

10 Tips When Visiting Someone with Dementia



While visiting someone with dementia is very important, it can also present some new or unexpected challenges. Below are 10 tips that may help to ensure a more successful visit for you and the person with dementia.

- 1 Plan Ahead.** Plan to do a meaningful activity together, as it can be helpful to bring focus to a visit. Try activities such as looking at a photo album, listening to music, having a snack, taking a walk or a drive.
- 2 Timing.** Find out what time of the day is best to visit the person. Try to avoid visiting when other activities are scheduled at the centre or home. In general, it is best to plan the visit for the late morning or early afternoon.
- 3 Keep Things Calm.** Avoid large groups, events and places with lots of noise and distractions. These kinds of places can become confusing and overwhelming. Take a one-on-one walk to get a break from a larger group activity.
- 4 Short Visits.** Regular short visits are best. If you plan a longer visit, your friend or family member may get tired or overwhelmed. They may need a break of time to rest.
- 5 Use Clues and Cues:**
 - Use verbal cues, and gestures to orient the person.
 - Introducing yourself or others by your name and connection can be helpful. For example “I was talking to Sheila, my daughter, yesterday”.

- Non-verbal signals such touching or pointing to an item when talking about it can also be helpful.
- 6 Be respectful.** Remember that the person has a life rich with history, experience, relationships, skills, hopes and dreams. Treat them with respect by trying not to talk about or over the person.
 - 7 Listen.** It is important the person has time to feel heard. If the person is feeling sad, let them express their feelings without trying make them feel better right away. Sometimes the best thing to do is to just listen, and show that you care.
 - 8 Use Touch.** Gentle touch can be comforting and reassuring. Holding a hand and a friendly hug can maintain much needed connection.
 - 9 Educate Yourself.** Knowing about dementia can help to understand what your family member or friend is going through. Understanding the illness can help you to cope more effectively with changes and challenges.
 - 10 Self Care is Important.** There are many issues around changing roles and losses that affect families, friends and carers of people with dementia. Remember that your visit is important. People with dementia need emotional support for their well-being. It's also important to take care of yourself. After a difficult visit, take time for yourself or connect with a supportive friend or professional.



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