

Staying Socially Engaged

Keeping everyone engaged during times of isolation can be challenging. Assistive technology can help people to stay in touch with one another when they cannot meet in person. Seniors and people with disabilities who live alone or in rural areas need a way to stay connected to family, friends and service providers.

Tablet Computers

A tablet is a handheld device that is connected to the internet. These devices can support video calls and help to stay in touch with others.



Grandpads

A Grandpad is a tablet that is designed for seniors. They have all the essential apps that are needed to stay connected without being cluttered up. Memberships include customer service and a built-in wireless data plan.

Echo Show and other smart speakers

Echo Show is a smart speaker with a monitor that works like a tablet and through voice commands. This hands-free device is useful for video calls, reminders and to keep up with the news. Smart speakers can be connected to other devices and appliances or lights in your house.



Support Animals

Having a pet to talk to and care for may help with loneliness. An emotional support animal can be any type of animal that you enjoy interacting with. Petting a dog or watching a fish swim are examples of interactions with support animals that can help with feelings of isolation.

Robotic pets can simulate living pets without the extra work to take care of them. Many robotic pets look and sound close to the real thing. They also respond to touch like a real pet would.

Engaging with the Community

Staying active in your community can help with feelings of isolation. There are many ways to connect with people without leaving your house. Being part of a group is a great way to make friends and find people that share common interests.

Senior Centers

Local senior centers can be a big part of someone's day. They provide a place to meet people and join in activities. Some senior centers provide transportation to and from the center. Some centers are closed due to COVID-19. Check with your local senior center to see what activities they have available. Visit wvseniorservices.gov or call 304-558-3317 to find a center near you.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is a way for seniors to get a meal delivered to them when they are not able to get to the store or cook for themselves. This also provides interaction and conversation during the delivery. Meals on Wheels helps with staying independent and maintaining healthy eating. To find the program in your community call 866-987-2372.

Telehealth

Stay connected with your healthcare providers even when it is not possible to leave your house. Appointments can be conducted through virtual meetings on a phone, tablet or computer. Many communities are setting up telehealth stations for people who do not have internet at home. This allows you a private space to have your appointment without traveling to the doctor. You can ask your healthcare provider if they offer telehealth appointments.

Exercise groups

Senior exercise groups are popping up more and more. These groups are made for people of all abilities and experience levels. You can also access them from your computer and exercise from your home. Some groups have even moved outside depending on the weather.



Contact WVATS at **800-841-8436** or wvats@hsc.wvu.edu for more information. You can also visit wvats.cedwvu.org to sign up for the monthly newsletter to stay up to date on new assistive technology and WVATS services.

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Virtual tours

Many places are now offering virtual tours on their websites. Zoos, parks and tourist attractions are some of the things you can view on the internet.

The Louvre- <https://www.louvre.fr/en/online-tours>



The Houston Zoo - <https://www.houstonzoo.org/virtual/>



The National Aquarium - aqua.org/media/virtualtours/baltimore/index.html

