

## 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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