

## eCare: Care - using technology

### Simple yet important contact

Here are a few ideas about how we can care for others using technology – our phones, PC's and tablets: text messages, phone calls, emails and the like. We did some Google searches. (Don't we all at some time?) using such phrases as 'electronic care' and 'health care using a phone' and invariably came up with how we should look after our phones and repair them! Very few articles appeared suggesting how we might use my phone to help others.

So, here are some ideas ...

### Face-to-face care

First of all, there is little doubt that, where possible, the ability to care for someone is enhanced through a face-to-face meeting. It is valuable to use our facial expressions and speak quietly to a suffering person, and when appropriate, touch them (handshake, hug and the like). In fact, the gift of your presence cannot be underestimated. But, often, this is just not possible. So, other means of communicating your care need to be found.



### An important aside

Just a thought, here. Sometimes we may feel that we are not sufficiently skilled to speak effectively with a suffering person. While we may feel this way, it can be more upsetting to a friend if we **do or say nothing**. The power of a warm, heartfelt hug without words can convey your support more than you realize. A silent, warm greeting may be very effective. (LL - I recall meeting a work friend for the first time after his mother had died. We were in a group at the time, so it was not appropriate for me to make a show of emotional support. I took his hand and shook it warmly in greeting, with slightly lingering eye contact. He knew what I wanted to say and commented later that he appreciated this. Silent support can be very effective sometimes. )

### Mobile phones

These can be very effective in care. It is possible to speak, send a text message or send an email. If you use *Messenger* or *Whatsapp* or other messaging forms, these can be effective, but the use of *FaceTime* or *VideoChat* can give you even more connection, especially with socially isolated people - thinking here of people the elderly or sick or disabled friends). The essential thing is that you **send or do something**.

Messages do not need to be long. Often, it is better if they are relatively short. A suffering person may not wish to provide a long response. Often they might only feel well enough to simply say, "Thank you!". It's important for the cared for person to respond with a "Thank you" – a simple acknowledgement of their friend's care, but at the same time, it may not be possible for them to respond at all because of their health or circumstances. We shouldn't be disappointed if they do not reply to our message. God knows our hearts and our motivation.

### What do we say in a message?

The general principles

- 1 Keep initial contact relatively short.
- 2 Include statements like: "May God be with you"
- 3 Avoid 'promises' – false hope: "You'll be OK!"
- 4 Include a practical offer when you can – "I'm so sorry to learn of your dad's passing. Would you like to meet for coffee and chat?"
- 5 Say something positive about your memories of their loved one – "I will always remember your Mum's beautiful singing at the meetings especially her favourite – The Holy City" or "I will

always remember your Mum's infectious giggle. We had such good laughs together." Or "Your Dad's faith has always been inspirational to me". You get the idea.

- 6 It can be useful to include some verses of comfort if this is appropriate. (Some readings are provided below. Choose shorter phrases if this is more appropriate.)

### *Some simple responses.*

**Illness** – "I'm sorry to hear that you are not well. Is there anything I can do to help?" **Variations:** "I'm sorry to hear that you have COVID. Is there anything I can do to help? Perhaps I can do some food shopping for you and leave it at your front door?" The essence here is that you are showing you are aware of their particular situation and are providing some specific help. It is good to be specific if you know the circumstances of the person suffering and can raise this with them.

**How *not* to respond:** "I'm sorry to hear you have COVID. I had it a few weeks ago and it was awful. I had to have 2 weeks in hospital; I was ill everyday. My cough lasted for three weeks and I've been tired ever since. It was absolutely terrible! But, you'll get over yours!" Remember, our reaching out in care for suffering people is designed to help them feel better – **not make them feel worse!**

**Bereavement** – "I'm so sorry for your loss." "I am thinking of you." "You (and your family) are in my prayers." "God be with you at such a difficult time."

**How *not* to respond:** "Oh you'll get over it." "You'll see him/her in the Kingdom." (This is difficult. We want to provide real assurance but there can be unexpected reactions. (LL - I recall someone saying once that their response to someone who said this on the passing of the person's mother was: "I know that, but I miss her NOW".)

(You might like to visit the following pages in [adelphicare.org](https://www.adelphicare.org) for more information on loss and grief:

[https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/003\\_Coping\\_with\\_Loss](https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/003_Coping_with_Loss)

[https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/035\\_Useful\\_resources\\_Loss\\_and\\_Grief](https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/035_Useful_resources_Loss_and_Grief)

[https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/037\\_Grief\\_and\\_special\\_occasions](https://www.adelphicare.org/documents/037_Grief_and_special_occasions)

### **Stories and photos**

One of the big advantages of eCare is that most of the ways of communication (phones, ipads, tablets etc) enable the sending of photos. If you have one or two photos relevant to the circumstances of their suffering that will spark a nice memory for them, it is often helpful to send such a photo with your message. It is helpful not to send too many, though!

### **Comfort readings**

Short Bible readings can be of immense value – they can reflect:

Praise e.g. *Psalm 66:1-4*;

Plea for help e.g. *Psalm 34:1-10*;

God's presence e.g. *Isaiah 55:1-9, 12-13*;

Glories of the Kingdom e.g. *Isaiah 35*.

## Old Testament

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. *Psalm 23:4*

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

*Psalm 34:18*

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. *Psalm 46:1*

... and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honour me. *Psalm 50:15*

But I call to God, and the Lord saves me. *Psalm 55:16*

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. *Psalm 147:3*

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. *Isa. 41:10*

The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. *Isaiah 41:17*

## New Testament

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. *Matthew 5:4*

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. *1 Peter 5:6-7*

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

*James 5:13*

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. *2 Corinthians 4:16*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. *2 Corinthians 1:3,4*

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. *Romans 15:4*

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

*1Thessalonians 5:9-10*

But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. *2 Corinthians 7:6,7*

## Your contribution?

Would you like to add to these possibilities of helpful comments and comfort verses? Please go to the Contact Us page on the [adelphicare.org](https://www.adelphicare.org) website and send in your contribution. We will add a section to the site with these comments.

[https://www.adelphicare.org/pages/contact\\_us.html](https://www.adelphicare.org/pages/contact_us.html)

Thanks!

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