Making a Difference
Finding Purpose by Helping Others during COVID-19

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Making a difference feels good, takes our mind off our struggles, and connects us to the larger world.
Having meaning and purpose is key to living well with dementia (or caregiving!)

7 Domains of Well-being

Dementia Beyond Disease: Enhancing Well-being. Al Power, MD.
But how do we find ways to give back when we can’t leave our homes?
Consider:
What are the needs?

- Consider needs in the wider community, the neighborhood, your friends and family, and in your own home.
- Who around you might need encouragement and support? Social contact? Guidance and wisdom?
- Are there at-risk folks nearby who need groceries or other essentials?
- Do you have supplies that might be useful to essential workers?
- Do you know any parents with kids who might appreciate “virtual” help?
- Are there non-profits or small businesses you care about that are struggling financially? Or others who have lost their jobs?
What do you love to do?

What skills do you have to offer?
If you live with memory loss or care for someone with memory loss, what special skills have you acquired that could be shared?

- Coping strategies:
  - For living with the unknown
  - For managing anxiety and depression
  - For dealing with social isolation
  - For overcoming challenge
- Compassion and understanding
- Learning to give and receive care
- Wisdom about priorities, values, what really matters
- Coming to terms with limits
Choosing a “Dementia-Friendly” volunteer task for yourself or a loved one

- Look for opportunities that:
  - Are meaningful and interesting
  - Are challenging enough to be engaging, but not frustrating
  - Use skills built up throughout life
  - Incorporate repeated actions
  - Focus on the present moment or distant past
  - Incorporate social interaction (if desired)
  - Encourage sharing of wisdom or stories
  - Use creative potential
  - Include care for living things – people, pets, plants
  - Show real-time impact/effect
  - Are safe
Ideas...

- Working in the garden
- Helping bake for friends or neighbors
- Cutting fabric for sewing masks
- Walking the dog or other household chores
- Playing virtual games with grandkids
- Playing musical instrument for others
- Packaging items for distribution
- Creating encouragement cards
What tools do you have at your disposal?
From your window…

Banners, Bear Scavenger Hunt
“Make a Joyful Noise”
From your porch or sidewalk...

Chalk Art or Obstacle Courses
Yard Signs, Thank-You’s to Mail Carriers
If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

☐ Picking up shopping
☐ Posting mail
☐ A friendly phone call
☐ Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I’ll do my best to help you (for free!)

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. #ViralKindness

Kindness Cards
Little Free Pantries

http://www.littlefreepantry.org/
On the side of your house, or in an alley?


Jason Redmond. Reuters.
Using your phone...

- Check in on neighbors
- Call friends and family – especially those who are isolated, or extroverted!
- Organize a phone tree for keeping in touch or sharing news
- Offer volunteer phone counsel/support
Online...

- Teach family or friends a skill or language
- Share family stories and history
- Distract grandkids while their parents work – sing, play games, use imagination
- Pass along funny stories or uplifting news
- Write encouraging emails or messages
Through the mail...

- Encouraging notes or thank you cards?
- Fun photos or cartoons?
- Family memoirs?
- Care packages?
Volunteering from the comfort of your own home

- Be My Eyes [https://www.bemyeyes.com/](https://www.bemyeyes.com/)
  - Assist blind and low vision people with daily tasks
- Chemo Angel [https://www.bemyeyes.com/](https://www.bemyeyes.com/)
  - Send cards or gifts to persons undergoing chemotherapy
- eBird [https://ebird.org/home](https://ebird.org/home)
  - Track birds to contribute to bird research and conversation decisions
- Binky Patrol [https://binkypatrol.org/](https://binkypatrol.org/)
  - Sew emotional support blankets
- LibroVox [https://librivox.org/pages/volunteer-for-librivox/](https://librivox.org/pages/volunteer-for-librivox/)
  - Record portions of audiobooks for public domain

Finding virtual volunteer opportunities

- Volunteer Match: [https://www.volunteermatch.org/covid19](https://www.volunteermatch.org/covid19)
  - 250,000+ Virtual / Remote options, for example:
    - Tutoring kids
    - Recording songs for hospice patients
    - Calling homebound seniors
    - Responding to crisis line texts
    - Participating in “no-contact” drives for essentials like diapers

- Idealist: [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)
  - Mutual Aid Groups (for helping out in a neighborhood)
  - Volunteer opportunities – can search for “remote” or “COVID-19 related”
Finally...give yourself credit for what you’re already doing!

YOUR GRANDPARENTS WERE CALLED TO WAR.

YOU'RE BEING ASKED TO SIT ON THE COUCH. YOU CAN DO THIS.