

# COVID-19

## Communication with residents and families



# Communication:

It is the glue that will hold everything else you do together.

The heart of social connection, togetherness and wellbeing.

Spoken and unspoken – what you do is as important as what you say.

Multi-faceted and on-going.

NGO co-designed checklist for residential facilities.

# Aim of this session:

Lessons learned from North Rockhampton

Developing a communication plan

Get prepared now

Into action: Communicating effectively

Resources





# Your communication plan:

**Why** – Purpose and principles of what you want/need to say

**Who?** Residents, families and who is responsible for what

**What?** Identify key messages

**How?** Different modes for different needs

**When?** Identify trigger points for different levels of communication






# What's your big why? Why are you communicating?

## **What's your goal?**

What are the **principles** underpinning your communication?

**Examples:** Transparency, openness, clear simple communication, responsive, trust, empathy, care, support, listen to and respond to the needs of your residents/families





# Who are you communicating to?

## **Update contacts list**

**Residents** – identify special considerations, need interpreter, hearing loop, clear, capacity to understand/leave it to family to communicate?

**Family members of residents** – update who are the key family contacts, best way to contact them, are they now working from home

# Who will be responsible?





# What are your key messages?

Consider communication needs of residents/families

Overarching key messages

Day to day information

Who is responsible for developing key messages?





# How will you communicate?

## **To residents**

- Modes of communication:
- Face to face – COVID-related and non-COVID related
- Recorded messages
- Easy-read graphical information
- Easy read written information
- Webinar for residents (video-based updates)
- **Communication devices audit**

## **To families**

- Modes of communication:
- Daily phone calls
- Written updates by email/website/social media/what's app,
- Hotline for family to ring.
- Webinar for all family members





# When will you communicate?

Be clear what triggers this plan into action.

Allocate roles at each of these trigger points.

Frequency of updates

Preferred time of day for residents (tailored)





# Into action, start communicating

## Continuous improvement

Be clear what triggers this plan into action.

Allocate roles at each of these trigger points.

When the triggers are met, ensure all roles/responsibilities are clear

Review the plan, monitor the effectiveness of the communication response

Learn from your experiences

Check in with residents/families about how you're going

Adapt for staff resourcing





# Effective communication

Takes time and resources

Active listening

Questions and answers

Check for understanding





# Check for understanding

Emphasise the responsibility to explain is clearly on you, the provider

Use plain language and ask the consumer to explain back, using their own words, what was just said

Use non-shaming open-ended questions

Repeat the process until you are confident the key messages are understood

[https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/health\\_literacy/health\\_literacy\\_toolkit/checking\\_understanding](https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/health_literacy/health_literacy_toolkit/checking_understanding)






# Key considerations

Communicating while wearing a face mask

Cognitive abilities

Communication abilities e.g. hearing impairment, need for a translator

Compassionate communication





# Communication for connection

Resident to resident communication

Community to resident communication (e.g. local kindys sending in paintings)

Resident's changes (transfers, death) and staff/operational changes how you will communicate this to fellow residents (mindful of privacy)





# FAQs responding to info needs

Likelihood of spread

What is happening now to keep residents' safe

How residents will be kept informed and frequency of communications

If you have a question(s) who/when to ask

How their families/carers will be kept informed

Information about what happens if they test positive, care options

Queensland Health CHO visitation directions and visitor advice

The use of PPE e.g. masks only at this point and why

Vaccinations



# Summary:

Communication is key.

Planning makes it easier when/if COVID impacts your facility.

Clear roles and responsibilities

Strategies for effective communication.

Be responsive to the needs of your residents/families

## Resources

<http://www.hcq.org.au/resicare/>

