

Helpful Tips

Assess with every interaction, "Are they safe, happy and pain free?"

Be compassionate – How would you like to be treated if you were ill or had a disability?

Offer help, but don't take over.

Make them feel empowered.

Repetitive questions or comments are new to them every time.

Don't take things personally.

Give yourself credit daily for engaging respectfully.

Live in their world and learn to play again.


Utilizing their preferred music can help create a calm environment.

Care Partners need to stay healthy in mind, body and soul; as well as stay socially connected and safe.

Know your connection continues to exist, even when they are unable to communicate with you by normal standards.

Look for the joy. As you will only find what you are looking for.

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Helpful Tips when Dealing with Dementia



Alzheimer's Speaks

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Helpful Tips

Keep in mind each person with dementia is unique and may react differently to these tips.

Smile, stay calm and positive. Doing this can help everyone.

A quiet environment is best.

Always approach from the front so you don't scare them.

Be at eye level when communicating and keep friendly eye contact.

Over stimulation of the senses can trigger emotional shifts.

Introduce yourself in a similar fashion utilizing multi-sensory connections such as: sound, sight, touch and smell.

Don't ask: Do you remember me? What is my name?

Accept and validate their emotions versus trying to change their feelings.

Look for their nonverbal communication signs. They can pick up and respond to yours too.

- ◆ Stern eyebrows
- ◆ Rolling eyes
- ◆ Crossed arms
- ◆ Pointing fingers
- ◆ Tight jaw
- ◆ Smile
- ◆ Gentle touch
- ◆ Glint in eye
- ◆ Dimples
- ◆ Wink

Helpful Tips

Have inclusive conversations. Show respect even if they don't reply or their response doesn't make sense.

Be gentle in both conversation and touch.

Use your calm and compassionate voice.

Laughter is usually appreciated, but don't be demeaning.

Be patient and give them extra time to respond.

Be conversational. Don't lecture or try to control.

Simplify instructions and narrow choices to one or two.

- ◆ Would you like to wear the red or blue shirt?
- ◆ Show the shirts as a physical cue.

If you don't understand what they are trying to say or do, show interest by asking clarifying questions.

- ◆ Tell me more about that?
- ◆ What does it look like?
- ◆ How does it work?
- ◆ Who uses it?
- ◆ When would you use it?
- ◆ Why do you like it?

Helpful Tips

Praise what they can do.

Maintain routines whenever possible.

Identify agitators and try to remove or replace them with a sense of calm and safety.

Don't assume they are not interested if their eyes are closed. They may be processing information or searching for a word.

Have a backup plan.

Be more spontaneous and willing to reprioritize things.

Gently redirect if they lose their train of thought or wander off.

Arguing won't work. Logic isn't always relevant when dementia is in play.

Take pictures to capture moments you both can reminisce about.

It's ok to relax and be quiet. Neither of you need to be busy all the time.

Be patient and kind. If they are struggling with a task, offer help in a respectful way.

Build a tool kit of resources, as what worked in one moment might not work in the next.