

VALENTINE'S DAY PR TOOLS FOR LEADINGAGE MEMBERS

Below you'll find a collection of customizable tools for local use as part of the LeadingAge "Care is Love" Valentine's Day campaign.

Below are plug-and-play draft op-eds, media advisories and phone scripts for reporter pitches that you can customize for use around Valentine's Day. We want to use the holiday as the "news peg" to generate coverage showcasing the inspiring stories of love and commitment by the people who work in our community.

We recommend filling in as many local details as possible about 1) any Valentine's Day observances, especially efforts to help connect clients/residents with loved ones; and 2) any anecdotes or observations of how the last few months have strengthened connections between staff and clients/residents. Nursing homes, assisted living and other residential providers will want, of course, to customize and adjust in accordance with current visitation status.

To ensure maximum opportunity for coverage on and around the holiday, we recommend deploying these products by Thursday, February 11 (though it's never too late to make a last-minute pitch to your local TV station's assignment desk!).

Providers of residential care:

- [Op-ed](#)
- [Media advisory](#)

Providers of care in the home or community:

- [Op-ed](#)
- [Media advisory](#)

All providers:

- [Sample pitch script](#)

OP-ED OUTLINE -- FROM PROVIDER OF RESIDENTIAL CARE

Care is Love: Making Connections this Valentine's Day

Planning Valentine's Day date nights or visits with family and friends seems a long way off. COVID-19 has changed so much -- particularly in how we can interact with those we love. But for folks working in aging services and the people we serve, caring hasn't stopped--because it can't.

Nowhere is that care felt like in a community like _____. We've been forced to take painful but necessary steps to protect our vulnerable residents from the virus -- steps that have often required loved ones to remain apart.

We know these measures aren't easy for those in our care and their families. We see it on the faces of our residents. We hear it in the voices on the other end of phone calls from loved ones wondering when they can visit once again.

Every member of our staff has a story or recollection of a moment when the emotional impact of separation hit home. [EXAMPLE]

We know that the care we provide is no substitute for the touch of a spouse, a son or daughter, or a visit from the grandkids. But we also know the last year has called upon us to provide an even deeper level of care, and to help residents who can't be with their families. For many of our residents, COVID-19 precautions have meant staff are the people they interact with in person more often. And that calls for more than care. It calls for love.

So we've [LOCAL DETAILS ON ANY PROGRAMS, EFFORTS OR INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE COMPANIONSHIP OR TOGETHERNESS, AND ANY ANECDOTES ABOUT PARTICULARLY STRONG STAFF-RESIDENT RELATIONSHIPS]

We also know that we need to do everything we can to help connect our residents to their loved ones. It's critical to their health and well-being, and it's also the right thing to do. So we've [LOCAL DETAILS ON EFFORTS SUCH AS VIDEO CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILIES, ANY SOCIALLY DISTANCED VISITATIONS, ETC]

Because Valentine's Day is so special to loved ones, we're making extra efforts to make this year's event special: We're [ANY INFO ABOUT SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS OR OBSERVANCES]

The ultimate answer, of course, is to defeat COVID-19 in [STATE/TOWN/CITY] so that isolation protocols can be lifted. We appreciate everyone in our community who continues to wear a mask and practice social distancing to slow the spread of the virus. We're excited by the vaccines' potential to get us back to normal -- so that next Valentine's Day is even more special.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY -- RESIDENTIAL SETTING

For Immediate Release Contact:

February X 2021

DATELINE -- As a Valentine's Day like none in memory approaches, [ENTITY NAME AND DESCRIPTION] is highlighting how care is love -- and how it's helping residents and their families ease the strain of COVID-19 restrictions that protect the health and safety of residents and staff.

"We know first-hand how difficult social distancing and visitation limits have been for the people we serve -- we see it every day," said [MANAGER, STAFFER, SPOKESPERSON]. "Social connection is critical to everyone's physical and emotional health. This Valentine's Day, our staff has taken many extra steps to help connect our residents with their loved ones."

To ease the impact of social distancing and other restrictions, [ORGANIZATION NAME] has [OUTLINE STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE IMPACT OF ISOLATION]

"We do our best to give our residents the care and the love they deserve, because we know the real impact on health and wellbeing caused by separation from the people they love," said [STAFF MEMBER]. "In so many ways, we've become like family. The bonds we build with residents are healthy supports -- for both them and for me. Reducing isolation is a critical part of our work."

Because Valentine's Day is an especially tough time to be separated from the people we love, we're [ANY SPECIAL HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES]

"We do this work because we care," said [MANAGER, SPOKESPERSON] "Love is a big part of what has gotten us this far, and it's what will help us get through the rest of this challenging time."

[COVERAGE LOGISTICS AND DETAILS FOR ANY COVERAGE POSSIBILITIES YOU CAN OFFER FOR LOCAL MEDIA SHOULD CONSIDER]

OP-ED OUTLINE -- FROM PROVIDER OF HOME HEALTH/NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Care is Love: Making Connections this Valentine's Day

Planning Valentine's Day date nights or visits with loved ones seems a long way off. COVID-19 has changed so much, but one of this pandemic's deepest impacts is the way it has changed how we can interact with those we love. It's made it ever more clear how important the people who care about us are to our health and well-being, and made it harder when we can't connect with them in person.

For me and my colleagues at _____, COVID-19 has put us in a new and unique position -- we're often among the few or only people that our clients see in person. COVID-19 means many vulnerable Americans, older folks or those with chronic health conditions, have had to reduce face-to-face interactions with people they've spent their whole lives with in order to stay safe. We know these measures aren't easy for those in our care and their families, because we see it on their faces and hear it in their voices.

Every member of our staff has a story or recollection of a moment when the emotional impact of separation hit home. And every one of us has tales of times when we've become more than health care providers; we've become companions and friends.

We know that the care we provide is no substitute for the touch of a spouse, a son or daughter, or a visit from the grandkids. But we also know the last year has called upon us to provide more than care. It calls for love.

So we've [LOCAL DETAILS ON ANY PROGRAMS, EFFORTS OR INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE COMPANIONSHIP OR TOGETHERNESS, AND ANY ANECDOTES ABOUT PARTICULARLY STRONG STAFF-RESIDENT RELATIONSHIPS]

We're also grateful for the love that our community shows us every day -- the thanks and appreciation we receive from our clients and their families, but also for the outpouring of support for our frontline health care workers. We appreciate our community's help, too. Everyone who wears a mask and practices social distancing to slow the spread of COVID-19 reduces the risk for us and other frontline workers, as well as our clients.

The ultimate answer, of course, is to defeat COVID-19 in [STATE/TOWN/CITY] so that distancing and isolation protocols can be lifted. We're excited by the potential vaccines' offer to get us back to normal -- something to look forward to next Valentine's Day.

For those of us dedicating our lives to aging services, Valentine's Day is especially meaningful. Our care workers are loving people who are devoted to helping older adults live life to their

fullest, and in the age of COVID-19, often at risk to their own health. This Valentine's Day, let's give some love to the care workers and the people they serve. All have gone through tough times but in the end spirit and humanity are prevailing.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY -- HOME HEALTH/NON-RESIDENTIAL SETTING

**For Immediate Release Contact:
February X 2021**

DATELINE -- As a Valentine's Day like none in memory approaches, [PROVIDER NAME AND DESCRIPTION] is highlighting how it's using care and love to help patients and their families ease the strain of COVID-19 restrictions that protect the health and safety of clients and staff.

"We know first-hand how difficult social distancing has been for the people we serve -- we see it every day," said [MANAGER, STAFFER, SPOKESPERSON]. "That's why our staff has done everything we can to support our clients, and why we take special care every day to strengthen bonds while delivering the high-quality care we provide."

To ease the impact of social distancing and other restrictions, [ORGANIZATION NAME] has [OUTLINE STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE IMPACT OF ISOLATION]

"We do our best to give our clients the care, respect and love they deserve, because we know the real impact on health and wellbeing caused by separation from the people they love," said [STAFF MEMBER]. "We know we can never take the place of a child or a visit from friends, but trying to reduce the isolation is a critical part of our work."

Because Valentine's Day is an especially tough time to be separated from the people we love, we're [ANY SPECIAL HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES]

"We do this work because we care," said [MANAGER, SPOKESPERSON] "Love is a big part of what has gotten us this far, and it's what will help us get through the rest of this challenging time."

[COVERAGE LOGISTICS AND DETAILS FOR ANY COVERAGE POSSIBILITIES YOU CAN OFFER FOR LOCAL MEDIA SHOULD CONSIDER]

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Hi this is ____ calling from _____.

As you're planning your Valentine's Day coverage, I wanted to let you know about how we're observing this holiday.

We know it's especially tough on the people we care for to be separated from their loved ones. That's why we've [ANY ONGOING EFFORTS TO REDUCE ISOLATION]

To make sure they get every chance to share the holiday with the people they love, we're [ANY SPECIAL HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES OR EFFORTS]

We want to highlight how important these connections are to the people we care for, and to make clear how important that is to their physical and emotional health.

If you're interested in learning more, I can connect you with [MANAGER/STAFFER] to talk more about this issue and the coverage possibilities.