



## AS IT IS

# 'Hug Tents' Give Older America Needed Contact, Safely

February 14, 2021

The COVID-19 health crisis has made it harder for older Americans who are in assisted living homes to have physical contact with their families.

The Juniper Village at Louisville is an assisted living home in a neighborhood near Denver, Colorado. It has fully vaccinated people living there and its workers. With the help of TRU Community Care, a nonprofit healthcare organization, Juniper Village created “hug **tents**” with plastic for people living there.

Amanda Meier is a project coordinator with TRU Community Care. With the help of her husband and some volunteers, they built the “hug tent.” It includes plastic arm **sleeves** for safe contact.

The tents are giving families a way to stay connected and see each other in a safe way. The tents permit people to hug and be in close contact without infecting each other by using the plastic barrier.

Anna Hostetter is the **spokeswoman** for Juniper Village. “I think it’s just a huge weight off their shoulders, just being able to have that hug that they haven’t had in so long,” she said.

During the planning of the “hug tents,” Hostetter said she was not sure if one could feel human contact through plastic. But she said the experience “was really special for our families.” Juniper Village plans to continue using the tents.

Since the coronavirus health crisis started, similar “hug tents” have been created around the United States, England and in Brazil.

Len Hartman is a 77-year-old **dementia** patient at Juniper Village. Lynda Hartman, his wife of nearly 55 years, was able to experience what life was like before the health crisis by hugging Len.

“It felt so good. I kept hitting his glasses when I hugged him, though,” Lynda said.

Lynda can no longer take care of Len by herself because of broken bones in her back. “I really needed it...It meant a lot to me, and it’s been a long, long time,” Lynda Hartman said after her short visit in the hug tent.

I’m Armen Kassabian.

*Thomas Peipert from the Associated Press reported this story Armen Kassabian adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.*

---

## Words in This Story

**tents** – *n.* a portable shelter made of nylon or plastic

**sleeves** – *n.* the part of a shirt, jacket, etc., that covers all or part of your arm

**spokeswoman** – *n.* a woman who speaks for or represents someone or something

**dementia** – *n.* a mental illness that causes someone to be unable to think clearly or to understand what is real and what is not real

*How are the elderly affected by the Pandemic in your country?*

*We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section.*