


# Epoch Pandemic Series


I.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**DEMENTIA MANAGEMENT  
DURING COVID-19**


PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS



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II.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH  
DURING THE PANDEMIC**


Managing Stress & Anxiety



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III.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**EPOCH DURING  
THE PANDEMIC**  
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WE ARE PREPARED

**COVID-19  
PROTOCOLS**



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The key to overcome crisis is patience, courage, self-discipline, adaptation and alertness.

— ” —



## About Epoch Elder Care

Epoch Elder Care is India's expert in Dementia and Assisted Living. Epoch Assisted Living Homes provide holistic, Person Centered Care that enables elders to have the highest quality of life. At Epoch, the team believes in focusing on the person as much as the clinical condition.

Epoch offers assisted living, dementia care, skilled nursing care, palliative care to elders in need of 24x7 care and assistance. They normalise the life of elders with chronic conditions, using Person-Centered Care, whilst focusing on overall well-being and happiness. Epoch has more than 8 years of relevant experience in India, and follows evidence-based global best practices. Currently, Epoch operates 3 homes in India - Vermeer House and Frida House in Gurgaon, Monet House in Pune, and will be expanding the services soon.

Epoch Elder Care is helmed by Neha Sinha, a dementia specialist, clinical psychologist and trained in palliative care philosophy from Stockholm (Sweden). She has gained international recognition for creating dementia services in India. Epoch Homes are managed under the expertise of registered senior nurses trained in elder and dementia care.



Epoch is a specialist trusted by families for the care of their elderly loved ones.

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## About the series

Caring for the elderly is always challenging, and due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19, it can be even more stressful and confusing; given the unknowns and the ever-changing situation.

At Epoch Elder Care, we have in-depth insights and experience in managing the elders. We have developed the 'Epoch Pandemic Series', with an aim to offer practical suggestions, on the management of the COVID-19 for the elderly including those with dementia. This series can be a ready-reckoner guide for the caregivers, and Senior Care Homes. This compilation of 3 e-booklets includes suggestions on the physical and mental health of both the elderly and the caregiver; and also has protocols on managing an Assisted Living Home

### **Dementia management during COVID-19: Practical tips for caregivers**



This booklet recognises the increased struggle of caregivers in dementia management during the pandemic. These simple, day-to-day practical tips will help in normalising, as far as possible, the physical and mental health of your elderly loved ones during the lockdown. This booklet can be a mini guide for caregivers at home, in caring for elderly with dementia, during novel coronavirus COVID-19.

### **Importance of mental health during the pandemic: Managing stress & anxiety**

The stress and anxiety during COVID-19 can be overwhelming. This booklet deals with the mental health of both the elders and caregivers during this pandemic. It addresses the adverse effects in mental health of elders and caregivers due to novel coronavirus COVID-19, with suggestions on how to manage not only caregiver burnout, but also increase emotional bonding with the elderly.



### **Epoch during the pandemic: COVID-19 Protocols**

Given the nature of novel coronavirus COVID-19, Senior Care Homes need to ensure special care and safety for its elderly residents. We, at Epoch Elder Care, as experts in Assisted Living and Dementia Care, have thoughtfully developed protocols for our Homes, to help us be best prepared in tackling this unprecedented health issue. These protocols can help in guiding an Assisted Living Home in this current fluid situation of the novel coronavirus COVID-19.



# Epoch Pandemic Series:



## IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

### Managing Stress & Anxiety



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# Stress and anxiety amongst elderly and their caregivers

## Emotional isolation amongst the elderly

Social distancing that needs to be adhered to due to COVID-19, puts the elderly at greater risk of increased loneliness, depression and anxiety. Emotional isolation amongst the elderly is a serious health concern. There are myriad of long-term negative physical and mental health outcomes that are linked to the elderly experiencing loneliness and social isolation. Self-isolation, during this novel coronavirus pandemic, disproportionately affect elderly individuals, and specially those who are already feeling lonely, isolated, or secluded.

## Caregiver burnout

Caregivers play a critical role in the welfare of our communities, specially of the elderly. Caregiving plays a unique and valuable role in our society. Caregiving exacts a tremendous toll on caregivers' health and well-being. Caregivers can be family members who stay along with the elders in their homes, professional staff providing services in the homes of the elderly or they could be staff at Senior Living homes. Even in normal circumstances, taking care of an elderly can be challenging, and it is even more difficult in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Caregiver burnout is a state of physical and emotional fatigue. Burnout can occur when caregivers try to do more than their capability- both physical & mental, and also may not get the help they need. For the caregivers at home, managing the professional and house-related issues due to the lockdown, and managing caregiving in addition to it can increase stress and anxiety. At Senior Living homes, the on-ground staff face double the responsibility of protecting themselves along with the residents- along with that very often covering up for fellow colleagues, staying inside the facilities as much as possible, and not stepping out anywhere. They are staying away from their families- combining this with the above factors can cause huge physical and mental toil on the staff and their families.

The demands on a caregiver's body, mind and emotions can become overwhelming, leading to fatigue and burnout.



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The stress and anxiety during this COVID-19 pandemic can be overwhelming, and causes adverse effects in the mental health of both the elders and caregivers. This booklet addresses two important aspects: caregiver burnout and emotional bonding with the elders.

We have focused on how to deal with the emotional trauma faced by caregivers (family members or caregivers at senior living homes), which unfortunately, gets overlooked in these uncertain times. We are also conscious that whilst increasing social distancing with the elderly is the call of the day, the need for decreasing emotional distancing is as, if not more important.

The points mentioned in this booklet are not difficult to implement, even in this period of lockdown, and it will help in balancing the emotional needs of the elderly and the caregiver.

- *Neha Sinha, CEO*



## MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY



### Dealing with caregiver burnout



*"Care often calls us to lean into love we don't know possible" ~ Tia Walker*

*Caring for your elderly loved ones, specially with dementia, is a challenging, time consuming and an emotionally draining experience. The anxiety of COVID-19 is a double whammy on your stress levels, and may lead to caregiver burnout. It is critical to balance the care of your elderly and of yourself.*

**Normalise your feelings:** Begin with accepting that it's okay to feel anxious, low or angry sometimes

**Watch out for any burn out symptoms early:** such as loss of interest in personal activities, irritability, feeling of hopelessness, decline in personal health etc.



**Minimise changes in your elderly's schedule:** Try and minimize change in the routine of the elderly, so that you won't have issues managing disruptions.

**Don't try to be a perfect caregiver:** Do the basic care management first- follow regular routine, hygiene, nutrition & hydration, medicines

**Ask for help:** Finding a lending ear amongst friends can do wonders. Reach out for professional help, when required.



**Invest in 'Me-Time':** Don't forget to indulge in calls with friends, hobbies, lazing around or just pampering yourself



## MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY



# Motivating teams in senior living homes



"Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen" ~ **Michael Jordan**

*In these trying times, many staff members at senior living facilities have moved in, and are staying away from their families. Motivating and taking extra care of your staff, specially those on-ground, are critical aspects during this pandemic*

**Be prepared for staff shortage:** Try and reorganize staff smartly, motivate staff to multi-task

**Continuous training on COVID-19:** Focus on facility preparedness and how it impacts their work.



**Don't take extra effort for granted:** Acknowledge, celebrate every single extra effort.

**Collaborative approach:** Constant connects between on-ground team and Work From Home team.

**Proactively manage staff burnout:** Look out for symptoms. Don't judge them. Be empathetic & counsel them.

**Sessions of sharing:** Staff chat sessions, share feelings, experiences.

**Connect with their loved ones:** Encourage regular video calls with their friends and families.

**Cheerful atmosphere in the facilities:** Have light entertainment, music whilst working





## MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY



# Increasing emotional bonding with elders at home



*“Perhaps the most important thing that we ever give each other, is our attention” ~ Rachel Naomi Remen*

*Older elders, those staying at home with families, or those who are on their own, due to the coronavirus lockdown, may feel lonely and neglected. Increasing emotional bonding with your loved ones, specially those with dementia, becomes even more important during this period.*

**Identify symptoms of depression:** Change in sleep patterns, gain/loss of weight, loss of appetite, neglect in hygiene etc lasting more than few weeks. Be mindful of a relapse, if someone has a history of any mental illness.



**Avoid unnecessary anxiety:** Provide simple answers to their queries about COVID-19. Protect them from the overload of news.

**Bond with them in a structured manner:** Engage in easy art and craft, musical activities, chronicle their lives.



**Facilitate independence with technology:** Download their favourite songs and movies. Teach them simple ways to use their smart phones. Help they reconnect with their hobbies.



**Use technology to stay in touch:** Initiate video calls with friends and family, add their friends on Facebook.

**Do things together:** Play online games, sing songs together, ask them to speak of their life and routine, share daily stories.



## MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY



# Increasing emotional bonding with elders at senior living homes



*“Kindness can transform someone’s dark moment with a blaze of light. You will never know how much your caring matters” ~ Amy Leigh Mercree*

*Elderly residents at Assisted Living facilities may feel isolated, since their families cannot visit them due to COVID-19. It is important for the staff to take extra efforts to keep the atmosphere at the facilities as ‘normal’ as possible, within the given constraints.*

**Watch out for signs of withdrawal:** Changes in sleep patterns, loss of appetite, mood swings etc. Look out for any signs of relapse.



**Insulate them from the changes in the outside world:** Keep life as close to normal as possible, don't disrupt routines.

**Help them stay connected with their family:** Increase frequency of interactions via daily video calls, send families daily photographs and updates.

**Increase emotional engagement, whilst maintaining social distancing:** Continue celebrations with residents, play simple games to keep residents engaged during these times.

**Staff and elders could spend more time together:** Listen and tell stories, sing old songs together, encourage sharing.

**Simple in-door physical exercises:** Facilitate walks around the house, stretching exercises, wheelchair or chair exercises.



## COVID-19 : INFORMATION SOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

### WEBSITES

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare - [www.mohfw.gov.in](http://www.mohfw.gov.in)
- MyGov (Government of India) - [www.mygov.in](http://www.mygov.in)
- World Health Organisation - [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### PHONE NUMBERS (INDIA)

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: **+91 11 23978046**
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: **1075**
- MoHFW Psycho-Social toll free helpline: **080 46110007**

### WHATSAPP

- MyGov CORONA Helpdesk: **+91 901 315 1515**
- World health Organization: **+41 79 893 18 92**

### EMAIL

- [ncov2019@gov.in](mailto:ncov2019@gov.in)
- [ncov2019@gmail.com](mailto:ncov2019@gmail.com)

### COVID-19 TRACKER

Aarogya Setu App on Google Play Store and Apple Store



[www.epocheldercare.com](http://www.epocheldercare.com)