



# Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program (MFCSP)

April 2020

## SPECIAL COVID-19 NEWSLETTER

Family caregivers and the professionals who support them are critical during these times. Given recent events, EOEA has curated a list of resources, relevant readings, and stories that aim to provide assistance as well as a sprinkling of joy and positivity for all -- family caregivers, those who support them, and those they support. Thank you for all that you do for the caregivers and loved ones in your lives!

## IN THE NEWS

### Now Is Not the Time to Sever the Ties That Bind Generations

Donna Butts of Generations United provides practical suggestions to continue the fight against social isolation while maintaining social distance.

### COVID-19 Now We All Know What It's Like to Be Old and Alone

MIT AgeLab founder Joseph Coughlin writes about social distancing as an exercise in empathy, helping younger adults understand retirement and aging.

### The Coronavirus Is a Reminder That Elder-Care Workers Deserve Much Better

Haley Swenson finds that COVID-19 is exposing how the caregiving workforce is stretched beyond capacity and calls for sweeping solutions.

## RESOURCES

The John A. Hartford Foundation has assembled up-to-date guidance and information for older adults and their caregivers, including:

- [What Do Older Adults and People with Disabilities Need to Know?](#)
- [Common Questions and Answers About COVID-19 for Older Adults](#)
- [COVID-19: Tips for Dementia Caregivers](#)

AARP has released many suggestions for caregivers during COVID-19, including:

- [Caregiving in Times of Crisis](#)
- [Practical Tips for Caregivers Concerned About Coronavirus](#)
- [Caregivers and Coronavirus: Dealing With Forced Isolation](#)

Family Caregiver Alliance has compiled a list of helpful resources and articles:

- Proper [hand-washing](#) and [hand-sanitizing](#) instructions from the WHO
- FCA wants [your input](#) to tailor future educational efforts to your needs

The **Alzheimer's Association** is now offering Educational Programs and Support Groups in a virtual environment. Please check the [website](#) to learn more and encourage caregivers to call the 24/7 Helpline (1-800-272-3900).

Please continue to stay updated on the **latest state news and guidance** at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>

## *Self-Care and Uplifting Stories*

*Seven meditation tips to combat COVID-19 anxiety*

*Getting ready for the marathon: Self-Care insights for COVID-19 from Psychology Today*

*A group of teachers posted caring messages in car windows and drove past their students' homes*

*Five uplifting stories of people showing up for each other in COVID-19*

*A list of museums, zoos, and theme parks offering virtual tours*

*March Memory Madness: A list of musicals you can watch online*

*The Paris Opera performances are online!*



## CAREGIVING MANTRA

"THIS MOMENT *is as*  
TRUE *a TESTAMENT there is*  
to the HUMAN SPIRIT"

Prince Harry and  
Meghan Markle (full)

## COVID-19 CAREGIVING TIPS

### [Seven Ways to Cope With COVID-19 as a Caregiver](#)

*Being Patient's* Trish Laub explores how to reshape your caregiving philosophy, goal, and strategy during COVID-19. These include: stick with successful routines, adapt through virtual socializing, and avoid COVID-19 anxiety.

### [Tips On Dementia Caregiving in the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

Liz Seegert of *Next Avenue* provides insightful recommendations for dementia caregiving during COVID-19, including: maintain a calm environment, have a backup plan, and engage loved ones in memory units.

### [Does Everyone Over 60 Need to Take the Same Coronavirus Precautions?](#)

Judith Graham in *Kaiser Health News* delves into the question of whether health status or age matters more for COVID-19 risk. She concludes that both matter, and airing on the side of caution is prudent for all at this time.

### [Dealing With the Added Challenges of Home Care During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

Sherri Snelling in *Next Avenue* addresses a number of difficult areas of caregiving during this pandemic. She discusses safety guidelines, shifting attitudes, the challenge of social distancing, and a few caregiver-specific solutions that can relieve some of this new burden.

#### *Spreading kindness: Nine thoughtful ways to help others from [Next Avenue](#)*

1. Before you run to the grocery store, drug store or a restaurant to pick up take-out, call and ask your neighbors if they need you to pick up something for them.
2. Volunteer to walk their dog(s).
3. Would it be helpful for them if you put their mail and newspaper beside their front door?
4. Does their yard need maintenance?
5. Do they need assistance putting their trash out or bringing the empty cans back into the garage?
6. If you have extra soap, toilet paper or other staples, leave a care package at your neighbor's door.
7. If you're looking for ways to engage your children, have them make cards and crafts for the neighbors.
8. Go online and join your neighborhood group to communicate with those who live nearby.
9. Even if your neighbors say they don't need help, continue to offer.

#### *Celebrating kindness: Two personal anecdotes showcasing the impact of simple acts of kindness*

"I went to the grocery store this afternoon. As I was walking in I heard a woman yell to me from her car. I walked over and found an elderly woman and her husband. She cracked her window open a bit more, and explained to me nearly in tears that they are afraid to go in the store.

"Afraid to get sick as they are in their 80's and hear that the novel coronavirus is affecting older people disproportionately. And that they don't have family around to help them out. Through the crack in the window she handed me a \$100 bill and a grocery list, and asked if I would be willing to buy her groceries. I bought the groceries and placed them in her trunk, and gave her back the change. She told me she had been sitting in the car for nearly 45 min before I had arrived, waiting to ask the right person for help.

"I know it's a time of hysteria and nerves, but offer to help anyone you can. Not everyone has people to turn to."

--[Rebecca Mehra](#)--

"I've been feeling pretty helpless watching the news. Maybe you have too? I wanted to do something about it, so I've made a postcard that I'll be posting to my older neighbours as this progresses (after washing my hands!)."

"If just one person feels less lonely or isolated when faced with this pandemic, then I'll feel better about it (I hope!) Coronavirus is scary. Let's make kindness go viral."

--[Becky Wass](#)--