

# Macon County Health Department

## June-July 2020

### Caregiver Advisory Newsletter

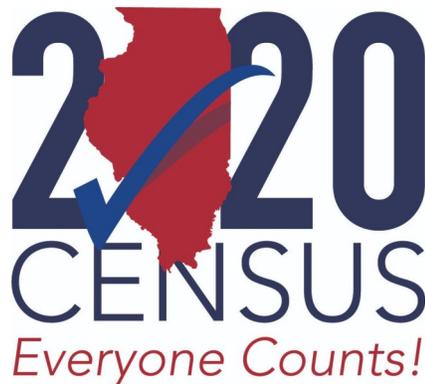
**“I Feel Lonely. Can I Talk to You?”**

**Friendship Line: (800) 971-0016**

The Friendship Line is available to share a conversation with someone who cares. The Friendship Line is also a crisis intervention hotline providing around the clock crisis support services including:

- Suicide intervention
- Providing emotional support
- Elder abuse prevention and counseling
- Giving well-being checks
- Grief support through assistance and reassurance
- Information and referrals

Institute on Aging’s 24 hour toll-free accredited crisis line for persons aged 60 years and older and adults living with disabilities.



**Have you responded to your 2020 Census Questionnaire?**

It's not too late!!! Need help? **Give us a call at 423-6550.** It only takes a few minutes and will help with allocation of funds for local essential programs.

## Fun Home Activities: Games, Puzzles, Audiobooks, Music, Cooking Shows, Crafts and More

We are all looking for ways to entertain ourselves and engage our minds and bodies while we stay safe at home. Here are some ways to keep people of all ages from getting bored, restless or agitated.

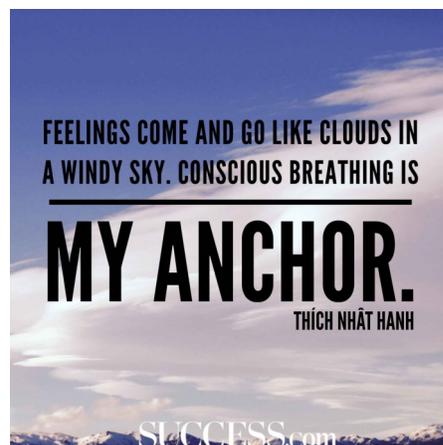
1. Play fun games and puzzles. Find jigsaw puzzles that are right for your older adult's cognitive or physical ability level. Large print crossword puzzles are fun and easy on the eyes. You can make a simple bean bag toss game from a cardboard box or simply play bean bag toss together. Classic games do not go out of style. Consider games such as checkers, connect four or Yahtzee. Consider simple card games such as War, Go Fish, Crazy Eights and Gin Rummy.
2. Listen to books, radio shows, and podcasts. Hearing the newspaper, books, magazines or even old letters aloud can be an enjoyable pastime for many older adults. Find things that capture their interest, but are not too complex to follow. Audiobooks allow your older adult to listen to almost any book he likes. You can access audiobooks from a retailer, the free National Library Service, home delivery or find them online for free. Sports fans may enjoy listening to re-broadcast games on the radio or television. Some older adults may enjoy listening to radio talk shows, spiritual broadcasts, science and other programs. Podcasts that cover almost any topic you could imagine are available for free online.
3. Enjoy music. Play their favorite songs or albums, especially music from their youth. You can use favorite songs as a fun way to help them reminisce over fond memories. Encourage them to sing along with songs they know. Tune the radio to a station that plays the types of music they enjoy.
4. Watch cooking shows. Even if you don't plan on doing a lot of cooking, there is something fun and relaxing about watching someone else cook. This can also open up opportunities to reminisce about meals they enjoyed while growing up.
5. Have fun with crafts and hobbies. Coloring is an activity that can be adapted for any level. Hundreds of free color pages are available online. Origami is a fun art form that can be adaptable to any skill level. The Spruce Crafts has free tutorials. Indoor gardening is a fun project that can bring a bit of nature inside. It is fun to watch new leaves sprout and a nice way to ensure you have some fresh greens and herbs on hand.
6. Try relaxation techniques. Changes in lifestyle are stressful for everyone. You might try these free techniques to relax mind and body. [Do Nothing for 2 Minutes](http://www.donothingfor2minutes.com) ([www.donothingfor2minutes.com](http://www.donothingfor2minutes.com)) - just listen to relaxing waves. [3Brief Meditations](https://www.headspace.com/covid-19) (<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>) - scroll down to see 3 meditation options (3 and 10 minutes). [Mindful breathing meditation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmfFUDkjAq0) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmfFUDkjAq0>) - a 5 minute video that helps you relax by focusing on your breathing.
7. Listen to or document life stories. Hearing or recording someone's life stories is a meaningful and rewarding activity to enjoy together. Ask open-ended questions about their lives and simply listen or record their responses. They could even write some memoirs of their own if able.
8. Stay active with senior-friendly exercise. Exercise is a great way to help maintain strength and balance as well as stay active and boost mood and the immune system. Chair yoga and Tai Chi are great senior-friendly exercise routines.
9. Learn something fun and interesting. For those who love to learn, there are many free, high quality courses available online.

## Managing Stress for Caregivers: 7 Calming Techniques for Stressful Situations

Providing care for an older adult is a stressful responsibility. Using a variety of techniques to reduce and manage stress helps prevent daily frustrations from becoming overwhelming and causing caregiver burnout. Here are seven stress relief activities that have been found to be effective.

1. **Plan ahead.** Come up with strategies so you will know what to do if a tough situation arises. Decide ahead of time “if X happens, I will do Y.” This will help you feel more in control and give you confidence that you will be able to handle the situation.
2. **Focus on breathing.** If you are feeling anxious or upset, practice breathing in a slow and controlled manner. Breathe in slowly through pursed lips into the belly area and exhale slowly, taking longer to exhale than to inhale.
3. **Exercise.** When you are physically active, you stimulate endorphins which are a great stress reliever. Even a few minutes of physical activity to get your blood moving will do great things for your mood.
4. **Avoid asking “what if?”** The more time you spend worrying about every possible outcome, the more time you will spend focused on negative thoughts. Force yourself to take a break from worry, even just for 10 minutes to help break out of a negative rut. Try turning your worry into something productive.
5. **Focus on the positives.** Keep a go to list of positive thoughts and things you are grateful for. In times of stress, you can immediately focus on them. When you put positive thoughts into your head, you shift your mindset away from negativity and instantly improve your mood.
6. **Reject negative self-talk.** When you are stressed, the voice in your head becomes extra negative toward yourself. When you notice this happening, identify those harsh self-criticisms as just thought, not facts.
7. **Forgive.** Nobody is perfect. When you hold onto blame toward yourself or others, you only add to your stress and frustration.

Adapted from [dailycaring.com](http://dailycaring.com)





***Macon County Health Department  
Starting Point  
Caregiver Advisory Services***

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