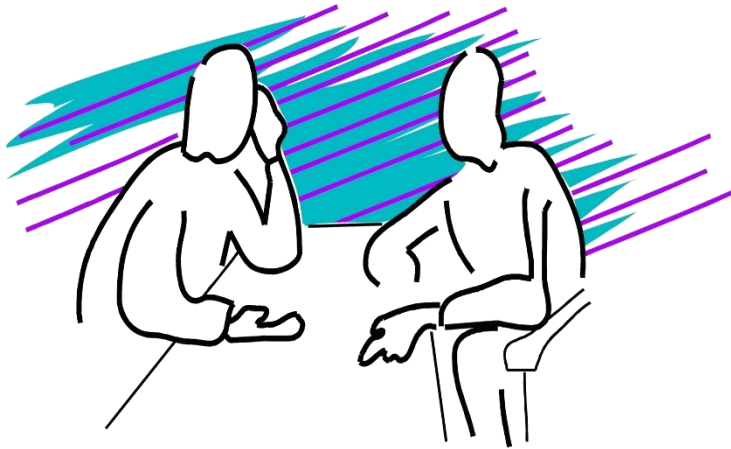


Communicating with Residents in Long-Term Care During COVID-19: OARC Tips and Template



With the amount of work and information flowing through long-term care (LTC) homes during COVID-19, it is difficult to cover all areas of communication. Homes are often provided with advice about “crisis” or “media” communication tips for external stakeholders. However, residents, who are at the heart of what we do, are often left out of the communication loop.

[Help Us Communicate with Residents](#)

While we commend the great efforts that are taking place in LTC homes across the province to protect residents, to keep them well and safe, residents are often missing in flow of information from their own homes. The OARC Board of Directors would like to encourage home administration and team members to provide residents with regular home-level updates about the management of COVID-19 in addition to disseminating news and directives from our Ministry of Long-Term Care/Ministry of Health/Public Health that impact their daily lives.

The Ontario government has given a clear directive to home operators about their responsibility to keep residents (as well as staff and family members) informed about COVID-19 in Directive #3 for LTC Homes under the LTC Homes Act:

<http://www.ontarc.com/documents/MOHLTC/20200331UpdatedCMOHDirective3LTCH.g>

[Communication Template](#)

To help you streamline this communication, OARC has created a simple template that can be updated on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in your home’s situation. **OARC recommends that this tool is printed and distributed on a weekly basis** (or more frequently as changes occur) and **delivered to each resident**. If this is not possible, we recommend that you explore alternative ways of communicating the information based on residents’ individual needs and preferences and available resources in the home. For example, you may consider posting the communication tool in conspicuous areas (accessible to residents) throughout the home. **Download a blank template here:** http://www.ontarc.com/documents/comtemp/20200417ComTips_BlankTemplate.docx

[Communication Template \(continued\)](#)

Some residents may have regular access to the internet and email accounts so information may be sent electronically. The tool may be incorporated into daily huddles/shift reports, with the intention that information could be delivered verbally during 1:1 interaction with residents or shared when small groups of residents are gathered for meals etc. We recognize that this is sensitive information being delivered and we encourage you to work with your teams to identify the most appropriate people to relay details to residents in a conscientious and timely manner.

[COVID-19 Information from OARC](#)

Further to this practice of home-specific sharing, OARC recommends that you consider printing and distributing OARC bulletins available here: <http://www.ontarc.com/covid-19/covid-19-bulletins.html>

We hope that this will assist you in your continued efforts to communicate with residents living in the home you operate.

If you have suggestions or questions, please contact:

Dee Lender, Executive Director
Ontario Association of Residents' Councils
194 Eagle Street, Suite 3105
Newmarket, ON L3Y 1J6

dlender@ontarc.com 1-800-532-0201 x 240



[Consider printing on home letterhead]

Resident Communications Update: [insert home name]	Date:
Dear Resident: At _____ home, we are experiencing some operational changes and shifts in routine related to the management and/or prevention of the COVID-19 virus. We want to reassure you that we are taking important steps to keep you safe and informed. We will be circulating and posting home-specific and provincial updates on a weekly basis. Our team is always available to answer your questions and to ensure you feel supported during this time. Thank you!	
CURRENT COVID-19 STATUS IN OUR HOME: Number of Resident Cases _____ Number of Staff Cases _____ or include celebratory statement as appropriate: Our Home is COVID-19 free! [insert specific information about COVID-19 testing if applicable] <ul style="list-style-type: none">EXAMPLE: Starting X, all residents and team members will be tested for COVID-19	
THIS IS HOW WE ARE KEEPING YOU SAFE: <u>Infection Control:</u> [include specific information about home efforts in this area] <ul style="list-style-type: none">EXAMPLE: You will notice that all team members/staff are wearing masks and other protective equipment while interacting with you and providing care – this is to keep you safe! You may not easily recognize your care team while they’re donning these protective items, but we will continue to introduce ourselves by name and role to keep you at ease.EXAMPLE: You may be asked to self-isolate in your room or temporarily relocate to another part of our home. We have been advised by the Ministry and Public Health to try and keep non-affected residents apart from those experiencing symptoms to prevent further spread. <u>Bathing Schedules/Guidelines:</u> [include specific information about changes affecting bathing/care] <ul style="list-style-type: none">EXAMPLE: Bathing schedules have been temporarily adjusted to avoid using communal spaces– each resident will receive an in-room sponge bath in lieu of their regularly scheduled shower/bath in the tub or shower rooms. <u>Food/meal service:</u> [include specific information about changes in meal service] <ul style="list-style-type: none">EXAMPLE: Mealtimes will be staggered with 2 seatings to allow for residents to be more spaced out in the dining rooms OR meal service will temporarily take place in resident rooms <u>Miscellaneous:</u> [include other areas of resident life that may be temporarily impacted] <ul style="list-style-type: none">EXAMPLE: All resident mail and care packages received from family/friends will be kept securely in a room for 3-4 days and disinfected prior to delivery. Please excuse this delay.EXAMPLE: Access to outdoor courtyards has been temporarily limited (expand on rationale)	
STAYING CONNECTED: [include any innovative program opportunities here – see ideas below] <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are you establishing virtual connection opportunities for residents? Check out the Virtual Visits toolkit to get started: http://www.ontarc.com/covid-19/virtual-visits-toolkit.htmlConsider registering for one of OARC’s new LTC Resident Forums to stay informed and connect with other residents across the province for support and sharing: https://attendee.gototraining.com/rt/4948757107395787522Looking for inspiration and resources for keeping residents engaged? http://www.ontarc.com/covid-19/resident-activities.html	

Do you still have questions about COVID-19?

Contact _____ (Administrator/Director of Care) at:
_____ extension _____ or email: _____

We are in this together and we’ll get through this together.