

“Best Practices,” for Check-in and Support Calls

**Fabu Carter draws on her experience as
Outreach Specialist for Wisconsin Dementia Research.**

Brief BIO

Fabu Carter is a Writer, Scholar, Teaching Artist, Educator and Outreach Specialist with extensive cross-cultural skills in communications and advocacy for African Americans and diverse populations. A poet, essayist, and storyteller in a broad array of settings that feature community service with a demonstrated ability in working with multi-ethnic communities and African, African American and Caribbean literatures. A culture columnist for The Cap Times and Capitol City Hues newspapers and a consultant in African American History, Culture, Literature, Research Recruitment and Community Relations. She has led poetry workshop with the **Alzheimer’s Poetry Project** as a Master Teaching Artist, starting in 2010.

Madison Poet Laureate

Carter was Selected as Third Madison Poet Laureate and first African American with her project of “Putting Poetry in Unusual Places and Spaces.”

I have found that the best ways to engage my community as a response to the shelter-in-place and to protect seniors with other health comorbidities is to:

- 1) Use phone calls as a primary means of keeping in touch
- 2) Over 2/3rds of our participants have access to some sort of technology, I-phones and emails, so that is a good alternative contact
- 3) All have access to radio and basic TV
- 4) About 50 percent feel confident about their computer skills.

In the check-in calls:

- 1) Introduce myself, say why I am calling and state that I am checking-in
- 2) I let the person talk as long as they need to talk
- 3) I make sure I ask if they are safe and have the resources that they need
- 4) I ask if they have at least one person that personally checks in with them, if they live alone
- 5) I always want to know what they are doing for fun
- 6) I encourage some sort of exercise and in the future,
- 7) I will tell them about the Poetry Party Radio Programs

Tips on clear, phone communication:

- 1) Use earbuds (I have one person with hearing aids who can only hear me when I plug in the earbuds)
- 2) Remove all background noise
- 3) Have a pad and pen to take notes
- 4) Don’t promise resources, but try to meet the requests for info about additional resources
- 5) Use clear language with repetition
- 6) Always be kind