



Tips for Visiting Residents in a Long Term Care Facility

1. Find a quiet place off the unit, if possible, so that you can be heard easily and where there are few distractions. Sometimes it is possible to take the resident out of the facility for a walk or to a local coffee shop or restaurant. Bring in a thermos of juice or tea and some cookies or fruit and have a "picnic" in a quiet place.
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3. Keep the conversation light. The stimulation of a few funny stories and a smile goes a long way to making a visit enjoyable.
4. Reminisce about the early years of the resident's life. Help him/her remember the songs he/she sang and the friends he/she had, what he/she liked at school or any travelling he/she did.
5. If the resident only wants to talk about going home, find out what he/she remembers of home and continue the conversation based on these memories. Perhaps he/she wants to be reassured that home did exist and that the remaining memories are valid. This kind of remembering can reassure the resident and produce contentment.
6. Because many residents in LTC facilities experience cognitive impairments, it is easier for them to understand you if you use short, simple sentences and speak clearly and slowly. You may need to repeat your sentences. Just as they cannot be hurried when walking, so can they not be hurried in their thoughts and communication.
7. Bring in a labelled photo album or laptop computer and go through it with the resident. Have all visitors sign a guest book with a short description of the topics discussed for reinforcement by staff.
8. Children and pets are welcome. Pets must be well behaved and have current vaccinations.
9. For variety, try a visit at mealtime. Call the facility in advance to arrange a meal with the resident.
10. Read recent letters, cards and/or newspapers to the resident or help the resident write a letter or note.