



# Supporting Your Loved Ones From the Outside

## 2 Sisters Senior Living Advisors

So many of us have older loved ones living away from us. They may live in their own home or apartment or in an assisted living or nursing home facility. Because of the pandemic, and the limitations on social distancing, many seniors are feeling lonely, claustrophobic and anxious. There are steps that we can take to keep our loved ones as comfortable and engaged with us as possible. Here are some suggestions from the 2 Sisters Senior Living Advisors.

### **Create a Communications Plan**

It's really important to establish a regular communications schedule with your loved one. A daily call after breakfast, a weekly FaceTime Sunday afternoon... whatever you decide, if you create and stick to a schedule, you'll give your loved one something to look forward to. That is key!

### **Engage Individually**

Many families default to having a single, everyone-at-once call with grandma. Those are fine, of course. But, by asking family members to get in touch individually as well, you both increase the number of interactions and give grandchildren the opportunity for one-on-one time.

One helpful activity to keep the conversations rolling is to provide children with a fun question to ask their grandparents: “Tell me about your grandparents.” “If you could live anywhere in the world, where would that be?” “What was your favorite pet of all time?”

## Continue Doing Things Together

You may not be able to come together physically yet, **but you can still recreate, virtually, many of the activities you used to enjoy as a family.**

You can play online games. You can do Yoga or other gentle movements. You can eat dinner, watch a movie, or enjoy a cocktail together.

Pre-Covid, these common, even mundane sorts of activities made up many of our interactions with your parents and grandparents. We all miss those, so we are all trying to recreate them as best we can with the wonderful and free technology that is now readily available.

## Send Things

You may not be able to enter a community, but your packages can. Amazon is delivering, as is the post office, UPS, and many local businesses. In some cases, you can drop things off yourself.

Send food, books, photographs, and care packages with fun and interesting items. Be creative—it need not be expensive. The pleasure is the arrival of an unexpected treat and the reminder that those they love are thinking of them.

## Final Thoughts

Today, our parents and older adult loved ones need us more than ever. Most of us are doing all we can to ensure their physical and safety needs are well taken care of. But, don't stop there. **The missing human touch can take a toll as well.** Keep the connections strong and meaningful by putting these or other ideas into practice.

