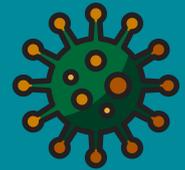


# WAYS TO HELP THE PEOPLE WE CARE FOR ENGAGE WITH SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY



During the COVID-19 public health emergency, people who are struggling to cope may find it harder to engage with services as certain behaviours are seen as being part of the new norm (e.g. social isolation). How can carers help people to engage and accept support?

## 1 Acknowledge the limitations of the current situation, while enquiring about their wellbeing:

Having a script or phrase can be useful: "I know at the moment you can't leave the house and you are saying that you are OK. You don't seem yourself, so I am worried that something is going on for you."

## 3 Use facts to gently challenge beliefs/behaviour that is creating a barrier to them engaging with services:

"COVID-19 may provide a reason for you to say no to some activities or services that previously you have found helpful. I wonder what difference it would make to re-engage in... even though COVID-19 has provided a reason to stop and take a break for a while."

"I know handwashing has become something we're all doing more of. I also know this is something you've worried about before and I'm noticing that while we're all handwashing a little more, that you seem very distressed about it, which is why I think you could benefit from further support."

## 2 Emphasise your care and concern for the person's wellbeing, while framing their engagement with services as part of this concern:

"With what is going on right now, I want you to be doing as well as you can, and being able to access these services can help make things better/easier for you".

## 4 Acknowledge the limitations of the current situation and that we all need to find new ways to be able to manage our way in the world:

"I hear that you feel safest/more comfortable staying at home, but the advice is you could start to attend these appointments again, which I remember you used to find really helpful. Can we talk about what steps we can take to keep you safe while starting to do so again?"

The scripts above are examples, it is important that you put them in your own words, so they are genuine and help to strengthen your connection

Sometimes when the people we care for refuse to access support services, it can be frustrating, but try to be as patient and forgiving as you can, accessing help can be difficult for most of us.

Be aware that COVID-19 may provide a reason for a person not to engage when they can. Keep in mind as their carer you may have the relational credit to challenge this in a direct, gentle, and supportive way. Continuing to gently raise your concerns and offer assistance will be more helpful than badgering, arguing or issuing threats.

If you need immediate support and assistance, including advice about the above, please call Access Mental Health on **1800 629 354** or **02 6205 1065**



Remember to also take care of yourself during this time and to reach out to your support network as well. Taking time to care for your wellbeing is an important part of being a carer. To support people when they are unwell we need to be well ourselves. For ideas about how to look after yourself, look at the Carers ACT website [www.carersact.org.au](http://www.carersact.org.au) or call the Carer Gateway on **1800 422 737**.

### Acknowledgement:

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