



Suggestions for visiting someone living with Dementia

People who live with Dementia can become anxious and frightened at times and may have trouble recognising people. Their behaviour can be unusual or awkward and 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.

When visiting try to

- **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
- **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 - checkers, dominoes, 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 their favourite book
- **Smile**, and share laughter

If appropriate, take something soft 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. Someone living with Dementia might forget that you came, but the warmth and feelings of your care will not be forgotten.

You may be distressed by a loved one's condition, but be encouraged in that your visit will have made their day better and helped them to feel more connected to those around them.

Departure should not be a big deal, remember to "parachute in, evaporate out".

Feelings remain when facts are forgotten.

Greengate