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## Safer-At-Home Tips and Support

### Keeping yourself and your loved one busy

T.V. will get old, constant watching of the news may cause anxiety and fear. It is very important for you at this time to stay busy. Below are some activities that you and/or your loved one can do to stay busy and/or feel productive as well.

- Organize something in the house, a drawer, a closet a room
- Do a puzzle
- Keep connected with friends and other family members, make phone calls, use "Zoom", face time or google hangouts if you have internet service

**Keeping busy for those with Dementia/Alzheimer's;** Think of something your loved one used to like to do, or enjoy, and help them to engage in an activity that is similar to this if he or she is unable to engage in this. For example:

If your loved one used to like housework, perhaps give them a simple task, and let them know how much you appreciate it. Things like folding washcloths, or sorting socks by color, wiping the table down or even sweeping, will give them a sense of purpose (which we all need to feel good about ourselves) and keep them busy. You can have them fold the same washcloths or sort the same socks multiple times if this seems to make them happy, or less anxious. It doesn't have to be washcloths or socks, it can be anything you can think of that will keep them busy and increase their feelings of mastery and productivity.

If your loved one used to like to garden, or still gardens, let them plant some seeds, or pull weeds, or water the garden.

Make bread, and ask if they would knead it for you. Have them help in the kitchen within their abilities. Perhaps take the silverware out and ask them to organize it.

If you have a box of buttons, you can ask them to sort the buttons, by color or shape, or size. Sorting of items is a good task to keep them engaged. Be sure to thank them when they are done, let them know how much of a help they have been.

### **For those with dementia/Alzheimer's disease**

**Conversation starters.** It's important to remember when having a conversation with someone who has dementia that very often their long-term memory is more (sometimes much more) intact than their short term memory. When having a conversation with them, talking with them about things that happened a long time ago vs. talking about the now will create a more meaningful connection for both of you. It will help you to feel more connected and them to feel more competent and secure. There are a lot of prompts below for conversation starters, but don't feel like you have to ask every one, feel free to let the conversation go where it goes, your loved one may surprise you and tell you things you never knew!

Give it a try. Here are some conversation starters:

- Tell me about your first car, what color was it, how old were you when you got it. How did you get it? Did you save and buy it, was it a gift, did you build it. What is one of your favorite memories about your car. What made it special, where did you go in it? What ended up happening to it. If you have access to a computer, look up the car they describe and show it to them, this may also serve to spark memories and more detailed conversation.
- Tell me about a pet you had when you were a child. When did you get it, what kind of animal/breed was it, what was its name. How old were you when you got it. Did you take care of it, or did someone else, tell me a funny story about the pet. Did you want it? What color was it. Do you remember what its fur felt like. Did it do any tricks?
- Who was your best friend when you were 8 years old? What was their name? What kinds of things did you like to do. How did you meet them, at school, the neighborhood? Tell me a funny story about the two of you? Did you sleep over at each other's house?
- Tell me about your favorite television show, why did you like it, did your whole family watch it? What do you remember about the actors of the

show, who was your favorite actor/character on the show, and why did you like them?

- What sports did you play when you were young? Were you on a team? What position did you play? Do you remember a game that was especially memorable, why was it memorable? Did you earn any trophies? What did you most like about the game?