

Seniors are at the Heart of Hospice of Santa Barbara

In this challenging time, Hospice of Santa Barbara wants our senior friends and family to know that we are here.

Last week, we activated our social distancing plan—transitioning to therapy and services by phone—to do all we can to limit exposure to seniors, those with underlying health issues, and our medical community. However, we know that many in our community are facing anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

Social distancing has had a cruel impact on many of the elderly including those who live in senior living communities and nursing homes. Most of these communities have closed to visiting friends and families. Many other seniors are staying inside their homes. This has created additional isolation. Here are suggestions for elders to stay socially connected:

- Learn new technology that connects you with family and friends. Most options such as FaceTime and Skype are very easy to use. If it seems daunting, ask a friend or family member for a quick tutorial.
- Watch news sparingly. While watching movies on TV and Netflix is a great way to keep us entertained, don't get locked into habit of endlessly watching "breaking news" on the 24-hour news channels. This is not good for any of our mental health. Typically, not much changes hour to hour. Stay informed but 30 minutes at the start and end of the day is more than enough to know what is happening.
- If you are in a senior living facility, share quality time with other residents; maybe some you haven't gotten a chance to know. Human connections are health connections!
- Call some of those people you've been meaning to call for a while to catch up or check in with them. They might be feeling lonely too.

Social distancing does not mean social isolation, and even a potentially deadly virus should not force us to be alone. Now, more than ever, people need to find smart ways to stay connected.

As the crisis continues to unfold, Hospice of Santa Barbara will look for new ways to serve our community as needs emerge. We will be updating our website regularly with new information about our services.

From all of us at Hospice of Santa Barbara, stay healthy, active and connected.

To reach Hospice of Santa Barbara log on to www.hospiceofsantabarbara.org or call 805-563-8820.