

Top Tips for Care Homes During Covid-19 Pandemic

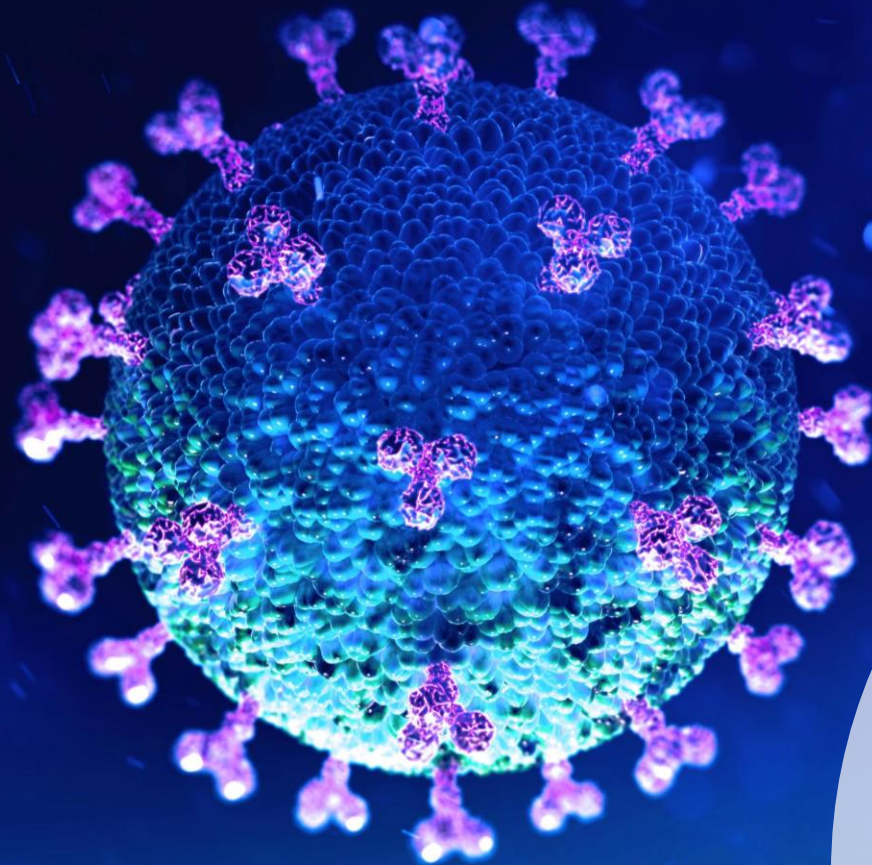


Elspeth Mathie on behalf of
Professor Claire Goodman and colleagues
Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care
(CRIPACC), University of Hertfordshire



Co-lead Inclusive Involvement in Research Theme, NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC), East of England. [@elspeth_mathie](https://twitter.com/elspeth_mathie)

<https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/research-implementation/research-themes>



COVID-19



Care homes

- Approximately 420,000 older people in England and Wales live in care homes
- Some care homes have on-site nursing, others only provide personal care
- Care home residents need extra support to live well
 - 70% have a cognitive impairment
 - 76% need support to walk or move around
 - Most have multiple health conditions



Research Background

- Questions and concerns raised by front-line care staff
- **Aim** to complement emerging COVID-19 policy and practice guidelines **with research-evidence based tips**
- **Rapid reviews** of research evidence were conducted to answer care workers' questions about 'how' to support residents, family members and each other.



Care Home Sector Driven Questions:

- How can we support people who walk with purpose to self-isolate?
- Managing stressed and potentially grieving relatives remotely
- Are there alternatives to close contact with residents? What can we do if we can't hug residents?



Co-production of Top Tips

- Gaps in research evidence:
 - Research **often set out** what care homes **should do** with limited recommendations for **how they should do it**.
- Rapid reviews were **organised as 'Top Tips'** and shared with care homes for feedback
 - Examples of feedback
- Implications: the benefits of working with the sector to co-design and co-produce resources with those who live, work and care in care homes.



PAGE — 29.06.2020

Top Tips for Tricky Times

COVID-19 Resources,
training, information

[Top Tips for Tricky Times](#)



Author



Claire Goodman
UNIVERSITY OF
HERTFORDSHIRE



Working with and for care home staff during a pandemic

When Covid-19 hit care homes there was no guidance on how to care for older people in long term care. It was as if the sector was hiding in plain sight.

To fill the information vacuum some care home managers set up a WhatsApp group, with support from academics, clinicians and a commissioner. They pooled knowledge, responded to questions about accessing PPE, clinical issues, and offered much needed peer support and encouragement. This care home led group grew rapidly.


A quick overview of the questions highlighted the context specific challenges being faced.



Topics Covered

- When residents don't understand physical distancing
- Uncertainty around resident's care
- Alternatives to Physical Contact
- Hydration and COVID-19
- Music to provide comfort and reassurance
- Dealing with multiple deaths
- Supporting families at a distance
- Supporting Video communication



 **Top Tips for Tricky Times:** Providing physical comfort and reassurance to care home residents during COVID-19



1) **How doll therapy can help:** Dolls can have positive effects, improve a resident's mood and calm them.



2) **Personal:** Each resident should have their own doll to keep in their room.



3) **Life-like:** Soft texture and open eyes.



4) **Ownership:** Do not take dolls away but be aware if a resident becomes tired from looking after a doll.



5) **Person-Centred:** Dolls may not be suitable or wanted by all residents. Dolls should be left out for residents to choose.



6) **Contamination:** To reduce cross-contamination and confusion, important staff know which doll belongs to which resident.

no!



7) **Attachment:** Residents may like them one day but not the next.



8) **Concerns:** Staff and relatives may worry residents are being treated like children. Reassure them that dolls can be a source of comfort.

Elisbeth Mathie and Frances Bunn, 27 May 2020 Top Tips for Tricky Times. Work supported by NIHR ARC East of England, NIHR ARC Kent Surrey and Sussex NIHR. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Register and download from Applied Research Collaboration (East of England) website.

<https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/covid-19-projects-innovations-and-information/covid-19-resources-training-information/top-tips>



From Top Tips to use in Practice

- These resources can be downloaded from the ARC EoE website
- To date there have been **346 individual downloads**
- We are following up their use in care homes to refine and roll out the resources





RESEARCH

Producing 'Top Tips' for Care Home Staff During the COVID-19 Pandemic in England: Rapid Reviews Inform Evidence-Based Practice but Reveal Major Gaps

Ann-Marie Towers*, Anne Killeth†, Melanie Handley†, Kathryn Almack†, Tamara Backhouse†, Diane Bunn†, Frances Bunn†, Angela Dickinson†, Elspeth Mathie†, Andrea Mayrhofer†, Rasa Mikelyte* and Claire Goodman†

Context: The work presented in this paper was undertaken during the first three months of the COVID-19 crisis in the UK.

Objectives: The project is aimed to respond to questions and concerns raised by front-line care staff during this time, by producing research-based 'Top Tips' to complement emerging COVID-19 policy and practice guidelines.

Methods: Eight rapid, expert reviews of published, multidisciplinary research evidence were conducted to help answer care home workers' questions about 'how' to support residents, family members and each other at a time of unprecedented pressure and grief and adhere to guidance on self-distancing and isolation. A review of the emerging policy guidelines published up to the end of April 2020 was also undertaken.

Webinars about the TTTT International Long Term Care Policy Network

<https://ltccovid.org/2020/05/13/ltccovid-webinar-international-responses-to-covid-19-in-care-homes-18-may-free/>

<https://ltccovid.org/2020/05/22/video-and-slides-for-1st-ltccovid-webinar-on-international-responses-to-covid-19-in-care-homes-18-may/>

<https://adph.org.uk/networks/eastofengland/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-19-in-Care-Homes-Webinar-Slides-09062020.pdf>

TOWERS, A.-M., KILLET, A., HANDLEY, M., ALMACK, K., BACKHOUSE, T., BUNN, D., BUNN, F., DICKINSON, A., MATHIE, E. & MAYRHOFER, A. 2020. Producing 'Top Tips' for care home staff during the COVID-19 pandemic in England: rapid reviews inform evidence-based practice but reveal major gaps. *Journal of Long-Term Care*. p.151-166. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.31389/jltc.43>



Future

Reflections on a Changed World

- Importance of research into social care
- Responding to questions from care sector
- Rapid turn around
- Working remotely as a multi-disciplinary team across regions



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Claire Goodman: CRIPACC, UH, Theme Lead - Ageing and Multi-Morbidity, NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC), East of England. [@HDEMCOP](#)

