

AN INTERGENERATIONAL GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY DURING COVID-19

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In a time of crisis, aiding others supports our own well-being. Research backs this intuitive claim: studies have shown that [volunteering is associated with higher self-esteem, improved immune system, and lower blood pressure](#). Physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic requires that New Yorkers find new ways of helping our loved ones. No matter our age or our health or employment status, we can all contribute during this public health emergency. Here are some ways to get started:

Call and connect with isolated friends

Physical distancing puts a strain on everyone's mental health, but it's particularly difficult for people living by themselves. Let your friends know you're only a phone call away, listen to their concerns, and share stories that aren't only about the current pandemic.

Share news and public health safety updates from reliable sources

An overabundance of information, false reports, and uncertainty about the pandemic makes it harder for everyone to get the real facts they need. Consult reputable and unbiased sources like the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) to ensure the accuracy of news updates you're sharing with friends and family.

Research COVID-related resources online for relatives and friends without internet access

Bridge the [digital divide in New York City](#) by helping friends and family members access the resources they need during the pandemic online. Examples include placing an order for a grocery delivery through [online grocery companies](#) and arranging a no-contact delivery of household supplies, medicine or food through the national platform [Umbrella](#).

Make your own face masks for your loved ones

With the [executive order](#) from Governor Cuomo requiring that all New Yorkers wear face coverings in public settings where social distancing cannot be maintained, the demand for fabric masks is skyrocketing. If you're feeling crafty, make your own for friends and family following the CDC instructions [here](#).

Give the parents in your life a break from round-the-clock childcare

With New York City schools closed, parents are juggling supervision of their kids' online classwork and their own professional responsibilities at home. Use video apps like Skype or FaceTime to help keep children on track with their assignments, and organize breaks for storytelling time, snacks and anything else that revitalizes you both.

Reflect on the crises you've lived through in the past and share the lessons you learned

As we age, many of us build an emotional resiliency that helps us weather new emergency situations. If you're drawing strength now from your experience of surviving a past crisis, consider sharing it on the phone, online, or in a letter to younger loved ones who are struggling and could benefit from a broader perspective.