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Rebuilding relationships with families in the context of COVID-19: Compassionate and proactive communication



Family Councils Ontario

PRESENTED BY: Raquel Meyer PhD, RN
Manager
Ontario CLRI | Baycrest

Daniel Galessiere MScPT, PT
Interprofessional Educator
Ontario CLRI | Baycrest

Samantha Peck
Executive Director
Family Councils Ontario

Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- Faculty:
Raquel Meyer, Daniel Galessiere, Samantha Peck
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Mitigating Potential Bias

The information presented in this CME program is based on recent information that is explicitly “evidence-based”.

This CME Program and its material is peer reviewed and all the recommendations involving clinical medicine are based on evidence that is accepted within the profession; and all scientific research referred to, reported, or used in the CME/CPD activity in support or justification of patient care recommendations conforms to the generally accepted standards



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Evolving Context

Grief Uncertainty
Support
Isolation Community Partnership Loss
Caregiver Tension
Distress Sadness Fear
Abrupt Empathy Trauma
Understanding
Communication

POLL QUESTIONS:

1. Since COVID-19, how have family communication needs changed?
2. Do your families have a designated staff contact person/s?

Communication & Information Sharing Resources



Families



Staff

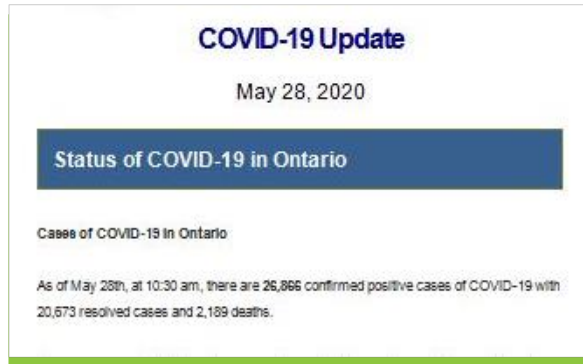


LTC Homes



Family Councils of Ontario

<https://fco.ngo/>



COVID-19 Update

eNewsletter

- ✓ published daily
- ✓ status update
- ✓ relevant resources
- ✓ consistent touch-point



Virtual Family Forum

Information & Support

- ✓ bi-weekly, English & French
- ✓ sharing of concerns
- ✓ ideas for connecting with residents
- ✓ FCO staff answer questions
- ✓ peer support



Family Council Week

June 6-12


*Theme: Family Councils:
Inspiring Hope, Resiliency,
and Change*

A series of virtual sessions to celebrate, inform, and connect Family Councils.



Family Councils of Ontario

<https://fco.ngo/covid-19/communication-and-information-sharing-materials>



PANDEMIC PRIORITIES :

Questions for Families to Ask During COVID-19

April 2020

Sample Questions

Information Families Want to Know

Overall Wellness & Hygiene

- Are there signs my loved one is feeling low, down, or troubled?
- Is my loved one having issues with their regular sleep routine?
- What is being done to prevent social isolation and loneliness?
- Does my loved one appear alert?

Nutrition

- Do staff help residents eat/drink at mealtime if they need help?
- Do the residents still have a choice for what they eat at mealtime?
- Is my loved one being encouraged to drink liquids to stay hydrated? If they require thickened fluids and assistance is this happening ?

Care Plans & Routines

- Is the care plan for my loved one still being followed?
- Are care plan meetings still taking place? If so, how often? Can I participate virtually?
- Can I be notified of any updates or changes in my loved ones care or routines via e-

Records & Complex Care Needs

- Will there be time for staff to address my loved one's complex care needs?
- Are residents able to see a doctor if needed?

Staffing in the Long-term Care Home

- Do the nurses/PSWs/aides take care of the same group of residents?
- How are staff assigned work within the home?
- Are there enough staff working in the home to respond to the needs of my loved one given the current circumstances?


Family Support & Action Line

- For additional assistance, families can reach out to the **Ministry of Long-term Care Family Support and Action line** (7 days/week) to receive information or raise concerns during COVID-19.

1-866-434-0144

April 2020

QUICK 10 - COVID19 FAMILY SUPPORTER CHECK-IN



USE THIS SET OF QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOU IN CHECKING IN TO SEE HOW YOUR LOVED ONE IS DOING

COVID-19 QUESTIONS TO ASK

Does the resident have COVID19?

- No
- Suspected
- Symptomatic
- Confirmed

Dining update

- Eating location: in an open space or isolated in their room?
- Alone or with others?
- Eating well? Diet or weight change?

Social activity and participation update

- Participating? Withdrawn? What are they doing in their day?

Bathing and Personal Grooming

- How often receiving a bath or shower? Any change in their appearance?
- Do they have their glasses, hearing aids, laundered clothing? Are they being shaved?

Skin Health

- Dry skin, bedsores, irritations?

Cognitive Function & Mental Wellness

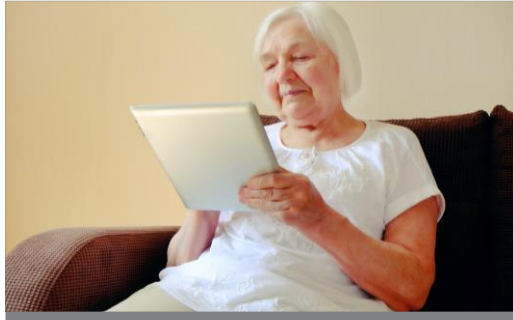
- Progression of any dementia, delirium, confusion, wandering, responsive behaviours, change in mental function?
- Mood, depression, anxiety, how are they coping?

Breathing Update

- Any change in lung function or breathing blockages?



OARC & RNAO



Virtual Visits

Toolkit

- ✓ Organize
- ✓ Solve common barriers
- ✓ Implement for success

<http://www.ontarc.com/covid-19/virtual-visits-toolkit.html>

Family Councils of Ontario
Ontario Association of Residents Councils
Tech Coaches Inc.



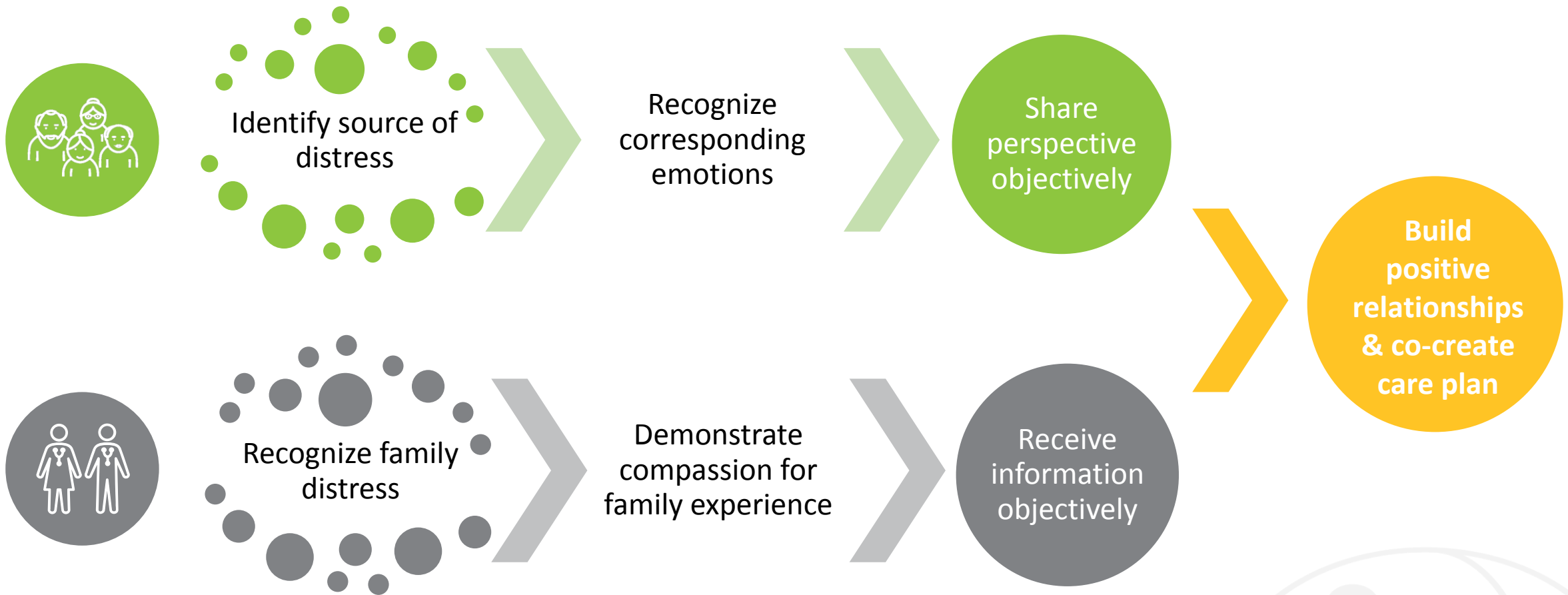
RNAO LTC Support

Facebook

Connecting family and friends who have loved ones in Ontario LTC homes to share their stories and get support from those in a similar position.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RNAOLTCsupportGroup/>

Benefits of Skilled Communication



Challenges of Phone Communication during COVID

- Lack of non-verbal cues
 - Eye contact
 - Facial expression
 - Gestures
 - Posture & body orientation
 - Body language
 - Touch
 - Silence



Family Communication Tool for Phone Calls

Ontario CLRI eLearning module

5 QUESTIONS



CIHR Study led by
Dr. Lisa Cranley et al.

lisa.cranley@utoronto.ca

Help a family member to

- ✓ reflect on an experience, situation or need
- ✓ organize this information to share with the team



A Tool for Families to Communicate With Staff in Long-Term Care

100% COMPLETE

- Introduction ✓
- Chapter 1: Family Communication Without an Effective Comm... ✓
- Chapter 2: The Huddle Tool ✓
- Chapter 3: Practice Using the Huddle Tool ✓
- Module Summary ✓

Ontario CLRI

- Family eLearning to use guided phone conversation tool



Question 1: Situation

The situation is that ... lately I have not been able to get through on the phone, and I am worried my mother is not being given a lactose free diet since the outbreak started, which would cause her pain.



What is the situation you wish to discuss that is impacting you and/or your loved one's care?



Thank you for calling and sharing this with me.

**Staff Skill:
Gratitude**





Question 2: Background

The background is that ... before the outbreak started, I visited her daily and personally checked that her diet was being followed. It worries me greatly that her diet may not be being followed. She is living with dementia so she can't keep track of what she is eating for herself.



How is this situation affecting you and/or your loved one?



This is really helpful.

**Staff Skill:
Validate**





Question 3: Action

The action by the team is that no one has answered the phone since yesterday when I started calling on an hourly basis until now.



To your knowledge, how has the staff and others at the home responded to you so far?



I took some notes to share with the team...

**Staff Skill:
Reassure**





Question 4: Recommendation

I'd like to recommend that my mom's care team make a plan with me for how to connect regularly by phone.





Question 5: Request

My request is that someone on the care team finds out if she is following her lactose-free diet, and then calls me back to confirm.



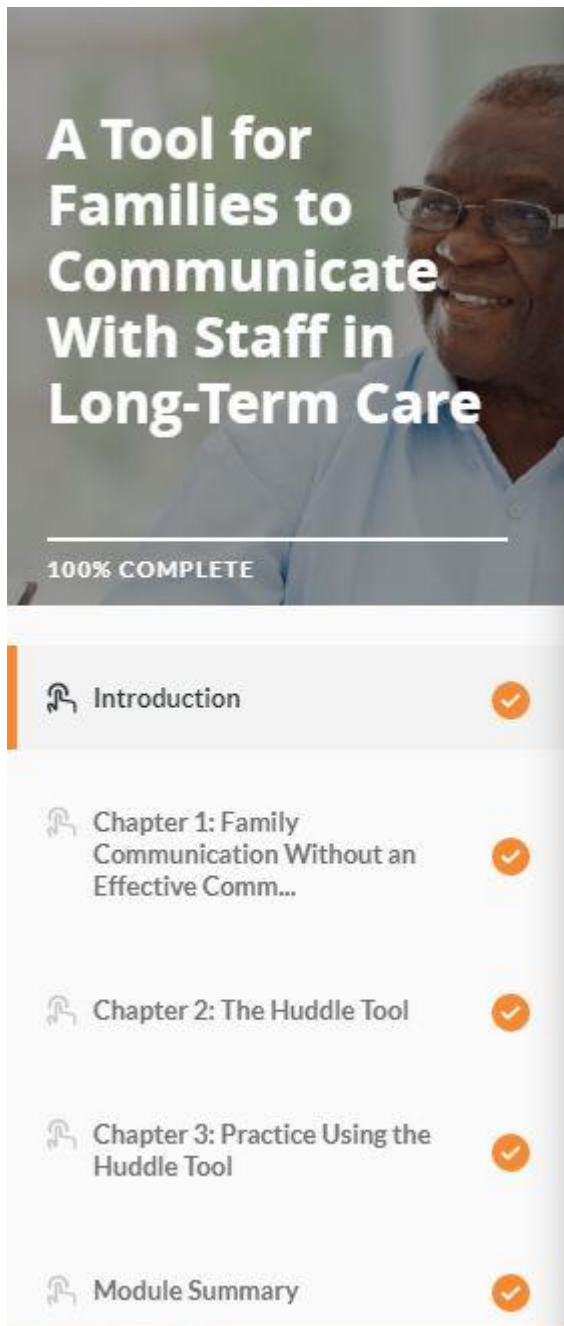
What other information from staff and others at the home would you like?



Just to confirm I'll read you what I wrote down ... is this accurate?"

Staff Skill: Clarify & Confirm





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www.clri-ltc.ca

- Family eLearning coming soon online (mid-June)

POLL QUESTION:

3. What new skills would support your teams to respond to family needs?



Ontario CLRI Staff eLearning

www.covidcarelearning.ca (coming soon www.clri-ltc.ca)

1. Being Aware and Prepared - Self-care in Distressing Situations with Families

- Ineffective scenario
- Activity: Use mindful breathing when faced with a distressing situation with a family member to become aware and prepared to respond compassionately
- Effective scenario

For example

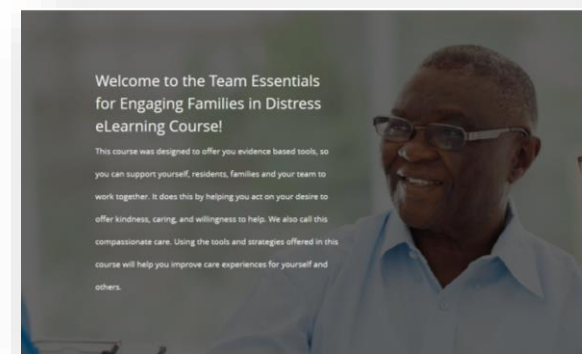
2. Recognizing and Depersonalizing Family Distress

3. Communicating Compassionately with Families in Distress

4. Identifying Family Concerns and Causes of Distress

5. Care Planning Collaboratively with Team Members

6. Putting it All Together: A Practice Scenario





Ontario CLRI Staff eLearning

www.covidcarelearning.ca (coming soon www.clri-ltc.ca)

What are we covering?



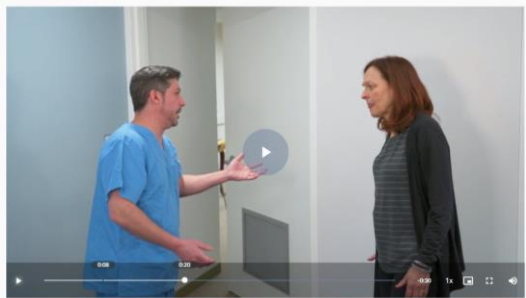
Module 1: Being Aware and Prepared - Self-care in Distressing Situations with Families

In this module, you will practice a method you can use when engaging with a family member who is in distress to prepare yourself to respond compassionately.



Module 2: Recognizing and Depersonalizing Family Distress While Remaining Compassionate

In this module, you will explore how a family member's expressions of distress are usually connected to feelings of grief and loss about their loved one's situation.



III. Introduction to ARC

...pen so quickly that being aware of your responses and needs ... often causes your emotions to take control of how you ... may take over (fight) or you may look for a way out of the ... en find yourself at a loss for words and unable to respond at

...ate communication tool comes in. ARC is a tool that was ... nicipating with compassion. It allows you to accept what you ... dgment, and to demonstrate caring, kindness, and ... element to learn more.

Reassure

Clarify

Select the scenarios below.

Mental/Emotional Expressions of Distress
Mrs. Watson

Behavioural Expressions of Distress
Mrs. Lakos

Physical Expressions of Distress
Bianca

See the different reactions below.



Fight



Flight



Freeze

III. Mindful Breathing Activity

Situations with family members who are in distress can often be overwhelming and affect your ability to think. Being able to slow down a situation and recognize how you are reacting to it, helps you to create a space to think more clearly and calmly. This can help you offer yourself and the family member kindness and concern, and respond to the family member more effectively.

Before we see how using ARC can make it easier for you to respond to family distress with compassion, let's explore some common types of mental/emotional, behavioural, and physical expressions of family distress. The following activity contains three scenarios to practice identifying various types of distress in a family member.



Identify the behavioural distress you observe the family member to be experiencing.

- Emotional outburst
- Avoidance of others
- Impaired performance
- Increased interpersonal conflicts
- Decreased interest in usual activities
- Increased alcohol consumption

Submit

Replay Video



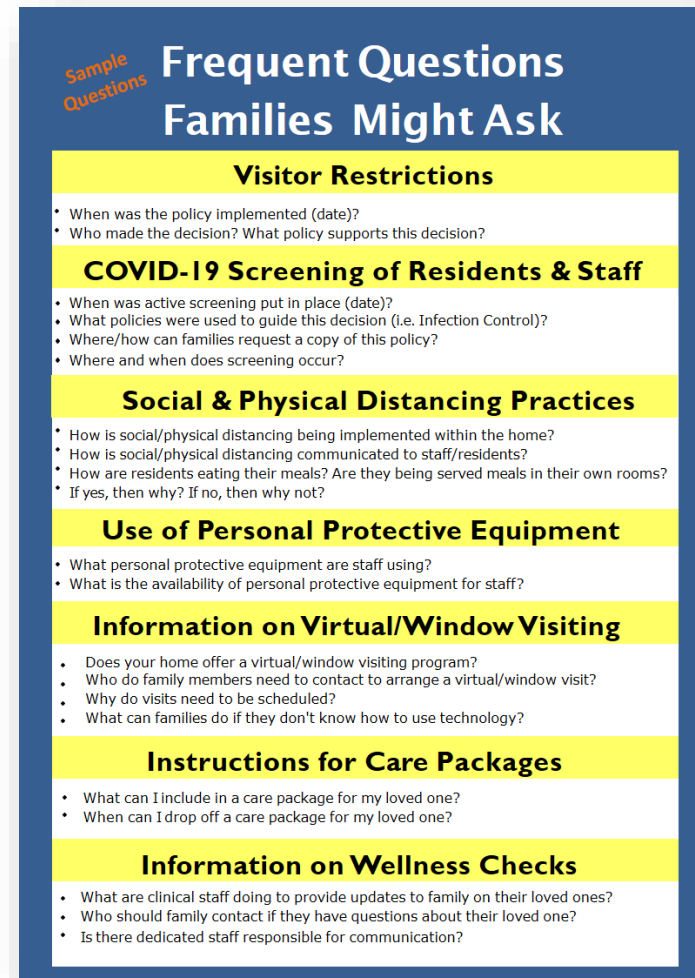
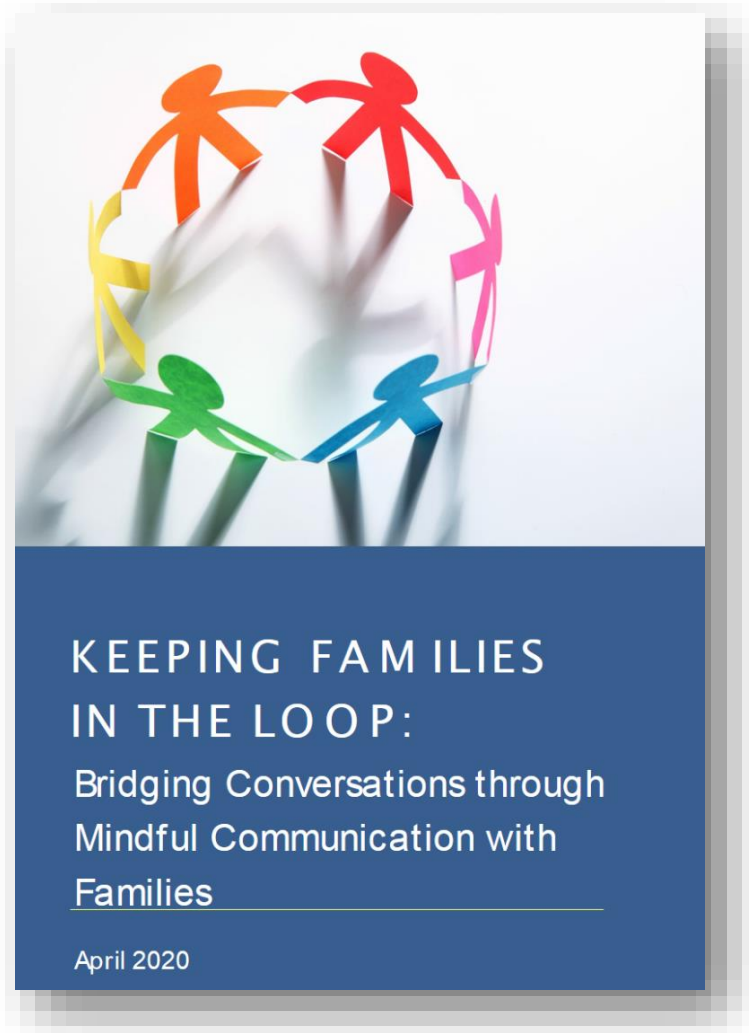
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Home Communication with Families

<https://fco.ngo/>





Home Communication with Families

<https://fco.ngo/>

Tips for Communication with Families

GET INPUT ON THE METHOD(S) OF COMMUNICATION

Ask families about their preferred mode(s) of communication. Common methods include e-mail, websites, and "Robo" calls. Families with a loved one affected by COVID-19 should be called by staff for additional details.

MAKE IT EASY TO FIND UPDATES

Use your existing resources (i.e. websites, social media) to share updated with families. When using social media you can include links to direct families to information.

USE HEADERS

Help families find the answers they are looking to find by organizing information by topic (i.e. Virtual/Window visit program, staffing, PPE use).

Families also appreciate when homes have created COVID-19 FAQ documents.

ASK WHEN TO COMMUNICATE

You don't want to trigger anxiety by providing too much information. Ask families how often they want updates about COVID-19 (i.e. daily, weekly).

Some homes have implemented daily automated calls or updates on their websites.

MAKE IT AUTOMATED

Families appreciate the use of e-mails and automated calls to share updates about COVID-19.

Test your automated system in advance to make that all families receive the message.

INDICATE WHO TO CONTACT & WHEN THE INFORMATION WAS LAST UPDATED

Some homes have a dedicated phone line for families to call for COVID-19 updates.

Homes will also share details about the who to call and when they will be available to speak to families.

April 2020

QUICK 10 - COVID19 LONG-TERM CARE HOME UPDATE CHECKLIST

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY WHAT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO GIVE TO FAMILIES.

COVID-19 UPDATES TO SHARE

- Number of cases of COVID-19 in our home (staff vs residents)
 - Confirmed:
 - Suspected:
 - Symptomatic:
 - Deaths:
- Total number of residents in the home
- Staffing situation
- Personal protective equipment
- COVID-19 testing updates
- Oxygen availability
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Virtual visits and window visits program
- Social engagement programs
- Donations needed

TIPS

Communication is essential during this crisis. Use these topics to guide the information you share with families. Provide updates on what has changed or stayed the same within each topic e.g. are you short staffed? Is physiotherapy still taking place? Think about what families want to know and provide information proactively.

Indicate when the information was last updated and who to contact for more information or to answer questions about a specific resident. Post this information on your home's website, social media, front door, and any other communication channels families access.

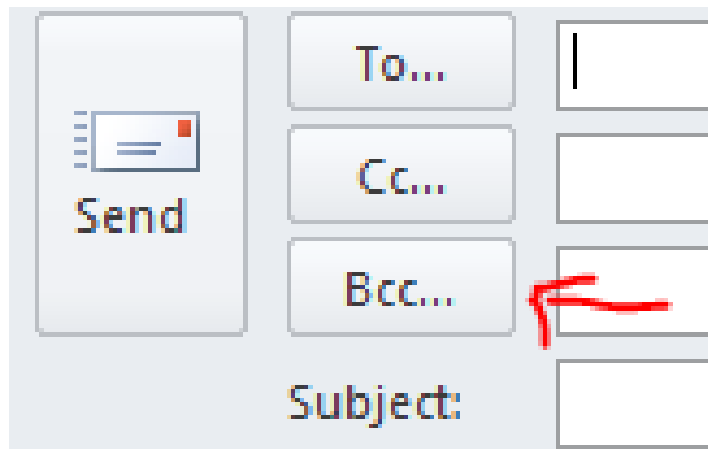
Developed in collaboration
Family Councils Ontario **CanAge.**



Home Support for the Family Council

<https://fco.ngo/>

- Due to abrupt change, some councils lost connection with members
- Potential for home to send an 'opt-in' email using blind 'cc'
 - Invite all family council members to opt-in to sharing their personal email address with the council
 - Use blind carbon copy function when sending out invitational email



DISCUSSION
COMMENTS
IDEAS!



Baycrest

Bruyère 

RIA RESEARCH
INSTITUTE
for AGING
Schlegel • UWaterloo • Conestoga

Thank you for your time!

Raquel Meyer

Manager, Ontario CLRI at Baycrest
rmeyer@baycrest.org
416-785-2500 ext. 3044

Daniel Galessiere

Educator, Ontario CLRI at Baycrest
dgalessiere@baycrest.org
416-785-2500 ext. 3110

Samantha Peck

Executive Director, Family Councils Ontario
speck@fco.ngo

