



Tips for Having a Successful Visit with a Loved One with Dementia

The Alzheimer's Association and other experts offer some useful tips designed to help achieve a pleasant and satisfying visit – for you, the person with dementia and his/her primary caregiver.

- **Bring items from the past** – Photo albums are great reminiscence tools. While recent memories may have faded for the individual, past memories are often vivid and clear. Photos from the past can spark conversation, elicit fond memories and make for a wonderful visit.
- **Relate to his/her former interests** – This can be used as a trigger for a positive response. Take a fishing magazine for the former angler or a fashion magazine for the woman who loved clothing.
- **Enjoy the moment with him/her** – Simply looking at pictures and hearing your soothing conversation can be entertaining and create a positive experience for the person with dementia.
- **Look at the big picture** – What is most important is that the person has a positive experience, whether he/she remembers who you are or not.
- **Do not ask the person if he/she remembers you** – By saying this, you are constantly reminding the person of his/her deficits.
- **Show your love and care** – Exhibit your love and support when visiting, be positive and demonstrate to the person that you are someone who loves and cares about him/her.
- **Plan on a short visit** – If you visit for short intervals you are more likely to have a successful interaction.

Additional Tips that Can Help Improve Your Visit

- Introduce yourself and call the person by name before every interaction.
- Maintain eye contact throughout the conversation to show that you are listening.
- Allow the person time to respond to your questions. Studies show that individuals with dementia need 90 seconds longer than normal to process what is being said.
- Reduce the stimulation around you. Turn off the TV or radio.
- Talk to the person like an adult. Don't talk down or use "baby talk."
- Talk in short, easy-to-understand sentences.
- Don't ask questions. It is better to make statements. Instead of, "Are you enjoying the pretty weather?" say, "It has been so beautiful this fall."
- Make sure you approach the individual from the front and at his/her level.
- Use touch to let him/her know you care.
- Never say "goodbye" at the end of a visit. It is better not to draw attention to the fact that you are leaving. Try saying, "I love you."

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