

# WISDOM'S CALL

Issue #1, April 2020



## Managing Caregiving During Coronavirus

Being a caregiver for a friend or family member takes patience and can test your strength on a good day. Now that our leaders and healthcare staff are working to protect Tribal communities from the impact of the Covid19 Coronavirus, caregivers like you face even more challenges. To help you manage changes in routine and the impacts of Coronavirus, we are sending out a series of newsletters with tips, helpful resources and activities for you and your loved ones. We are here to support you and help your loved ones maintain the highest quality of life during upcoming changes.

From our family to yours,  
Be Well!

*Aniwahya Consulting Services  
Working in partnership with  
Native American communities  
to serve our Elders and those  
with adaptive needs.*

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You may be hearing a lot of different information about the Covid19 Coronavirus such as “shelter in place” or “self-isolation”. Here is a list of important terms you may need to know about to make the best decisions for you and your loved ones:

- **Social Distancing** – Reducing or eliminating person-to-person direct contact by doing things like staying home and avoiding gatherings like church, school and going to public places.
- **Self-Isolation** – Staying home and avoiding contact with other people
- **Shelter-In Place** – When everyone in the community must stay at home except to take care of Essential Activities
- **Essential Activities** – Getting supplies or services for your family like groceries or medications. This includes going to work if your job has been included as Essential such as healthcare workers, certain government employees or those who care for Elders or those with disabilities.

**Being out of the normal routine can be hard on everyone. Try to stay connected to family and friends through regular phone calls, letters or the internet if it is available.**

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#### **DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?**

Is there an Emergency Plan for you or your loved one?

What will you do if someone in your house gets sick during the COVID shelter-in place?

We are here to help!

Read “**What to Do If Someone Gets Sick**” on page 3 for tips to prepare in case you or your loved one falls ill.

## How to Stay Healthy at Home

**WELL Balanced – Wise Elders Living Longer**  
Part of staying healthy is to stay moving to the best of your ability. Exercise, even in small amounts, has many benefits including increasing circulation, lowering blood pressure, improving mood and much more. These exercises can be done at your own pace. For those who are chair bound, light stretching, and arm movements can be performed instead.

The **WELL-Balanced** program has three booklets available for you to use at home: the **Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced**. Each program contains movements targeted at helping Elders and others build strength and increase flexibility in a way this is gentle to the body.

You can print a copy of the program booklets directly from: <https://www.nrcnaa.org/well-balanced>



Even walking around the house or practicing sitting and standing up can help Elders by keeping them mobile.

**To reduce the risk of you or your family becoming ill or infecting someone else, only one person should go out for supplies, shopping, or other essential errands if possible.**

**Take precautions such as wearing a mask and wiping down the handles of carts and doors with sanitizing wipes.**

**When you return home, wash your hands following the 20 Second Rule before interacting with your family or preparing food.**



## Stopping the Spread of Germs

### TIPS FOR HEALTHY HANDS

Handwashing is the #1 way to reduce infections and stop the spread of germs. Elders and others with memory problems, may forget to wash their hands and will need to be reminded.

- Consider taping a note by the sink reminding your loved one to wash their hands
- Make sure that everyone washes their hands before serving food and eating
- If anyone becomes ill, make sure hands are washed more frequently
- Use hand sanitizer when available if anyone is unable to wash hands

## Eating for Health



It's important to make sure you and your family are getting nutritious meals. Eating the right foods helps you and your loved ones stay healthy.

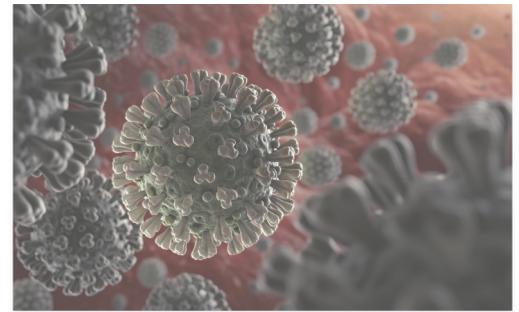
Turn to Page 5 for groceries, supplies and other services in your community

## What to Do If Someone Gets Sick

**You or your loved one may get sick while sheltering in your home. This article lists tips for making a plan to be prepared if you or your loved one becomes ill.**

One of the best things to do during the coronavirus outbreak is to make an effective plan. You will need to know what steps to take if the person you are caring for becomes ill and also how best to prepare if you are the one who is sick. The following tips will help you put together important information and supplies as well as emergency contacts to help you care for you and your loved ones.

- Create an Emergency Plan with the Elder you are caring for with the names of doctors, illnesses, medications, allergies and emergency contacts.
- Call the pharmacy and ask about (1) increased supply of medication, most pharmacies and insurance carriers will fill a 90-day supply at a time and (2) ask about delivery service for medication
- Contact primary care providers to see if they will hold visits over the phone or online if you have internet access.
- Contact your Tribal Aging program and check Tribal websites for a list of available drop off or pick-up services for food, meals and other supplies or services.
- Make a plan for what to do if you, the caregiver, becomes ill with alternate contacts (family, friends, Tribal program help)
- Keep a basket or container of supplies such as a thermometer, cough or cold over the counter medicines such as cough drops, sore throat spray or lozenges, Tylenol or Advil, ice packs and Kleenex. This will keep everything in one place so you are not rushing to find items you may use the most
- Prep a small first aid kit with items such as band aids, gauze wrap and tape, antibiotic cream, alcohol wipes, ice pack and, pain relief cream, tweezers, disposable gloves if available. If you have a diabetic in your home, consider keeping a small container of glucose tablets or similar supplies if blood sugars drop unexpectedly.
- Plan for a space, such as a bedroom, for the sick person to stay and not expose others in the house if possible. It is important to have a wastebasket or small trash container for used supplies and tissues to be thrown away to prevent the spread of germs.
- Wash your hands often as the caregiver and help the ill person use hand sanitizer when available, especially before meals
- Clean and disinfect commonly used services regularly. Some examples are doorknobs, telephones and cell phones, remote controls, keyboards on laptops/computers and surfaces where food is prepared and eaten
- If you are the caregiver and become ill, wear a mask and use disposable gloves if possible when taking care of your loved one.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.



## Is it Coronavirus?

COVID19 the name of the upper respiratory disease with symptoms similar to a cold or flu caused by a virus called SARS-CoV2. This is a new type of coronavirus causing infections around the world.

Because no one has had this virus before, Elders and anyone with other health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma, are at a high risk for a more severe illness or death.

While some healthy and young people have only mild symptoms such as being achy, slight fever and a dry cough, they can pass the illness to someone who is in danger of becoming seriously ill.

### ***So, what do you do if someone in your house has symptoms that might mean a COVID19 infection?***

Help that person avoid contact with others in the house where possible. Take their temperature and watch for a high fever (anything over 103°) and cough. Should these symptoms develop, contact your local clinic or hospital.

Tell medical staff the symptoms and get their instructions BEFORE taking yourself or anyone else to the hospital. This will reduce everyone's risk of infection and ensure that you have the most current instructions for care. Staff will be able to tell you when and if you should come in as well as get you set-up with testing.



## Keeping Spirits Strong

*Caring for the Mind and Spirit is Important for Overall Health*

We all feel worried during an emergency. Everyone is feeling stress over finances, health and keeping their loved ones safe. The world is grieving for the changes all around us and it is important to take time to honor our feelings.

Taking care of the emotional health of you and your loved ones will help you be able to make clear decisions during this emergency and be better prepared.

Here are some ways to honor our bodies and our minds during this time of sheltering in place.

**Caring for the Body** – Try to feed yourself and your family good food, get sleep when you can and do gentle exercises such as walking or stretching. Avoid drugs and alcohol which can make your body sick.

**Uplifting the Spirit** – Find a religious or mindful practice that feels right for you. Take a few moments of each day just to take a few slow, deep breaths in and out. Try meditating or sitting quietly for 15 minutes at the start or end of the day. Light smudge or say prayers that you find comforting.

**Protect the Mind** – Try reading books to your loved ones and for yourself. Limit the time you and loved ones spend watching or listening to news and social media stories about the coronavirus. Watching images and hearing stories of crisis and tragedy over and over can increase stress, depression, and anxiety.

**Honor Your Feelings** – Recognize when you need a break. Taking a short walk, standing on the porch to breath in fresh air or just having a phone call with a friend or family members can help you stay connected and balanced.

## Caring for Those Who Once Cared for Us, Helping Elders with the Challenges of Isolation

Keeping Elders safe during the COVID19 coronavirus outbreak means staying inside and away from others as much as possible. Elders may already be alone due to rural locations, illness or disability and inability of family or friends nearby. There are many ways we can help our loved ones cope with their fears and battle the challenges of being in isolation. Read on to find tips and suggestions for helping our Elders remain connected to the community, to us and to each other.

## Ways to Keep Elders Connected

Staying active means more than just exercise. Keeping Elders engaged in pastimes such as traditional crafts, cooking and other activities they enjoy can help reduce stress, anxiety and help relieve feelings of loneliness and isolation.

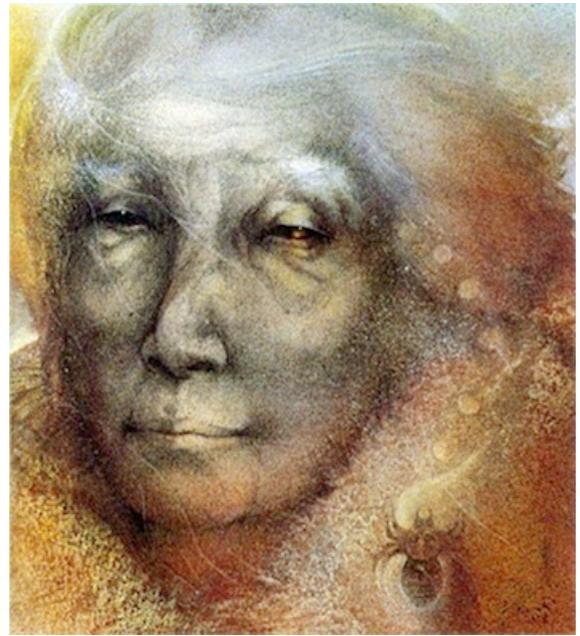
Here are a few suggestions for projects and activities to keep loved ones involved and focused on happier or meaningful tasks.

- Beadwork - Some Tribal Aging programs may have supplies you can use for Elders to create projects.
- Puzzles – Many people enjoy puzzles, and these can also be a way for Elders to play with grandchildren who are now home from school.
- Woodworking projects – A small project such as building a birdhouse or bird feeder
- Cooking – Even those who are unable to prepare meals are able to help with smaller tasks such as mixing dough or cutting out cookies
- Story telling – Set up a time to record your loved one on a phone or other device telling traditional stories or sharing memories of their youth

**Dementia and Alzheimer's** disease presents another level of challenges for caregivers during the present emergency. This corner of our newsletter will be devoted to tips, frequently asked questions and other information specific to our loved ones with cognitive decline.

One of the best ways to manage Alzheimer's and dementia is to have a regular routine. Now that Elders and others at high-risk of becoming ill are being advised to shelter in place, those routines are disrupted. This can lead to more confusion, irritability and other behaviors as our loved one tries to find ways to express how they are feeling.

With everyone trying to figure out their new normal under shelter in place advisories, travel bans, school closing and possible loss of employment; it can be much harder to keep our patience. Here are a few Dos and Don'ts tips for Dementia and Alzheimer's to help you get over some of the bumps in the road:



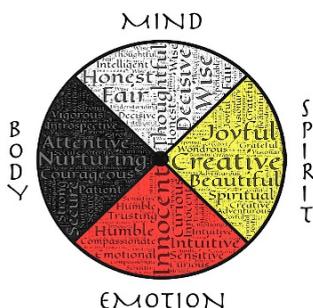
Artist: Susan Seddon-Boulet

### DO:

- Tape up instructions for hand washing, mealtimes and even a daily schedule to serve as a reminder
- Practice kindness and patience. This is a hard time for everyone. If you find yourself losing your temper, walk away and take a few deep breaths.
- Go to where or when they are. If your loved one insists it is your birthday (or theirs!) go with the flow. There is no harm in making a card and eating cake!
- Try to create a playlist on a CD, cassette tape or electronic device of their favorite songs. Music has been shown to reduce the need for medications, increase interaction and simply bring calm and joy.
- Watch for signs of increased confusion or dramatic changes in behavior. These may be signs of other illness that should be reported to a healthcare provider.

### DON'T:

- Ask "Do you remember..." questions. It causes embarrassment as well as sadness to Elders with Alzheimer's or dementia when they are asked if they remember events, places or people that they likely, do not or are unable to clearly recall.
- Argue, yell at or confront people with memory loss. This is more likely to get an agitated response, leading to more upset or aggressive behavior. If your loved one is insisting they need to go out to the store, try to distract them with a treat or activity rather than get into an argument.
- Expect your loved one to understand what is happening with the coronavirus restrictions. It is ok to make up reasons for why you are unable to have visitors or why they cannot go for an outing.



**In Case of a Mental Health or Substance Abuse Emergency Call the National Help Line at**

**1-800-985-5990**





# Local Resources



If you need help finding resources in your area. Contact Tribal Aging at:  
**INSERT CONTACT**

## HOW TO GET WHAT YOU NEED

Services & Supplies	Who to Contact & Where to Go
Groceries	
Prepared Meals	
Sanitary and Cleaning Supplies	

If you have question you would like us to answer in our next issue, or your own tips and stories; please send us an email to [Service@Aniwahya.com](mailto:Service@Aniwahya.com).