



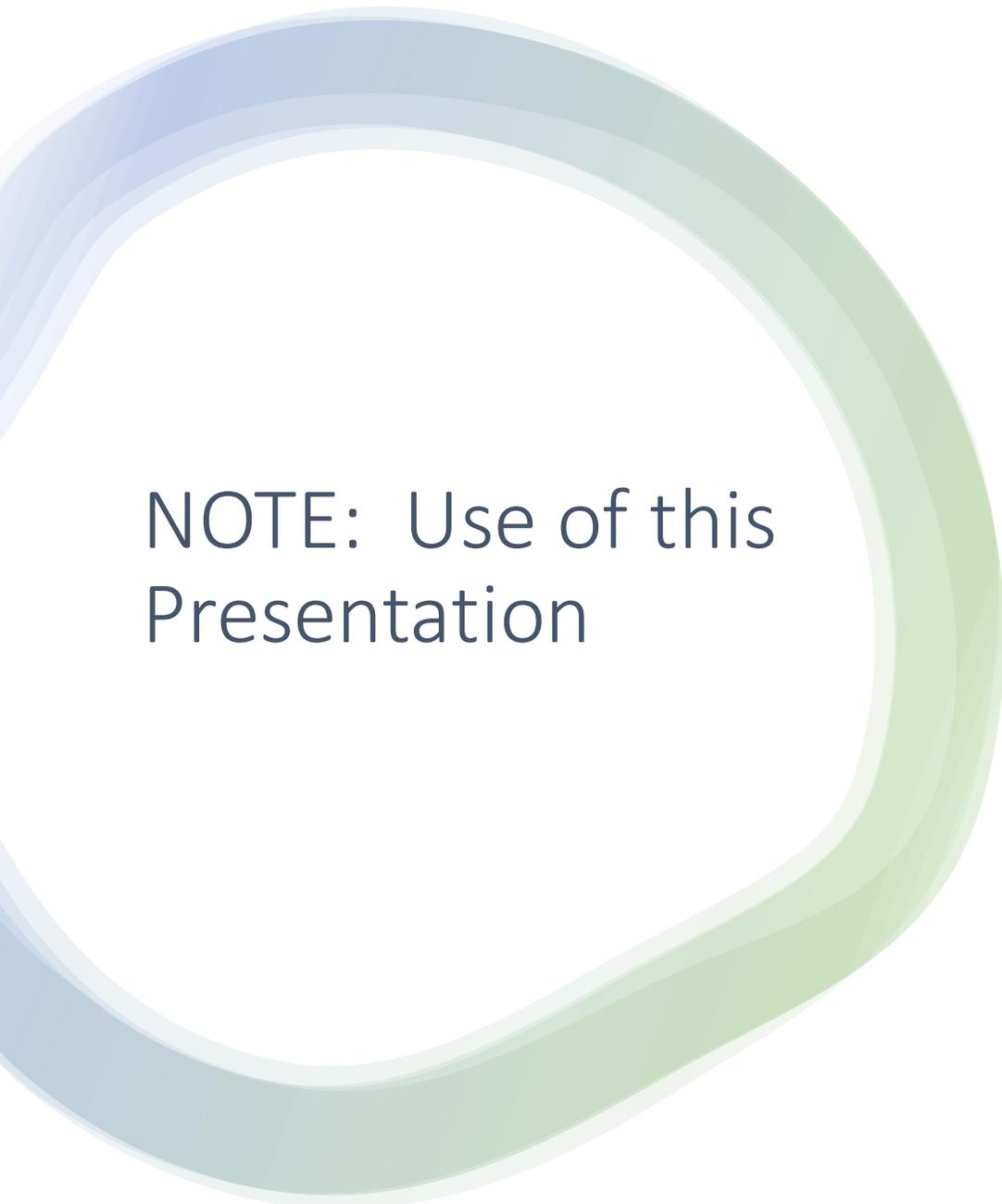
Compassionate,
Essential Care
Visits – Part II
Essential
Opportunities

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Bureau of Assisted Living Forum

August 4, 2020



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Residents want:

The same things all of us do: life back to “normal.”

The chance to say good-bye, to hear the voice of a husband or wife, sister or brother, son or daughter, when they think it might be their last chance.

To sit outside and feel the sun, breathe fresh air, and only hear the one voice of a friend instead of the many voices of others who can't move about freely.

To get back to living life without so many rules. To not be afraid.

To be able to celebrate again; to hold new babies, go to a wedding, go to church.

GRATITUDE

turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity...it makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

-Melody Beattie

As of today:

- Current guidance still says that the safest approach is to stay home, continue to limit visits and outings, especially with transmission rates currently increasing in many communities.
- For assisted living communities, DHS has posted the Safer Visits in Assisted Living Facilities guidance –
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/ltc.htm#-safer-visits-in-assisted-living-facilities>
- Regardless of the guidance provided, each home will need to set its own policies, its own pace for when and how to relax visitation restrictions.
- As of today, knowing what we know about how the virus is transmitted and how to mitigate risk, can you begin to plan for allowing essential and compassionate visits to residents who need to see their families?

What's Your Plan?

- Set your priorities:
 - What is the Covid status of your home, your community?
 - What residents need what types of visits most urgently?
 - What can be done most easily and safely?
- What do you need:
 - A system, including a method for evaluation, a back-up plan
 - Cooperation and communication to make the system operate consistently
 - PPE that is appropriate for your residents' needs
 - Environmental adaptations
 - Buy-in to succeed
 - Attitudes of hopefulness
- Who do you need:
 - Input from residents, family members, staff
 - Collaboration with local public health, other community partners, DQA, Ombudsman, MCOs, ICAs

Essential Opportunities

The daughter of a resident calls you, the Director, to report that the resident's husband had passed away unexpectedly. She had spoken with her mom, who hadn't been able to see her husband for almost 5 months due to Covid restrictions on visitors. Your building has been very careful, has had no cases of Covid among residents or staff. The resident wants very much to go to the funeral of her husband, is willing to self-quarantine when she returns, if necessary, will wear a face covering at all times, and will not spend any more time at the funeral than for the service itself.

How do you respond? Please choose all that apply:

- I give the resident my sympathy but advise against her attending her husband's funeral.
- I call the funeral home and ask what their arrangements are for infection control at funerals.
- I tell the resident that she just cannot go to the funeral, that she will put everyone else here at risk, and she may end up being discharged if she goes out.
- I confirm with the resident and, with the resident's permission, her daughter, all that she is willing to do while out at her husband's funeral. I also encourage her to avoid accepting any hugs, handshakes or kisses, and make sure she has hand sanitizer she can take with her.

Essential Opportunities

You have a couple of residents who you have started to worry about as the restrictions on visitation continue into its 5th month. They are seeming to lose weight, seem depressed, are less interested in the virtual visits with family and friends that you offer. They are exceedingly quiet, not caring to watch TV, not coming out of their rooms to even see what might be happening in the hallways; they just sit and look out the window, or sleep a lot. One resident recently told his caregiver that he thinks he'll die of a broken heart before Covid can get him. What do you do? Please note all that apply:

- Have staff try to spend more time with these residents, trying to engage them socially.
- Continue to try to get them to accept the virtual visits, or ask if there is someone else they want to talk to.
- Ask them what's wrong.
- Have a staff meeting to see if there might be a way to manage compassionate/essential visits with a key family member for each resident.
- Report to the residents' doctor(s). Ask if it might be time to think about hospice if the resident thinks he might die.
- Stay in touch with the residents' family members to see what else you could be doing to "cheer them up."

Essential Opportunities

The daughter of one of your residents calls you to talk about her plans for her mother's upcoming birthday party. The resident has a large family, and the plan is for about 25 people to visit and join her party on your patio. The daughter is planning cake and ice cream, balloons and a couple of her family members will do some music. You know that some of the resident's family members are not willing to wear masks, and the family is not good at maintaining physical distancing. You also have other residents who would like to be able to use the patio, if even to attend the party. You do not have any cases of Covid in the building, but the community spread is high and increasing every day.

How do you respond to the daughter?

- This plan will not work. Period. Not negotiable.
- You ask if the plan can be scaled back: just a couple of guests (no other residents), cupcakes instead of a cake, try to limit to 20 minutes so other residents can also use the patio, everyone who attends must agree to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing.
- In addition to the above, you suggest other ways the family could celebrate their mom's birthday: encourage all of her family and friends to send cards and notes, offer to share the party with others by Skype from a tablet, suggest a parade of cars with signs and balloons that drive by and wish the resident a happy birthday.

Essential Opportunities

You have a resident with mild dementia who had been going out for car rides with her daughter pre-Covid. With the restrictions on visits the daughter stopped taking her mom out for a bit, but is now demanding to be able to take her mom out again. You know from prior conversations that the daughter doesn't believe Covid is a real disease, she thinks its seriousness has been blown out of proportion and she thinks there's no good proof that wearing a mask does any good. You agreed last week to a car ride. The daughter kept her mom out for 5 hours, and you heard from others who saw them in the community that they spent most of the time in a bar, visiting with other patrons and not wearing a face covering. The daughter was obviously intoxicated when she brought her mom back, and the resident said she never wanted to do that again.

The daughter calls again this AM, and said she'll pick her mom up tomorrow after lunch for another ride. How do you respond?

- I tell her that she can't take her mom out anymore until Covid ends.
- I tell her that her mom said she doesn't want to go, and it's her right to decline. I give the daughter the ombudsman's number to talk about her mother's rights.
- I tell her that I will report her to Adult Protective Services if she takes her mom out against her will, and if she appears to be intoxicated when she brings her mom back from future outings.
- I try to negotiate a different type of visit that might have lower risk for the resident, if the resident wants the visit: maybe a brief outdoor visit on the patio, with both wearing a mask and maintaining physical distance.

Essential Opportunities - Creativity at Work

A LTC setting in “farm country” built a plexi-glass “hugging window.” The plexi-glass has arm holes that were fabricated, and when persons put their arms through they wear calf birthing gloves, purchased from the local farm supply store.

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RESOURCES

- Staying Connected with Family and Friends Living in Long-Term Care Facilities - <https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19#staying-connected>
- Board on Aging and Long Term Care – Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
www.longtermcare.wi.gov Phone: 1-800-815-0015 {Advocates for persons age 60 and over}
kim.marheine@wisconsin.gov
- Safer Visits in assisted Living Facilities, State of WI DHS <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/ltc.htm#-safer-visits-in-assisted-living-facilities>
- Disability Rights Wisconsin - www.disabilityrightswi.org - 800-928-8778 {Advocates for persons under age 60}
- www.pioneernetwork.net