Paint your finger nails

Moisturising/creaming

Aromatherapy activities

Essential oils on hot/cool flannel

Footspa

Hot water bottle (not too hot) and wheat microwavable pillows (there are scented versions)

Do some meditation classes, there are different kinds you can find and try online

(guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness)  
Do online exercise classes – there are all kinds online including seated versions

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### Domestic tasks

Hoovering/vacuuming

Dusting and polishing

Sweeping

Mopping the floors

Spring cleaning -organising drawers and wardrobes

Emptying the bins

Checking the cupboards and writing a shopping list

Ordering shopping online and putting things away

Laundry (putting things in the washer, hanging things up with pegs to dry, folding and sorting, putting away in drawers)

Handwashing clothes

Putting things you don't need in a bag for charity

Looking after plants (watering and re-potting and planting, removing the dead leaves/flowers)

Changing your bed sheets

Washing and drying up (use lots of soap and bubbles and different types of scrubbers and sponges)

Loading and emptying the dishwasher

Wiping down counters and tables

Setting and clearing the table

Polishing shoes

Mending things (holes in clothes, or things that need gluing)

Ironing

Making tea (you could use a teapot and a tray and sit down for tea-time together)

Washing windows

Home decorating

*Cooking:*

Loads of recipes online

Peeling and washing and preparing food

Fruit/vegetable salad

Sandwiches and toasties

Ice-lollies

Fruit smoothies with blender

Soda stream for fizzy drinks

Chocolate crispies

Non-cook recipes (like fruit kebabs, lots of recipes online)

Baking bread or biscuits – use packet or raw ingredients

Popcorn

Angel delight

Crumble

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Leisure tasks

*Arts and crafts:*

Cards and letters – make your own, send to your friends and family

Scrap-books related to personal interests ie trains, popstars

Keep a diary, make a story about what you did when you had to stay at home

Taking selfies and family photos – have fun with filters!

Making a collage

Hand painting/printing

Sewing/embroidery/knitting

Making jewellery, beadwork

Making models

Modelling with papier-mache

Printing with stencils

Painting by numbers

Magic (water) painting

Using online apps to do art work

T-shirt decorating

Sticker books

Drawing or painting

Pottery with air drying clay

Making salt dough (make the dough at home from flour and water and salt, mould it in to shapes, bake and paint, recipes online)

Block printing (or use a potato-stamp!)

Reading or looking at magazines/newspapers/old photo albums

Acting and role play

Have a fashion show, dress up!

Make a 'smelly box' with different scents (ie body lotion, coffee beans, washing powder, mint mouthwash, marmite, star anise, cinnamon, perfume, essential oils etc)

*Music:*

Playing musical instruments – have a concert

Singing – record it, make an album!

Listening to music

Make your own playlists – make different playlists for different times(upbeat/relaxing)

Karaoke

Dancing – even seated chair dancing!

Make your own musical instruments (ie plastic bottle with rice or lentils inside)

Musical bingo

*Socialising:*

Sending emails and text messages and voice recordings and video clips about your day to checking in with friends and family

Sending letters and cards

Using social media to connect with others

Using the telephone to call people – use the video function to see them

Discussions about people/places things

Storytelling

Start a blog or website to share your interests with others

Games:

Games on ipad – there are all kinds of apps you can tailor for individual interests

Wii

Jigsaw puzzles

Card games, such as snap

Bingo

Memo

Ball or bean bag games – throw these into a basket (add points for competition)

Velcro dartboard

Balloon volleyball (bat this backwards and forwards between you, or balloon tennis - try to get it over something a line of tape on the floor)

Clapping games

Rhymes and tongue twisters

Jenga and connect 4

Board games

Tabletop football

Water play with colenders, funnels, pots and pans, paintbrushes

Blow bubbles – catch and pop these

If you have access to a garden:

Potting plants

Weeding

Sitting in swing chair

Ball or racket games

Frisbee

Touching and smelling plants and herbs and flowers

BBQ

Looking after birdtable or feeder – you can make your own birdfeeder with old plastic bottle (instructions online)

Learning Disabilities Professional Senate – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Sowing seeds (can also be done inside)

Growing vegetables

Watering the garden

Caring for hanging baskets and window boxes

Looking after compost

Thank you for your support – it is invaluable in keeping the person you support and community well! Please contact the team using the number above if you have any queries we may be able to support with, or if you are struggling to find activities to do with the person you support at home.

General Heavy work / proprioceptive strategies to try  
during social distancing



**Surrey and Borders  
Partnership**

NHS Foundation Trust

**Intensive Support Service**

Ramsay House  
Richmond Crescent  
Epsom, Surrey  
KT198PB  
Tel: 01372 206305

**General Heavy work / proprioceptive strategies to try during social distancing**

Undertaking proprioceptive / heavy work activities can be helpful to feel more regulated and me in a calm/alert state. These are general strategies – there would need to be consideration base on individual need, preference and risk assessment

**Oral motor - follow SLT guidelines if there are any dysphagia concerns**

- blowing bubbles
- sucking thick liquids milkshake / smoothie through a straw
- chewing - gum, bagels. dried fruit
- eating crunchy food / ice
- sucking sweets
- using curly straw
- drinking from sports bottle

**Proprioception**

- Wall push ups
- Chair or desk push ups
- Stretchy bands on chair for feet
- Body sock
- Increase movement by running errands
- Wiping counters/ tables / windows
- Squeeze toy / fiddle
- Have crunchy or chewy food at breakfast and throughout day
- Use drinks bottle with valve
- Moving furniture
- Going up and down stairs

**Productive tasks at home**

- loading / unloading washing machine
- wiping counters
- carrying shopping
- carrying boxes / items
- washing windows
- vacuuming
- mopping
- sweeping
- taking out rubbish / recycling
- digging
- weeding
- watering plants using watering can
- going up and down stairs to fetch items
- mixing cake with spoon
- kneading, and rolling dough

**Activities:- interests sensory needs and challenges need to be considered**

- Running
- Jumping
- Trampolining
- Cycling
- Scootering / skateboarding
- Yoga

This is a helpful website on sports and sensory challenges , (NB it has an American focus) <http://asensorylife.com/sensory-benefits-of-sports.html>

*Information adapted from Roley, RC, Smith Roley. S. (2006) Sensory Integration: Applying Clinical Reasoning to Practice with Diverse Populations. 1st ed. United States of America: Therapy skill builders and Williams, M.S. and Shellenberger, S. (2012) How does your engine run? A leaders guide to the alert program for self regulation. 16th ed. Albuquerque, NM: Therapy Works inc.*

Karen Bates Occupational Therapist

## Coronavirus – Tips for Managing Challenging Behaviour

# Coronavirus

## Tips for managing challenging behaviour

Coronavirus has meant that all of our normal activities and routines have stopped and we have to stay at home. Lots of us are also feeling worried about the virus and that we or our family will get the virus.

It is therefore understandable that during this time there may be an increase in challenging behaviors for the people we support. Here are some tips that may help:

1. Try to understand the cause of the behavior or the trigger of the behavior, e.g. the environment is too noisy/busy, being asked to do something, wanting to get something, being bored, being anxious, being physically unwell.
2. Watch out for the early warning signs - what can you do to help at this point? What has worked before? Can you distract or divert to something else?
3. Find ways to help the person express themselves. Such as using pictures, photos, objects or Makaton signs.
4. Try to keep to as usual a routine as possible, if the person is used to getting up, meals, going to bed at certain times try to keep to these.

Tower Hamlets Community Learning Disabilities Service

# Coronavirus

## Tips for managing challenging behaviour

5. Make a plan/timetable for each day, include things to help the person to feel happy, do activities they enjoy.
6. Make sure that the person can make some choices about activities/food each day. Offer 2 or 3 choices, too much can be overwhelming.
7. Prepare them for finishing an activity they enjoy with countdowns, either verbal or visual.
8. Where you can, get outside for some exercise and fresh air, even a twenty minute walk can be helpful!
9. Develop simple coping strategies, such as breathing exercises or switching to an activity they enjoy.
10. The person you care for might need extra reassurance during this unusual time. Remind them that they are safe at home.
11. Make a time for yourself to do something you enjoy too. We need to look after ourselves to be able to look after others.
12. Keep in touch with family, friends and professionals – reach out for help and advice!

Tower Hamlets Community Learning Disability Service

## One Page Positive Behaviour Support guide

<p><b>When I am in a good mood / appear calm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage me in social interaction, learn my likes and dislikes</li> <li>• Encourage me to carry out/assist with my personal care</li> <li>• Support me to do daily living tasks e.g. laundry, tidying up, preparing meals/snacks, cleaning</li> <li>• Help me learn new skills</li> <li>• Support me to try something new – and praise me for trying</li> <li>• Use your sense of humour, laugh &amp; joke with me</li> <li>• Notice how I behave if I am waiting for something e.g. an outing, an electronic item to charge, to see the doctor. Share this with the team.</li> <li>• Check if I prefer just words, words and signs, words and pictures etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>When I am starting to feel anxious/annoyed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a calm, clear tone of voice. Use short, simple sentences and positive language.</li> <li>• Invite me to come and talk somewhere quiet and private. Show empathy.</li> <li>• Increase personal space</li> <li>• Make sure all my basic needs have been met (e.g. food, drink, toileting, pain management)</li> <li>• Meet any reasonable demands e.g. help me charge the iPad, contact my family, open a cupboard etc.</li> <li>• Offer me an activity that I find calming (active or passive depending on my preference). Use distraction.</li> <li>• Only use humour if you are confident about this strategy</li> <li>• Notice how I am behaving, plus what strategies help me and record these details</li> </ul>
<p><b>When I am a risk to myself or others, or losing control of my behaviour:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a calm, clear tone of voice. Use very short sentences or single words.</li> <li>• Use an open posture and facial expression. Avoid large gestures or sudden movement.</li> <li>• Increase personal space. Move others out of the area. Inform other staff.</li> <li>• Remove hazards or triggers from the room</li> <li>• Make sure I have an exit route.</li> <li>• Make sure you also have an exit strategy</li> <li>• Only one person should talk to me, other staff can monitor from a distance. Consider switching staff if I relate better to a certain person</li> <li>• Consider prn, or physical intervention as a last resort (according to your local policy)</li> </ul>	<p><b>When I appear calm again:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond calmly to anything I say. Accept any apology I offer</li> <li>• Offer me a cold drink, or some time to rest</li> <li>• Keep monitoring my arousal level</li> <li>• Help me move on by focussing on a new activity</li> <li>• Avoid asking me why I behaved that way</li> <li>• Avoid discussing details of the incident</li> <li>• Administer first aid as needed</li> <li>• Record the event on your incident reporting system, complete ABC charts etc.</li> <li>• Consider debriefing – for people using the service and for staff</li> </ul>

## Top Tips for Communication



## Top Tips for Communication

1. Think about your **non verbal communication** – tone of voice, facial expression, posture and the person's readiness to interact.
2. Remember the individual may not be able to **attend** to lots of verbal speech.
3. Use **short sentences** and only use the words that are needed to get your message across.
4. Allow **time** for information to be processed before you move on.
5. Avoid asking lots of questions. Especially "open" questions such as "Why.....?" or "How....?"
6. Try to use **intensive interaction** approaches to communication at all times.
7. Use the environment to support what you are saying. Use objects, photos, drawing etc. to help to get your message across. Making choices for the person may be difficult.
8. **Model** actions/tasks you want someone to do.
9. If the person is repetitively saying the same things over and over, try to create situations where you are with them, engaging in an undemanding activity that they can join in with if they choose. (Availability but low demand).
10. Think about any written communication, can this be simplified or provided in another format if necessary?
11. Use **scripts** to help someone know what is expected of them. Seek advice for help in knowing what to put in your script.
12. Remove alternative sources of distraction. Turn off the TV and radio.
13. Do not have a complex conversation with someone else when you are trying to interact with the person with a communication impairment.

Going up the **STAIR** to better communication

**Support** them to get their message across

Give them **time**

Gain the person's **attention**

Use appropriate **interaction** and obvious **resources** that you have around you.

Created by Polly Dawe- Occupational Therapist  
Liberty Care Ltd



## NHS Sitting Exercises

## Exercises for older people

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### Sitting

#### Getting started

**If you've not done much physical activity for a while, you may want to get the all-clear from a GP before starting.**

For the exercises that require a chair, chose one that is stable, solid and without wheels. You should be able to sit with feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles. Avoid chairs with arms as this will restrict your movement.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy.

Try to attempt these exercises at least twice a week, this will help to improve muscle strength, balance and co-ordination.

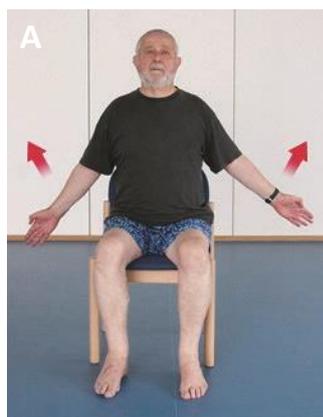
Build up slowly and aim to increase the repetitions of each exercise over time. As your fitness improves, why not look for a group session near you? Age UK have lots of ideas.

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

There are three other sets of exercises in this series: Flexibility, Strength and Balance.

Go to [www.nhs.uk/exercises-for-older-people](http://www.nhs.uk/exercises-for-older-people) to download.

## CHEST STRETCH



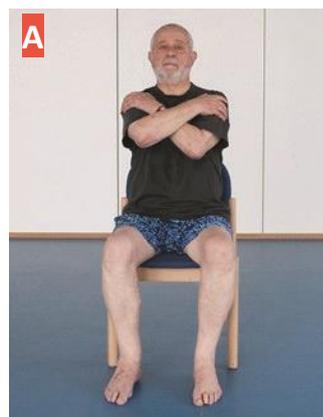
**This stretch is good for posture.**

**A.** Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Pull your shoulders back and down. Extend arms out to the side.

**B.** Gently push your chest forwards and up until you feel a stretch across your chest.

Hold for five to 10 seconds and repeat five times.

## UPPER BODY TWIST



**This will develop and maintain flexibility in the upper back.**

**A.** Sit upright with feet flat on the floor, cross your arms and reach for your shoulders.

**B.** Without moving your hips, turn your upper body to the left as far as is comfortable.

Hold for five seconds. Repeat going right. Do five of each.

## HIP MARCHING



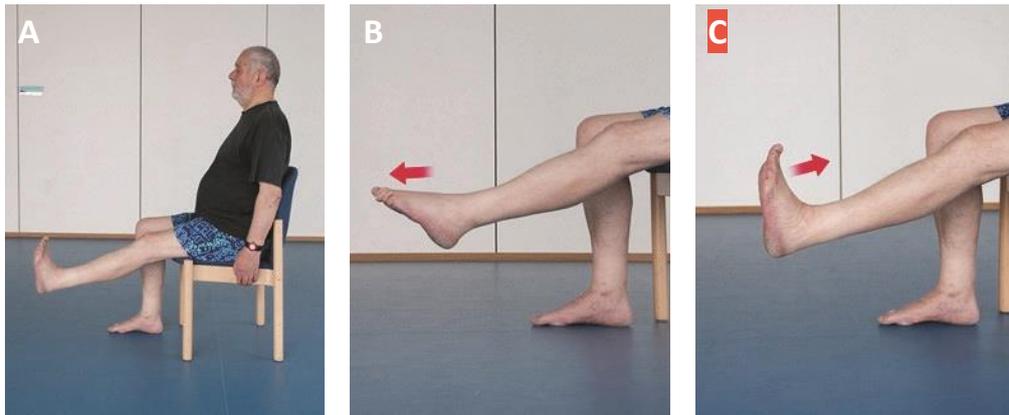
**This will strengthen hips and thighs and improve flexibility.**

**A.** Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Hold on to the sides of the chair.

**B.** Lift your left leg, with your knee bent, as far as is comfortable. Place foot down with control.

Repeat with the opposite leg. Do five lifts with each leg.

## ANKLE STRETCH

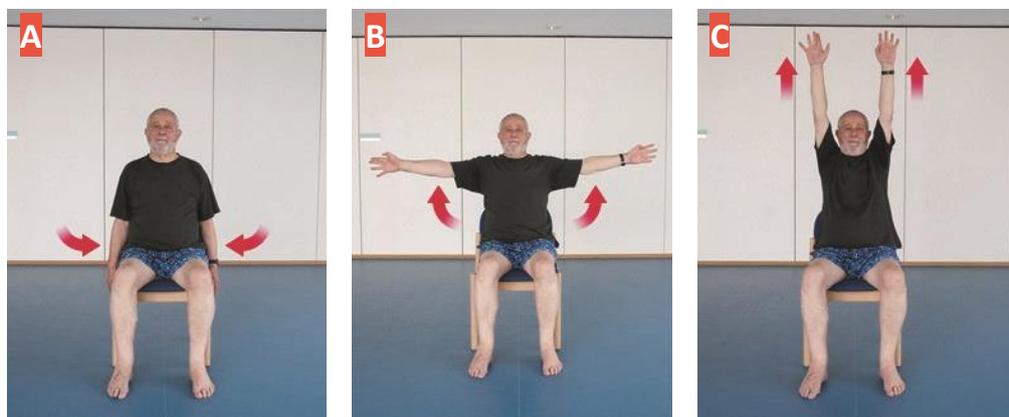


**This will improve ankle flexibility and reduce blood clot risk.**

- A.** Sit upright, hold on to the side of the chair and straighten your left leg with your foot off the floor.
- B.** With leg straight and raised, point your toes away from you.
- C.** Point toes back towards you.

Try two sets of five stretches with each foot.

## ARM RAISES



**This builds shoulder strength.**

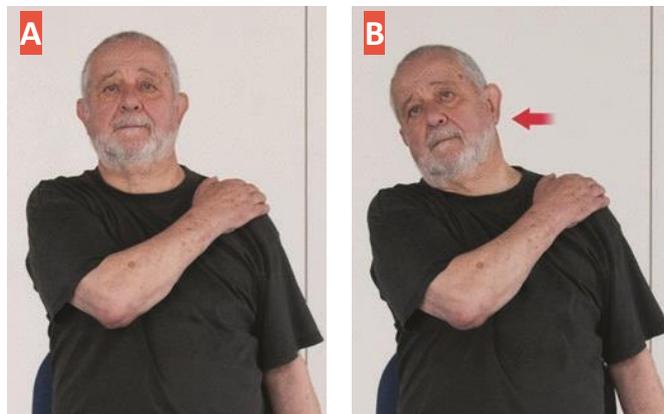
- A.** Sit upright, arms by your sides. **B.** With palms forwards, raise both arms out and to the side and up as far as is comfortable. Then return.
  - C.** Keep your shoulders down and arms straight throughout.
- Breathe out as you raise your arms and breathe in as you lower them. Repeat five times.

## NECK ROTATION



**This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.** **A.** Sit upright with shoulders down. Look straight ahead. **B.** Slowly turn your head towards your left shoulder as far as is comfortable. Hold for five seconds and return to starting position. **C.** Repeat going right. Do three rotations on each side.

## NECK STRETCH



**This stretch is good for loosening tight neck muscles.**

- A.** Sitting upright, look straight ahead and hold your left shoulder down with your right hand.
- B.** Slowly tilt your head to the right while holding your shoulder down. Repeat on the opposite side.

Hold each stretch for five seconds and repeat three times on each side.