

## Supporting loved ones overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic?

As the COVID-19 situation is progressing and the Government guidance continues to change, individuals may be feeling anxious, tired and fed up. Mental Health support during times like these are paramount, which is why Care first have worked tirelessly to ensure our services remain available 24/7 throughout the pandemic to provide emotional and practical support and ensure we have every aspect of your overall wellbeing covered.

One of the feelings millions of us have experienced during the current coronavirus pandemic is loneliness. In our combined efforts to stay safe and save lives, our usual ways of seeing family, friends or just familiar faces have been put on pause. This article looks at how we can support loved ones abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic?



### Tips to support loved ones abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Look after your own wellbeing** – In order to support others it is very important to look after your own wellbeing first. Keep a balance between helping others and maintaining your own wellbeing. If you are not looking after your own wellbeing it can be difficult to support others.
- **Accept the reality of the situation** – It is important to accept that not everything is in our control. During the COVID-19 pandemic there have been lots of restrictions that are beyond our control. Although it may be difficult to accept that we may not be able to go and visit loved ones abroad. Try to be creative and think about what you can do to support loved ones abroad.
- **Be as positive as possible** - Try to avoid topics that might upset your loved one, especially if they are struggling with anxiety or worry.
- **Check in with your loved ones regularly** – Try to check in with your loved ones to see how they are doing. You could call them or have a virtual catch up via video call for example.
- **Virtual quiz night** – You could have a virtual quiz night or similar event that all of your loved ones could join including any loved ones abroad.

- **Talk about what you may like to do when it is safe to do so** - You could talk about future visits when you meet up with your loved ones abroad once lockdown and social restrictions are lifted. Once it is safe then you may be able to travel to see them or they may be able to travel to see you. Although it may be a while until you feel safe to actually visit them abroad, it may be nice to talk about what you will do together or reminisce about past times when you have previously met.
- **Involving others** - No matter how close you are to a loved one who is abroad, there are benefits to you not being their only support network if possible. Involving others can help your loved one feel more connected while also spreading the responsibility for checking-in across several people.

Here are some ideas for ways you can help others get involved:

- Have a regular family or friend group video chat
- Set up a rotation of regular calls or video chats between a group of people
- Start a regular virtual game or quiz night

## How can Care first help?

If you feel you may need some emotional or practical support, you can contact Care first on the Freephone number. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. Whilst our BACP accredited Counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support with emotional issues, our expertly trained Information Specialists are available 8am-8pm Monday-Friday to provide advice on any practical issues that may be causing you a stress or worry and help you feel more in control of a situation.

All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'Supporting loved ones overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic'** This is being delivered live on **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 12pm**, please use the below link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7152755661703219215>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.