

## **COVID-19 – Providing Comfort and Safe Care**

In the current pandemic, residents in seniors' homes and long-term care facilities are particularly at risk for complications and death. Measures have been taken to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading the virus as much as possible.

However, steps taken to slow the spread of the virus may create risks for caregivers, including the following:

- Stress and anxiety about catching the virus or spreading it to others.
- The absences of residents' family members and volunteers, or other staff members.
- An increase in residents' behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD); this stems from physical isolation, boredom, social distancing and the fact that caregivers are wearing personal protective equipment.

To address the needs of caregivers and residents, ASSTSAS has prepared a checklist to help you remember the basic approaches and attitudes that will help you establish a relationship and provide comfort and safe care.

For more information, download the *Relationship between Caregiver and Client* fact sheet by clicking here: <https://asstsas.qc.ca/publication/relationship-between-caregiver-and-client-ft19a>

If you have any questions, please contact us.

We're here for you.

Relationship-Centred Care Approach Team

## **Checklist for Providing Comfort and Safe Care**

### **Before providing care**

#### Prepare

- Get details on the resident's condition before going to the resident's room
- Apply the recommended precautions (hand hygiene, personal protective equipment if required)
- Prepare the material required for providing care

### **While providing care**

#### Establish and maintain the relationship

- Attract the resident's attention and make them aware that you are coming in (e.g., knock on the resident's door)
- Establish direct eye contact with the resident, from a distance of two metres
- Introduce yourself, explaining that you're there to help
- Approach and place yourself so that your eyes are at the same level as the resident's, while keeping a minimum distance of one metre
- Position yourself beside the resident, rather than face-to-face, to avoid the risk of droplet transmission
- Place your hand on the resident's shoulder or forearm
- Smile, be calm, and use gentle gestures and reassuring words

A mask makes it even harder for a resident to recognize a caregiver and understand what's happening. The resident may recognize your voice, and your explanations and gestures are additional guides. The smile in your eyes speaks for you, even behind a mask and visor, conveying caring and calmness.

- Explain what you are doing or will do (give simple and clear directions)



- Be attentive to the resident's feedback and adjust your verbal and non-verbal communication accordingly

If the resident is **anxious** or **agitated**, listen carefully, be reassuring and use diversion to turn the resident's attention to something that is pleasant or meaningful. For instance, you could ask the resident to help with the care being provided, to hold a washcloth, or the side of the bed, or a stuffed toy, etc.

If the resident **resists** or **refuses** the care being provided, stop and review the situation. Adjust what you are doing: if possible, come back later, ask for help from a co-worker, introduce a diversion, etc.

- When care is being provided by two caregivers, only one caregiver speaks at a time. The person speaking explains what is being done, gives simple instructions, is reassuring and encouraging, and acts as a diversion

### Conclude

- Finish providing care and leave the resident on a positive note, mentioning when the next visit will be
- Make sure that the resident is comfortable and able to be alone
- Apply the recommended precautions (removal of personal protective equipment and hand hygiene)