

Suggestions for Visiting Someone with Dementia

Dementia covers a group of symptoms such as memory problems, decreasing ability to think or reason and difficulty communicating.

People with Dementia can become muddled, anxious and frightened and may have trouble recognising people. Their behaviour can be unusual and awkward. They may find it hard to express themselves or understand people.

However, feelings remain, as does spiritual awareness. Visits can stimulate warm feelings, bring comfort and reaffirm spiritual truths.

Wear something bright or colourful
Approach from the front
(don't tap on the back or shoulder)

Introduce yourself with an explanation
Smile and make eye contact
Sit at the same level.

Perhaps **touch** their hand if appropriate
Speak simply, one comment at a time
Listen and give time for answers or comments
Be positive and reassuring.

Avoid questions if possible or choices
A cup of tea? (not, tea or coffee?) Be Patient.

Accept Incorrect statements as they may be caused by memory loss or faulty logic.
Acknowledge the emotions behind the words.

Suggestions - things to take or do

Take a magazine, postcard, flower catalogue

Play a game - draughts, dominoes, ludo, etc

Listen to a CD-familiar music, hymns or songs

Watch a dvd of flowers, gardens, water views

Reminisce about the past, people or places

Look at photographs or illustrated books

Read a passage from the Bible but it needs to be in a familiar version for them ?KJV/RSV/AV
Read a collect or creed from Common Prayer

Smile, and share laughter.
If appropriate, take a soft toy for them to hold or stroke or a lavender bag to evoke memories

The visit need not last long. It is the feelings that remain not the length of time spent. They might well forget that you came but the warmth and feelings of your care will not be forgotten.

You may be distressed by their condition but be encouraged in that you will have lessened their isolation and loneliness by your visit.

Departure should not be a 'big deal'.
Sunrise advise, "Parachute in, evaporate out"

Feelings remain when facts are forgotten

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