



Mature Adult Centres are health promoting, capacity building, and community focal points on aging where older persons come together for services and activities that enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage their involvement in and with the community.



Manitoba Association of Senior Centres

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HOW TO STAY CONNECTED DURING COVID-19

With the current code Red in the province of Manitoba, many people might be feeling a little blue, especially with the upcoming holidays and the uncertainty about how you will celebrate with your friends and family.

The following is from an article by Dr. Caroline Bulous on how to stay connected during the Holidays.

Unfortunately, when there are barriers to in-person socialization, feelings of both exclusion and loneliness can be intensified. This can play havoc with emotional and physical well-being. What is now important is discovering how to put new spins on old traditions in order for friends and family to stay connected in a safe way.

Planning ahead: Virtual get-togethers

This will allow for coming up with creative suggestions as to how everyone can experience a sense of inclusion, especially during the holidays. Even the art of planning can be a connective activity allowing all ages to contribute suggestions. When organizing, make sure everyone involved is comfortable using the technology required to participate. For instance, while the tech-savvy nephew might scoff at a Zoom lesson, a grandparent might appreciate help in setting it up!

Keep in mind, there may be modifications that need to be put in place to allow everyone to feel fully included. Webcams or headsets might come in handy for those

with sensory deficits, and these tools can be used in the future to help continue communication well after the holidays.

Other ways to virtually connect with loved ones include:

Cooking or planning recipes together on virtual platforms (make the moment even more special by sharing secrets of traditional favourites!)

Playing games or doing fun activities together online (e.g., trivia night, dancing, karaoke, and many others!)

Sharing a meal together by connecting virtually (arrange a specific time for everyone to log onto their devices and enjoy an online celebration together)

Creative ways to stay connected

While technology is especially helpful to keep in touch with family and friends, it's not always necessary.

Here are some ways that can help family and friends feel closer without going online:

- Mail out real cards: Instead of sending an email, consider connecting with a hand-written card. It may take a longer time to arrive in a person's mailbox but the heartfelt sentiments in hand will be worth it.
- Send flowers or deliver food: Even though our lives are more virtual nowadays, people do appreciate tangible items at this time. Sending flowers or delivering

food in a safe manner can make a big difference to someone, especially if they are isolated and alone during the holidays.

- An activity for all ages is to share photos, videos, and stories of past celebrations together. This can be done with a distanced outdoor visit or online as well.

Keep the connection going

- It is beneficial to take time to feel grateful for what we have, and reflect on the positive relationships cultivated over time. Doing this helps protect and nourish our mental and physical well-being, which in turn can also help improve the well-being of our loved ones. Finding new ways for family and friends to be together is something that is well worth doing.

Being around familiar faces during this time is comforting, but it is also important to maintain these connections beyond the holidays! This unique time could be the perfect opportunity to kickstart healthy relationship habits. Staying connected with, and reaching out to loved ones is especially important during challenging times like these when we may have to physically be apart. Let's make sure to check in on your family, friends and neighbours this holiday season, as a friendly check in could help more than you know!

Adapted from an article <https://health.sunnybrook.ca/mental-health/thanksgiving-creative-ideas/>



Mature Adult centres are open to all individuals 55 years and older, or retired. The centres provide programs that offer core health services, are governed by a community-based board of directors, respond to diverse needs of older persons, hire professionals, provide education, develop innovative programming approaches, and are a community resource for information on aging.



COVID Alert: Canada's COVID 19 Exposure Notification App:



This app is designed to let you know whether you have been exposed to COVID-19. **How does it work?** The app uses Bluetooth signals to exchange random codes with nearby phones with the app installed. If someone you've come in contact with later tests positive for COVID-19, they will receive a one time key from their local health authority that they can enter into the app. You and others who have spent time (more than 15 mins, less than 2m apart, over the past 14 days) near this person will be notified through the app that you may have been exposed. Your privacy is protected, the COVID alert does not collect personally identifiable information about you. For more information about how to install the app on your phone go to canada.ca/coronavirus.

Electronic App Options:

There are many smart phone and tablet applications that make staying connected easier in this time. Here are a few of our favourites.

Facetime- Apple users already know that it's easy to stay connected using FaceTime, the free app that allows up to 32 users to connect via video or audio calls using their iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch.



Houseparty- Houseparty is a video chatting app that mimics the feel of a small, intimate gathering with a handful of your closest pals. By using a split-screen feature, up to eight participants can chat face-to-face, and it's free and easy to download for both iOS and Android devices. There is also a variety of games you can play with your friends on this app.



Scrabble Go- Play the classic Scrabble game you know and love! With the official board, tiles, and Scrabble word dictionaries, only Scrabble GO delivers the authentic crossword game experience. Easily find and start games with your Facebook friends and family!



How to stay connected:

Senior Centre Without Walls (SCWW) provides educational and recreational programming in a fun and interactive atmosphere where all programming is provided over the phone. For more information or to register:

204-956-6440 (WINNIPEG) 1-888-333-3121 (TOLL-FREE) or visit <https://www.aosupportservices.ca/our-three-pillars/social-engagement/senior-centre-without-walls/>



Check-in with your local centre. Many are offering online/virtual programs or options for older adults during this period and some are even offering take-out meals and meal delivery. Senior Centres <https://www.manitobaseniorcentres.com/places/>

Are you local for a resource for your community like snow shovelling/ grocery delivery? In Winnipeg call your local senior resource finder. A list is available here <https://wrha.mb.ca/support-services-to-seniors/seniors-resource-finders/>

In Rural Manitoba contact your community resource coordinator by using **211**.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
and HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the staff and board of the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres