



The Maine Long-Term Care
OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

&



The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long-Term Care
formerly NCCNHR

Strengthening Families as They Reunite in Uncertain Times

A Virtual Discussion

with Dr Susan Wehry

Thank you

For being here

For participating

For all you do

It's good to be with you



Outline

Reflect on experience

Moving beyond (growing from) experience

Preparing for next phase

Nurturing resilience

(Trauma-informed care 101)

Open discussion



Creating virtual community

In a word...
How are you doing?

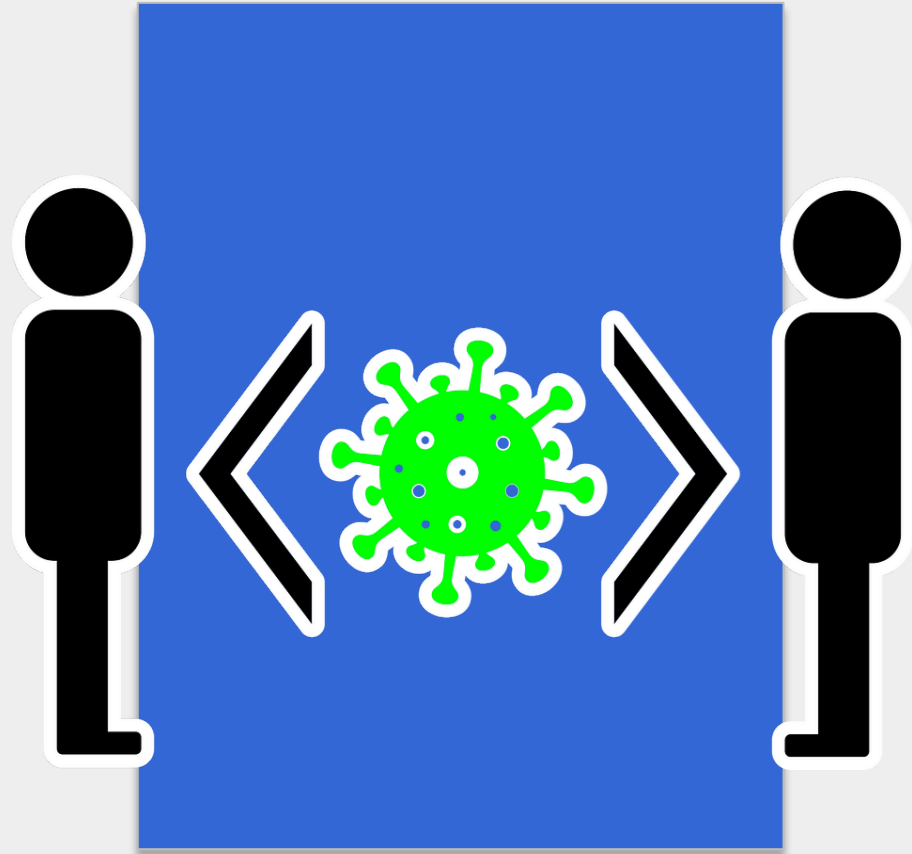


Creating virtual community

Your COVID experience

How long has it been?

- <1 month
- 1-3 months
- 4-6 months
- > 6 months



Looking back
Shared COVID experience
In residential and long term care

Closed to visitors
Closed to ancillary staff
Quarantined in rooms
Loss of communal experience
Uncertainty, shifting conditions
Insufficient PPE



Quarantäne

Shared COVID experience

In residential and long term care

Abiding the five

Intended consequences

Containment

Mitigation



Shared COVID experience In residential and long term care

Unintended consequences

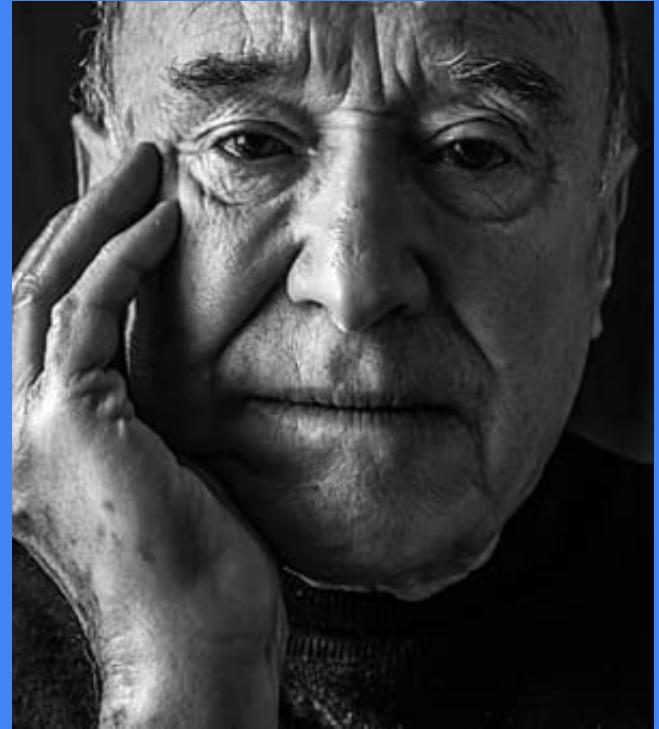
Distress

Loneliness

Deconditioning

Weight loss

Decline in ADLs



Families and Facilities have responded

With compassion

With creativity

With determination

With frustration

With sorrow

Some days were easier than others

We've grown tired





What we know

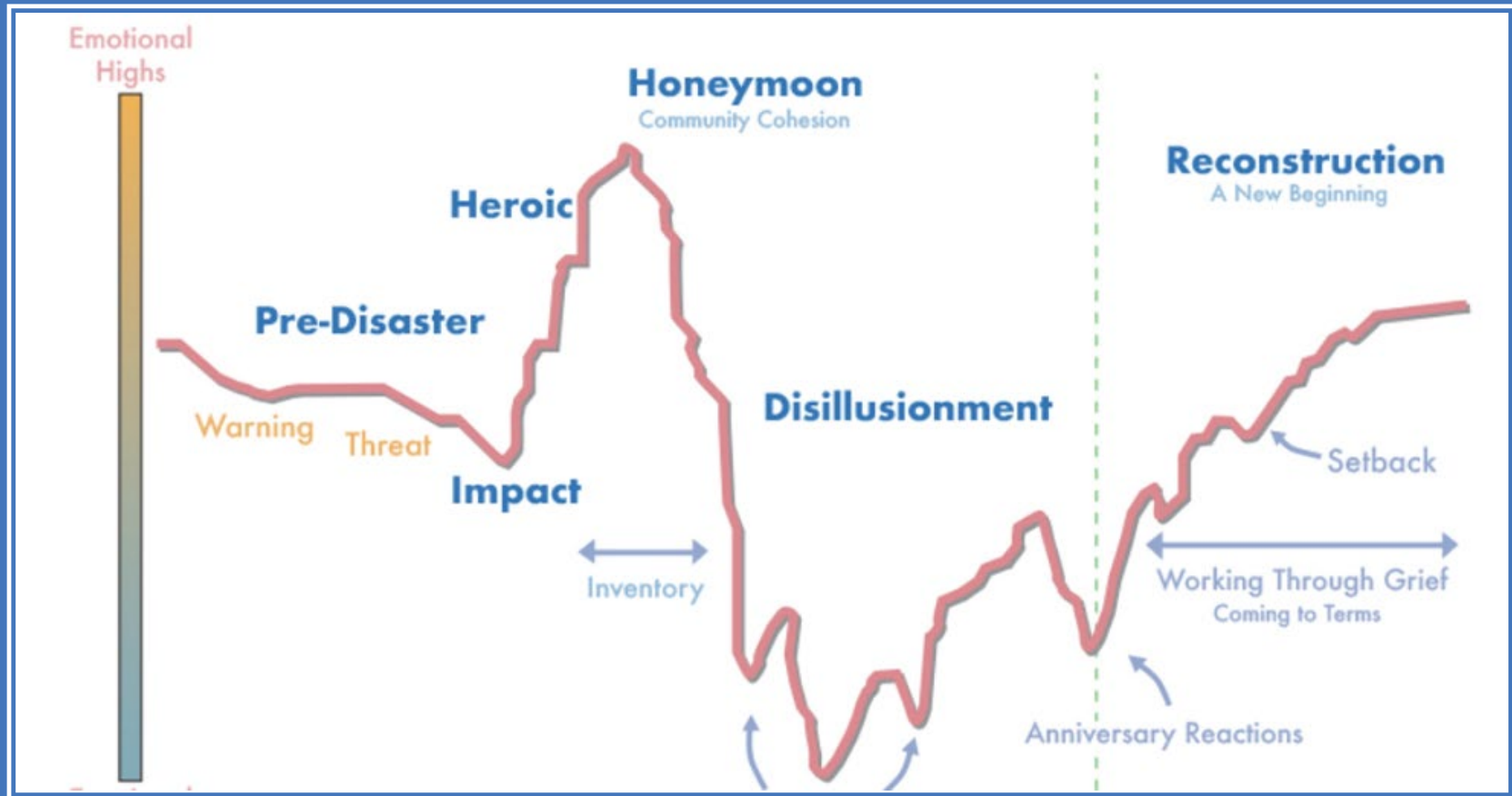
No one has been untouched

Disasters have a pattern

Recovery from disasters and
from trauma have common
elements

It's not over yet and we need
to nurture our resilience





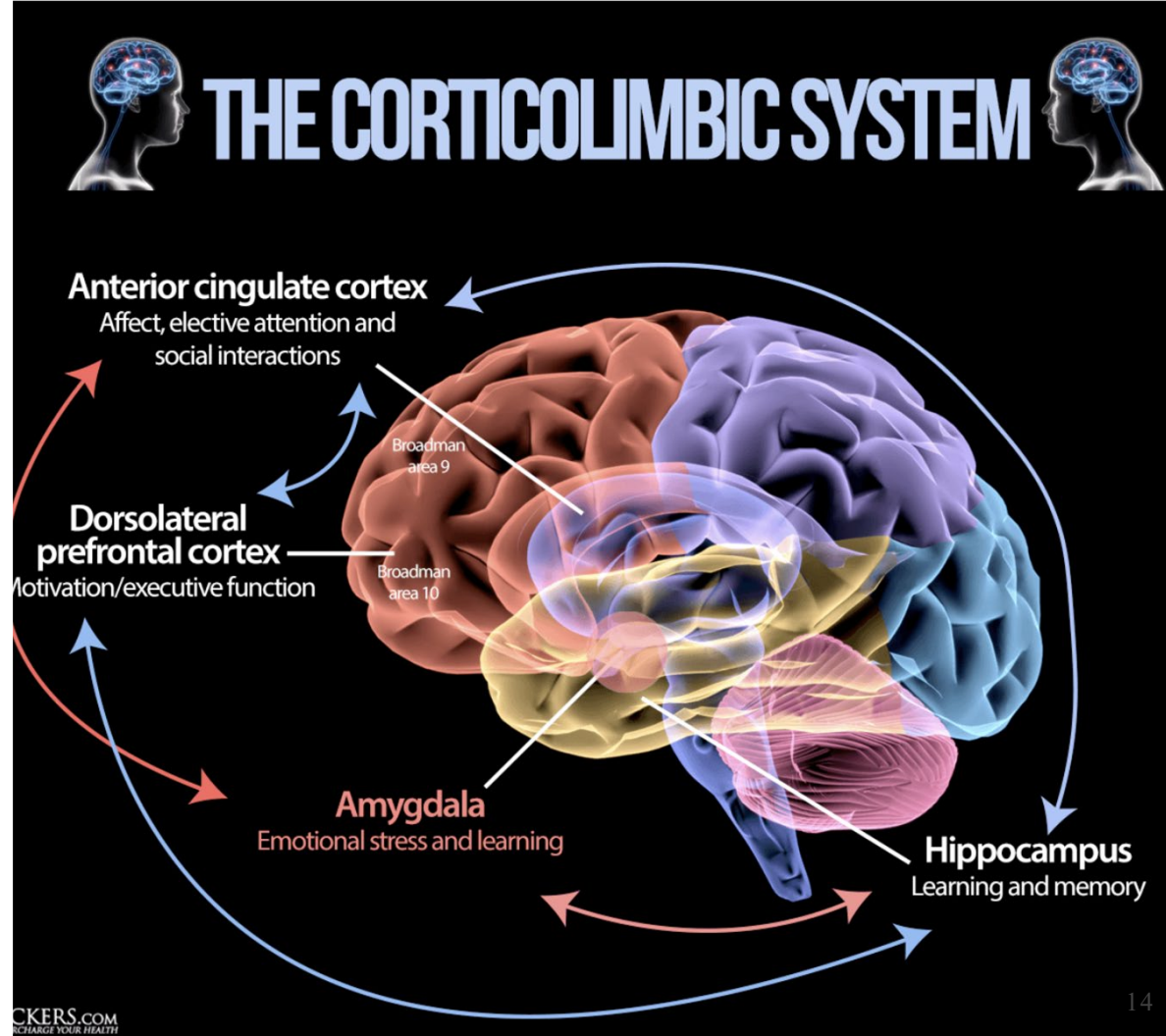
We are remarkably resilient



—
We're built for
this.

We need to take
charge.

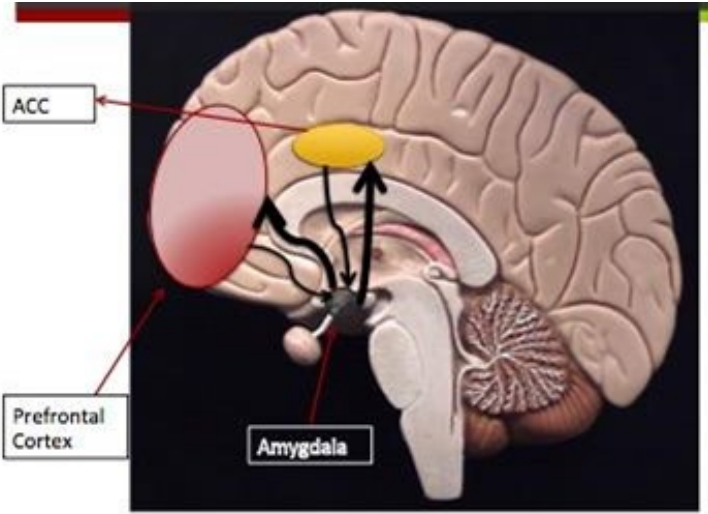
Lend ourselves
and others a
hand as we enter
this new phase.



1. Build reserves

- Know yourself
 - Stressors/De-stressors
 - Recognize your limits
- Take time for yourself
- Practice good self-care, kindness
- Strengthen your brain





Amygdala

Overactivated

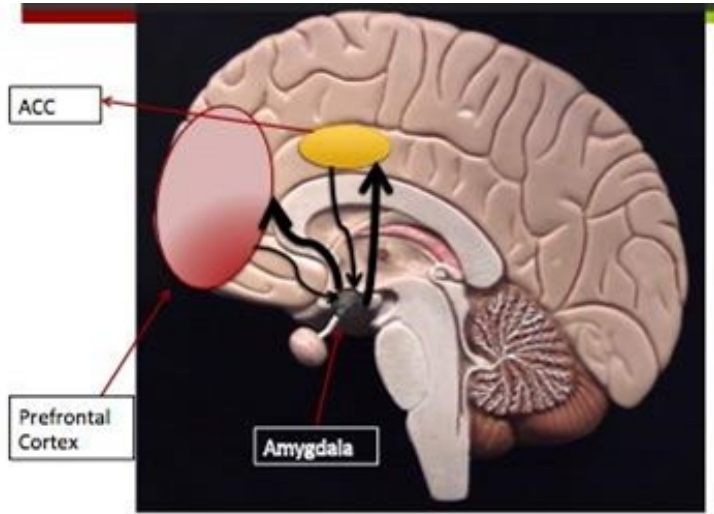
Antidote

Remove stressor

Physical Exercise

Deep breathing

Mindfulness practice



ACC: Emotional Regulation

Underactivated

Overwhelmed

Antidote

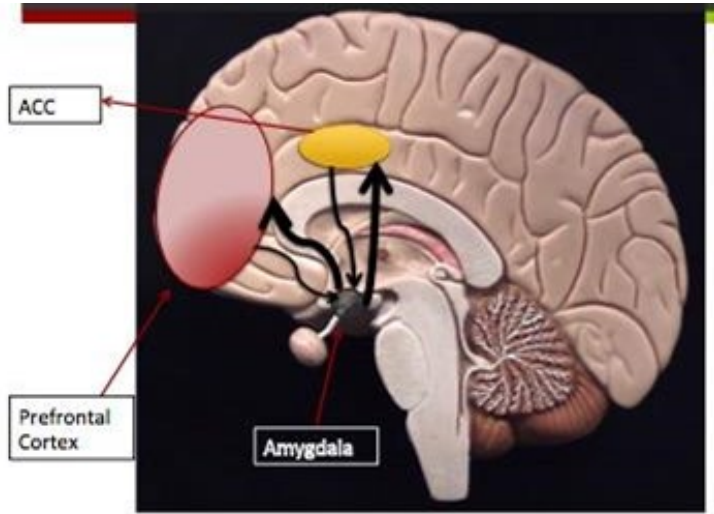
Chill the amygdala

Acknowledge
circumstances

Name your emotions

Practice gratitude

Use mantras



PFC: Think, Plan,
Solve

Wisdom

Judgment

Offline

Antidote

Reboot

Exercise it

Solve for isolation

Strategize

- Self-care
- Care for staff
- Care for residents
and families

Make meaningful

Practice flexibility

2. Actively plan for weeks ahead
educate yourself
small steps
short intervals
comfort objects
stay in touch plan



CMS (Center for Medicare
and Medicaid Services)

State regulations

Resources

LTCOP/Consumer Voice

Community transmission

Opportunities

Both/ And

Safety and quality of life
Individual and community

Phasing in
(Indoor) visitation

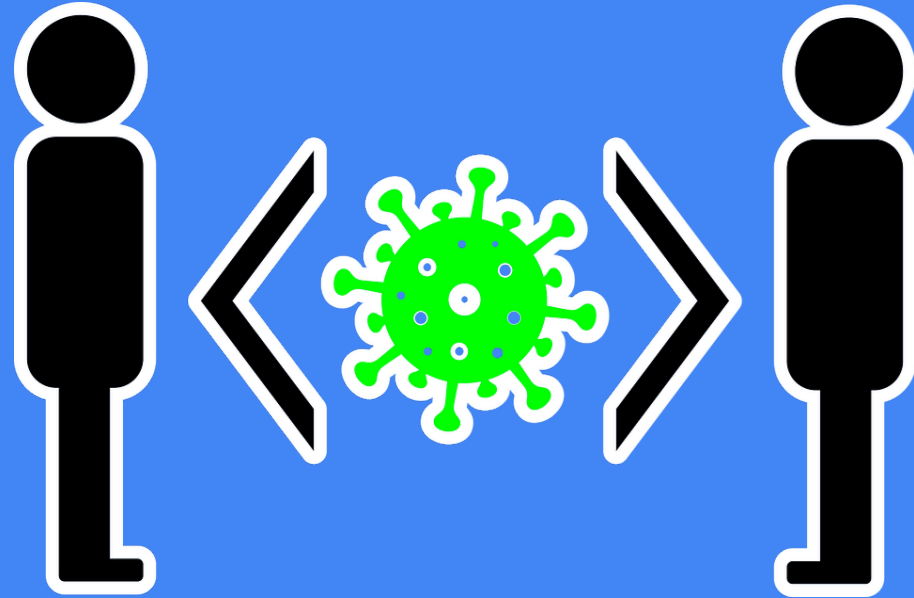
Re-examining
compassionate visits
essential visitors

Name concerns

Lack of privacy

Inability to touch

Different homes seem to
have different rules



When you visit: What you may hear...

“I want to go home; I am so lonesome I just want to see you. This is awful.”

“I am lonely and feel like a prisoner”.

“All the staff work very hard and we’re proud of them. They all work hard to keep us safe”

“The Administration will not create an area that is safe for us to go out, or assign staff to go and watch us. I miss visiting my friends and having group activities.”

What you might expect if your loved one is living with dementia

Increased sensitivity to feeling tone of others

Remember anxiety is contagious, so is calm

Sense of time passage will likely be different

Present/remote past may have more weight than recent past or future

Person-centered, individualized routines may have been lost

They may be thriving

What you might bring/what is needed

Anger, sorrow, frustration, grief, bewilderment, guilt, anxiety


Hope, love, compassion, desire, joy

Emotional regulation: Balance, confidence, evenness, openness, listening

Tuning in

Attune to your loved one

- Set tone: Calm is contagious/try deep breathing
- Set aside assumptions

A close-up portrait of an elderly woman with white hair, smiling warmly. Her face is wrinkled, and she is wearing a black and white striped garment. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

**Listen to their story
Acknowledge tears and
laughter**

An elderly woman with short, light-colored hair is sitting on a bed in a bedroom. She is wearing a yellow top and is looking out a window with dark curtains. The room is dimly lit, with light coming from the window. There is a lamp on a nightstand next to the bed and several framed pictures on the wall. A white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Create areas that are
calm and comfortable**



2. Maintain connections

Connection is crucial -
keep reaching out

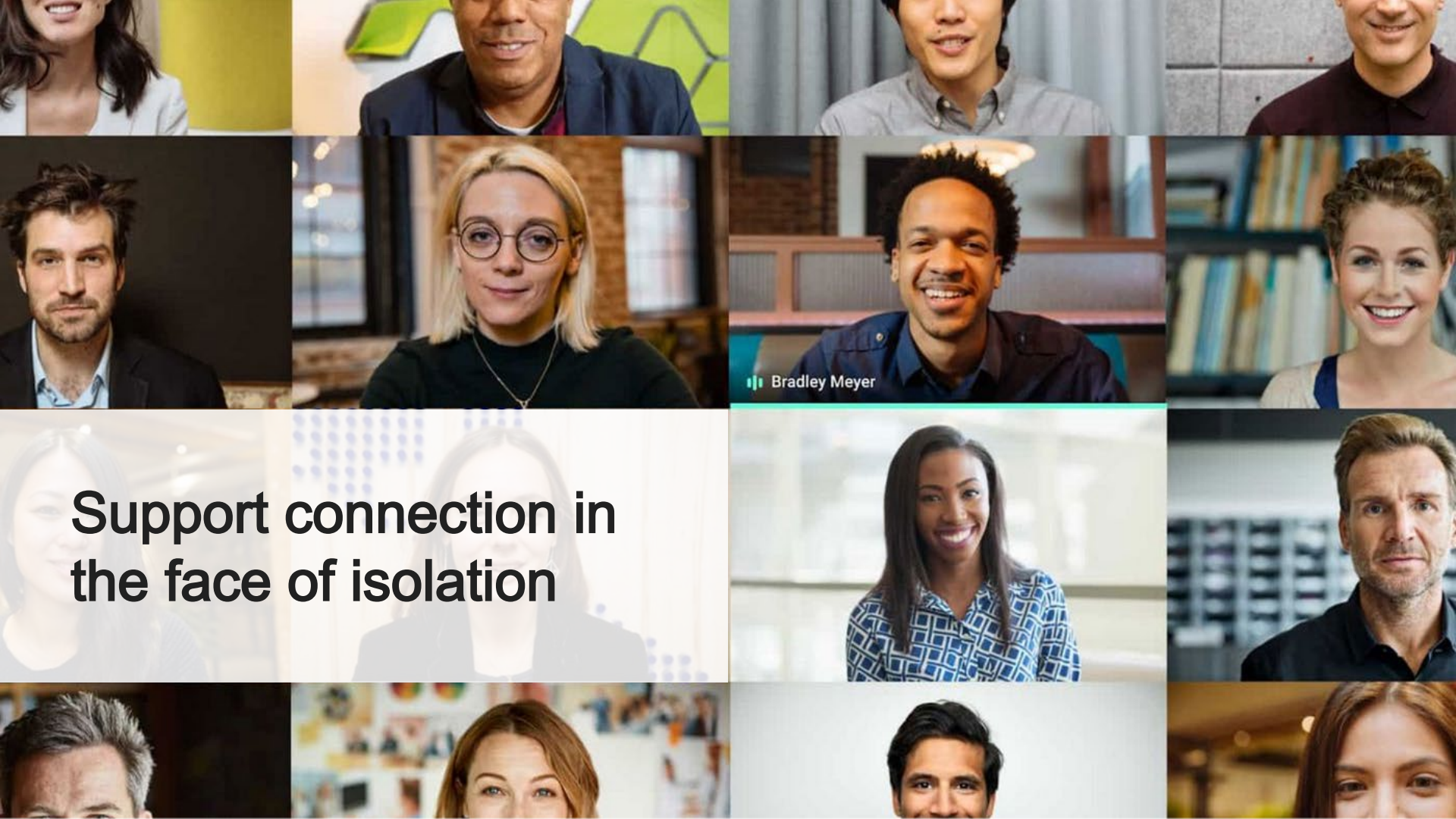
With loved ones
With each other

Augment virtual
Postcards, pen pals

Share information

Assume good
intentions

Acknowledge staff



**Support connection in
the face of isolation**

Bradley Meyer



3. Regain confidence

We are not powerless

Wash your hands

Wear a mask

Practice distanced socializing

Acknowledge loss, permit grief

Control what you can:

IDT care plan, “All About Me”

Provide options in daily living

A caregiver in a white uniform is sitting on a bed next to an elderly man in a striped shirt. They are both looking at a document held by the caregiver. The scene is set in a room with a white wall and a light switch.

**Make decisions with
the person**

A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a white top, is sitting at a desk and looking at a computer monitor. A man with a balding head, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt, is sitting next to her, pointing at the screen. The background shows a bulletin board with many small photos and a poster on the wall. A name tag is pinned to the man's shirt. The scene is brightly lit, likely from a window on the left.

**Connect residents with
resources**

Provide consistent,
clear information





4. Make meaning

Tell stories

Talk about what is
happening \neq always
talking about Covid-19

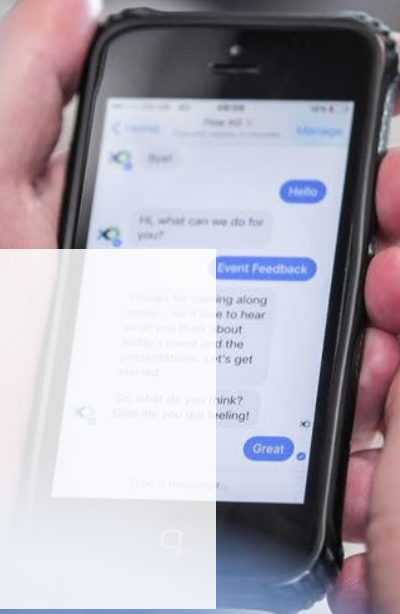
Scan for signs of beauty
and hope

Practice kindness

Self and others

Participate in shaping
the future: has there
ever been such a
moment?

Share information



REFLECT:

Think of one
positive lesson or
discovery about
yourself



Nurturing
resilience - in
ourselves and in
our loved ones - is
an active process

Building reserves

Maintaining connections

Regaining confidence

Making meaning



A deep blue night sky filled with numerous stars of varying sizes and colors, including white, yellow, and orange. A faint, dark grid pattern is overlaid on the entire scene. The text "We are in this together." is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**We are in this
together.**

Thanks
Please stay in touch
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Let's Chat

