

WHEN RELATIVES & FRIENDS VISIT

Here are some tips you can share with relatives and friends who visit your loved one.

1. Understand Dementia

Understanding how dementia develops will allow you **a window into what your loved one is going through**. It will help you to understand some of the behaviours or feelings your loved one is experiencing.

2. Always Introduce Yourself

Greet your loved one by introducing of your name and how you are connected to them. Sometimes your loved one may have forgotten, and they may develop anxiety from trying to recall who you are.

3. Make the Visit Fun!

Make the visit fun by **taking something with you**: an old photo, a memento from a past trip together, or an item from olden days. Reading from a magazine or newspaper also helps to engage your loved one and gives both of you something to do together.

Use music to lift your loved one's mood. Music can create an atmosphere of relaxation or fun whether it is played from a CD or on an instrument. It can help your loved one recall past memories, or simply to have a good time!

4. Acknowledge your loved one's feelings

Have an open mind and be flexible: **Your visit may not go according to how you have planned, but that is all right**. Have an open mind on how your visit with your loved one goes, adapting to your loved one's energy levels, mood, etc.

Dementia can cause your loved one to experience feelings of anxiety, anger and agitation. Acknowledge how your loved one feels to provide some assurance.

5. Adapt your communication style

Explore other methods of communication other than talking. **Hold your loved one's hand, give him/her a hug, a shoulder rub or hand massage** to complement or replace conversation.

Communicate clearly by asking closed ended questions instead of open ended questions. Listen patiently and allow him/her time to respond. With dementia, your



love one's ability to express himself/herself may be affected. Try not to finish his or her sentence. Instead, **listen patiently** as he/she speaks and searches for the right words.

6. Keep in touch

Often, it is assumed that with memory loss, interaction with loved ones and friends holds little or no purpose. However, offering your loved one **your time and presence helps to sustain their emotional wellbeing!** Be comfortable with silence as it is not a bad thing. Savour each other's presence and your time with each other.

