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Maintaining social and emotional wellbeing among older adults during periods of increased social isolation: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic [dataset]

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This Dataset is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/datasets/112>

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Coping during social isolation

Through a survey and interviews, older adults in Western Australia shared how they coped during the pandemic.

* Many older adults were resilient:

63% of the older people we surveyed were only slightly affected by COVID-19.

Close community networks were an important source of support.

“ Everyone knows everyone down here. [During lockdown], most people rang other people to see that they were okay too, because that's the kind of community that it is... [and] the priest was always available [during lockdown]. ”

“ I haven't experienced any [anxiety around COVID-19], and I didn't know any from other people. It's just a matter of these things occur, and you have to adapt and move on, that's what older people have had to do in our lives, adapt and move on. ”

Digital and online technologies (e.g., social media, Zoom) were helpful for some people but not for others

- Helped me keep in touch with family and friends
- Saved travel time
- Can't afford, don't have access, don't trust, and can't use social media and zoom.

Two in five only had two or fewer people to chat with.

Nearly one in five older adults said they chose not to access services during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown even though they would have liked to.

* However, sometimes it was really difficult:

Barriers to accessing support services include:

- the belief that I 'should be able to cope on my own'
- a preference for face-to-face care



Additional resources:

Association for Culturally Appropriate Services

Mobile: 0413 619 748

Web: www.afcas.net

Email: info@afcas.net

Council on the Ageing WA

Phone: 9472 0104 (Tues & Wed)

Web: www.cotawa.org.au

Email: policy@cotawa.org.au

Delivering care during social isolation

During the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations like yours have been taking care of isolated and vulnerable older adults in the community.



Training in use of Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) and hygiene measures.



- Providing easy-to-understand information
- Staying in touch through phone calls and postcards.



Networking with other organisations to share ideas.



Self care and checking in on co-workers

* Here's what you said worked:



Providing new services for clients, such as domestic assistance and shopping and delivery.

Our clients say "We can survive if the dishes are not done or if the floor is dirty, but we cannot survive without talking with anyone for weeks." That's very depressing and that's very sad.

It's more internal than external. We are caring for our community and the businesses and everything else, but also self care and how we can help each other to do more for that.

Updating the organisation's website and social media pages with advice on current restrictions, how to get medication, and useful phone numbers.



More time in advance to help clients get comfortable using technology.



Technology upgrades to help you work from home when needed.



More convenient funding in times of crises to adapt and change services.

* Here's what you said you needed:



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