



Dear ...

With care homes very much in the news at present, and local ones much on our minds and in our hearts, I wanted to ask if you might order some booklets designed specifically for care assistants during the health crisis for us to give to care home managers to distribute?

<https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/anna-chaplaincy-carers-guides>

The Anna Chaplaincy for Older People initiative from The Bible Reading Fellowship, BRF, has just published five booklets which could be of real benefit to hard-pressed care home and domiciliary agency staff providing social care in our area at this time.

www.annachaplaincy.org.uk

Anna Chaplains and pastoral workers can't provide spiritual care in the same way as before because of visiting restrictions. However, lockdown has seen considerable creativity and imagination at work as Anna Chaplains and others across the country have adapted and developed new ways to continue, albeit from a distance, providing spiritual care to older people. Recently almost 100 people joined a Zoom session led by Debbie Thrower, Pioneer of Anna Chaplaincy, to hear about resources for this.

One example is this series of 'A Carer's Guide' booklets that BRF has brought out this month (July, 2020). The five guides aim to help those on the front line of care work – both managers and carers – provide for the spiritual needs of those they look after.

They cost ten pounds for a pack of all five titles, or ten pounds for a pack of five of a single title.

Please might we consider buying some of these booklets and giving them to our local care staff and other social care providers in this time of crisis?

Best wishes,

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Helping the carers during the pandemic

Anna Chaplaincy for Older People offers spiritual and emotional care for those in later life. www.annachaplaincy.org.uk

The Revd Sally Rees, Anna Chaplaincy lead for Wales, shares the story behind new booklets for care staff during the health crisis and how they've come to be produced by the Bible Reading Fellowship, BRF, in record time:

New 'A Carer's Guide' series fast-tracked'

'Care staff work round the clock, so they are in the best position to offer people spiritual support when Anna Chaplains are not there and when visiting is so severely restricted.

In response to these new circumstances, members of the Anna Chaplaincy network have written a series of booklets to help those on the front line – both managers and carers – to provide for the spiritual needs of those they look after.

Ready-to-use, road-tested resources

The series of five booklets – 'A Carer's Guide: How To...' – provides information and advice on how to offer spiritual care in a variety of contexts. The booklets are laid out in easy-to-follow steps that can be read as a whole or dipped into for helpful reference. Each one also provides ready-to-use, road-tested resources, so no one needs to start from scratch when planning, for example, a short church service or a memorial service for those who cannot attend a cremation or burial.

These are truly extraordinary days and care staff have been stretched to their limits, and beyond.

During these difficult days, the effects of Covid-19 on care home residents and staff have rarely been out of the news. There have been so many heart-breaking deaths, both of residents and staff, but also hundreds of heart-warming stories of carers 'going the extra mile' in looking after those in their care, even when, exhausted and grieving, they're also coping with the fear of falling ill themselves and carrying the virus home to loved ones.

Even in those homes that have managed to avoid the virus, care has changed beyond recognition, with severe restrictions on those who can enter the home and the need to wear personal protective equipment. These are truly extraordinary days and care staff have been stretched to their limits, and beyond.

It's no accident, therefore, that the first of these new booklets is for carers themselves. I wrote 'How to take care of yourself in stressful times' in response to the special needs of carers at this time.

Comfort and spiritual care now falls to the carers

Until care homes closed their doors to visitors in the middle of March, in many places across the UK Anna Chaplains, ministers and pastoral visitors frequently dropped by. They had regular contact with individual residents and groups of residents and offered spiritual care to those of strong, little or no faith at all. They listened to people's stories over a cup of tea, joined in social activities, had fun together and generally built good and lasting relationships with residents. For those who wanted it, they were able to pray with individuals and gather together for group services of worship, hymn singing and Holy Communion.

But none of that is possible at this time. Anna Chaplains and ministers are doing their best to keep in touch by phone, by writing postcards, by sending resources to individuals and care homes, and by offering church services by phone and internet. But day and night comfort and spiritual care now falls to the carers.

While all carers know that the needs of those in their care go beyond the physical, and include the mind and spirit, not all feel confident in offering overtly spiritual care. It's to help them, therefore, that the other four booklets have been written.

Not all carers feel confident in offering overtly spiritual care, so it's to help them that the booklets have been written.

I have written 'How To worship with individuals in your care' and 'How to have a memorial service at home when you are unable to attend the funeral'. Anna Chaplaincy founder and pioneer Debbie Thrower has written 'How to help someone spiritually towards the end of life', and Catriona Foster has written 'How to worship with a group of residents'.

When I first thought about writing something for care home staff my idea was that I would just email it to all the carers that I knew locally, but then early on in lockdown we had a meeting of Anna Chaplaincy regional leads on Zoom and the idea just took off! So here we are, eight weeks later, about to publish a set of five booklets for care homes. God's amazing! I never saw this coming, but it feels wonderful. We all just hope they'll be a blessing to people because that's our only aim.'

About Sally Rees

Sally Rees is the Anna Chaplaincy lead for Wales, currently awaiting her formal commissioning in this role, as well as her ordination as a priest, as soon as lockdown

restrictions are lifted. After retiring from a career in nursing, both on the wards and as a lecturer, Sally offered the next ten years to God, which is how she came to play a key role in the development of Anna Chaplaincy.

Anna Chaplaincy Carer's Guides

A Carer's Guide are available for pre-order now at ten pounds per pack of five:

<https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/anna-chaplaincy-carers-guides>

How do we look after ourselves and others better in the wake of a health crisis such as Covid-19? This Carer's Guide series offers practical help and guidance to carers who find themselves needing to provide spiritual support to older people or others in residential care.

Anna Chaplaincy for older people

Anna Chaplaincy for Older People offers spiritual and emotional care for those in later life.

www.annachaplaincy.org.uk

