

# **VISITING TIPS FOR PERSONS OF IMPORTANCE**

- **It's the quality, not the quantity, of visits that makes a difference to residents.** Bring something to do together, or spend time with other residents and their families. Visit when you are not rushed and do not stay so long that you and the resident are worn out.
- **Alternate visits with other family members and friends.** Encourage church and social friends to visit at times when the resident is most alert... invite friends and provide suggestions for activities during their visit.
- **Create visiting rituals.** Bring a milkshake to share on a hot afternoon, check out the bird feeder, or sit on the balcony, visit another resident, or bring a craft project, favourite video, or audiotape to enjoy together.
- **Quiet shared moments are just as meaningful as 'gab' sessions about current family events.** Listening to hymns or saying prayers together, polishing nails, brushing hair, or massaging the resident's hand can promote feelings of togetherness and belonging.
- **Use props for reminiscing about the old days.** For instance, bring photo albums or scrapbooks, old magazines, sewing patterns, or tools, and talk about them. Sometimes, residents enjoy repeating favourite stories, jokes, poems or songs. **When in doubt, reminisce.**
- **Love is portable.** You do not have to be present or send your love in a telephone call, videotape, a letter, or a card. Your loving message may be 'delivered' by a friend or relative in your absence or by another resident's family.
- **"Connect, not correct".** When speaking to someone with dementia, it's sometimes impulsive to correct them with the facts, but this can be confusing and not helpful to the individual. Instead, focus on their feelings and provide reassurance.
- **Communicate Effectively:**
  - Speak clearly and slowly: Ensure they understand what you're saying.
  - Be a good listener: Let them express their feelings and listen without interrupting.
  - Use technology: Virtual visits can help maintain connections with family and friends

- **Make the environment pleasant.** Reducing background noise by turning off a TV, closing a door, or shutting a window can help make the visit peaceful, more focused, and less confusing.
- **Ask the person what they want to do.** By encouraging the person you're visiting to make decisions about how you spend time together that day, you enhance their independence and self-esteem. It is generally a good idea to limit the choices. Try asking "Would you like to go for a walk?"
- **It's ok to bring a pet along.** Pets that are up to date on all vaccinations and that are on a leash are welcome to visit The Pines. Pets can provide comfort and joy for people living in long-term care. If you have questions about bringing a pet into The Pines, please do not hesitate to speak with the admin at the front desk.
- **It's okay to tell a Love Lie.** A person with dementia might ask questions that are difficult to answer truthfully without causing distress. Sometimes, a "loving lie" or "therapeutic fibbing" can be used to reduce distress and promote comfort. This involves intentionally not telling the truth to avoid unnecessary pain or upset, particularly when the person's reality is different from what is being told.
- **Check for special events to enjoy together.** If you're visiting The Pines, ask the staff if any special events are happening, such as a holiday party, pub night, or live entertainment. You can also find information about special events on the monthly activities calendar located in each home area or access it on the Pines Resident and Family Portal.
- **If you are concerned that the person you're visiting will be upset when you leave, try to plan your departure with an event.** Having the end of your visit coincide with going to a meal or an activity can make for a natural end to the visit and can be a distraction for the person.

### **Sources:**

Lisa P. Gwyther, *Caring for people with Alzheimer's Disease: A manual for facility staff*

*Making visits meaningful.* Alzheimer Society of Canada. (n.d.).

<https://alzheimer.ca/en/help-support/i-have-friend-or-family-member-who-lives-dementia/making-meaningful-visits>