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Organising care on distance for family carers during the Covid-19 pandemic

- **During the covid-19 pandemic we had to organise care at a distance for our family members who were in need of our care**
- **We live sometimes long distances away. We do not live any more nearby to our parents or other persons who need our care**
- **So we had to manage our own lives, we had problems to hold contact**

Often personal contacts were no longer possible.

We tried to bridge the gap by holding contact via

- **telephone, smartphone, tablet, laptop, computer**
- **we wrote mails, sometimes letters**
- **we tried to use skype, or zoom etc.**
- **we organised family gatherings on easter or for birthday-parties in the virtual space**

The problem was: Older people are often not equipped with digital devices and they are not used to them. So they needed help to learn how to use.

Volunteers trained them.

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The question was: How to organise ambulant care from a distance?

Personal local analysis of the situation was often not possible due to the pandemic-restrictions.

Therefore it was necessaire to

- **search for a contact person nearby**
- **look for neighbourhood assistance**
- **ask at churches parish for help**
- **somtimes it was tried to organise a "24-hour care" but the problem was:
What should be done if the caring person returns to her/his home country?**

We had to manage visits to doctors to get prescriptions for medicines, disinfectants and care products. We tried to get an online contact or mandated persons who could manage it für us.

- **We communicated with pharmacies to get medicine delivered at home**
- **we organised professional care when necessary**

Mostly it was tried to organise everything online. The problem was, that not all the organisations were well equipped with digital devices or had stable access to the internet.

Additional we had to organise from distance:

- **shopping for daily needs**
- **maintaining the home**
- **providing food**

We asked neighbours and friends for support, organised professionell cleaning services, „meals on wheels“ or orderd food delivery

**We wanted to maintain contact to relatives in nursing homes.
Due to the pandemic-rules this was often very difficult:**

- **Fixed dates were setted, on which contact could be made via smartphone, laptop or tablet**
- **a regular exchange of information with nursing staff took place via mobil devices**
- **on-site visit services were tried to be established.**

But under the line it was quite difficult to hold a personal contact

- **We saw, that it is necessary to seek for alternatives on a local level, to whom the person in need of care and the relatives abroad can turn: E.g. neighbourhood support, church organisations, supporting associations. It became very clear: The goal should be a "caring community"**
- **Digital communication and support is essential.**
 - **we need comprehensive network coverage**
 - **people in need of support must have access to digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops**
 - **they need to be trained in advance and constantly**
 - **they should be trained to become maximal independent**

Under the line it became clear, there should be fostered the development of

- **Online networking platforms like "nextdoor"**
- **Municipal and supraregional networking apps**
- **Communication tools such as "Alexa"**
- **Smart home support like door & window control**
- **Wearables that measure vital parameters and transmit them**

- **We should adjust all planning to the needs of the patients and their relatives.**
- **The persons who needs care and their relatives must be asked what they need.**
- **An individual support plan must be developed together with them.**

Above all must be valid:

"Nothing for us without us"

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Thank you for for your attention!

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