



### HOW CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE (GRANDPARENTS, AUNTIES AND UNCLES, FRIENDS) HELP NEW AND EXPECTANT PARENTS RIGHT NOW?\*

With all the COVID-19 related stressors – in particular, the physical restrictions imposed on us for safety – new families and expectant parents have faced an isolating and lonely time in recent months. They have lost their village of support at a critical time in their lives. This isolation has been felt by those close to them, as well.

If you know a new parent or someone who is expecting a baby soon, there are many ways you can help ease some of the stress right now. It can be difficult to know how to help expectant and new parents because there are so many limitations to what you can do. If all else fails, remember that listening is often the best gift you can give!

Here are a few other ideas:

- Acknowledge how hard it is for them right now and validate their feelings
- Adjust expectations of expectant or new parents; ask them what kind of support they need or make a few suggestions
- Stay in touch regularly without the expectation of a quick response. Sending a message telling the person that you are thinking of them, but do not expect a response, is a lovely way to show your support without overwhelming them
- Deliver a meal that can be easily re-heated
- Offer to take their toddler for a walk or to the park

- If they have older children, arrange a time to video chat with them; perhaps you could read a story together or play a game
- Use video platforms to stay connected; ask expectant/new parents when is most convenient for them
- Be sensitive regarding how they choose to re-engage with the community again as COVID-19 restrictions ease; it will be an extra-stressful time for them
- Be reassuring if an expectant parent is about to give birth and has had to be more flexible (e.g. adjust to a new birth plan and potentially come home earlier from hospital)
- Check before visiting them; respect their need for space if that is what they want
- Encourage self-care times throughout the day
- Remind them to limit screen time, especially before bedtime
- Suggest virtual supports if you think it might be helpful e.g. lactation support, mental health support or other. However, it is generally best to avoid providing parenting advice, as this is generally not appreciated
- You could post some thoughtful gifts
- Do some shopping for them, bake a cake, or offer to clean their house

Any support (as long as you check first) is usually very much appreciated. There is much loss and grief surrounding this period of time; offering support to those in need is essential if we are to get through this together and try to maintain connection as much as we can. 🌸

*\*This topic was requested by a concerned relative of new parents. Thank you for the feedback, and we hope it is helpful!*