

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine (ANZSPM) has a comprehensive guide on [Palliative Care Communication in the COVID-19 context](#),¹ which outlines the challenges to improve connections in order to facilitate compassionate care.

Palliative Care Communication during COVID-19

Kind, timely, open and empathetic communication is an important priority in aged care, especially for those with a high risk of severe illness and death.

The goal of communication in the context of COVID-19 is to ensure the facilitation of clear and appropriate information to and between:

- The resident or client and their health professionals;
- Health professionals and families;
- Families and the resident or client;
- All the members of the multidisciplinary health care team.

It is essential that the person and their family/carers are involved in all decisions and discussions about the diagnosis and what it means in terms of holistic and person-centred care.

[Telehealth solutions](#)² should be utilised to facilitate communication wherever possible. It is important to plan key discussion points in advance. [Resources](#),¹ [prompt sheets](#)³ and [response guides](#)⁴ should be made available to staff at all points of communication; such as next to phones, computers and at staff stations. These can be invaluable for staff initiating difficult conversations or when conveying sensitive and potentially distressing information.

There should be clear objectives for staff around the expectations for effective communication. Communication skills can be practiced at staff handover.

Consider the impact of communicating compassionately and effectively whilst wearing [Personal Protective Equipment](#)⁵ (PPE). [Printed photos of staff](#)¹ can be worn on PPE to personalise care and reassure residents and clients. These can either be laminated to allow cleaning or disposed of when [doffing PPE](#).⁶ Compassionate and empathetic care is possible in PPE.

**National Coronavirus Helpline:
1800 020 080**

Call this line if you are seeking information on Coronavirus (COVID-19). The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

References:

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5. Australian Government Department of Health. COVIDSAFE. When to Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Aged Care.
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6. Australian Government Department of Health. Coronavirus (COVID-19) wearing personal protective equipment in aged care video.
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