



The
**Dementia
Society**
Ottawa and Renfrew County

MOVING IN AND MAKING THE TRANSITION: VISITING



After the person you are caring for has moved, you may find yourself wondering: What do I do now? Where do I fit in? Visiting can help you adjust to your new role. It can help you and the person you are caring for re-energize and reconnect.

How can I help the person feel safe in their new home?

Moving can be tough on anyone. It is okay if the person is feeling frustrated, confused, or angry. Actively listening allows the person to share concerns. The person may repeat themselves more often than usual. Even if you have heard the story before, let the person re-live the memories or share current thoughts. Pay attention to the emotional tone in their voice. Acknowledge their feelings to help build a positive connection.

You can provide reassurance and support by saying:

- *“You are in good hands,”*
- *“I am here,”*
- *“You are safe,”* and
- *“I am sorry that it has been hard”*

How often should I visit?

Every relationship is different, and this will determine how often you should visit. You might feel like visiting the home every day for the first few weeks or so. It will help you to get to know the staff and see how the home works on a daily basis. This also allows the staff to ask you questions. Over time, you may want to visit less often. You may also want to make a visiting schedule and share the care with friends and family.

Consider:

- How often to visit based on how much time and energy you have
- What activity you will do together based on their interests and abilities
- What the staff suggests based on how well the person is adjusting
- What the best time is to visit based on their energy levels

Watch for fatigue. The person is tired if they are repeating conversations, showing irritability, walking away from you, or asking you to leave. Remember that the visit is about “quality time” and not “quantity time.”

What should we do when I visit?

Here are a few potential activities:

- Assist with meals, drink, comfort
- Share special treats
- Bring in something from the garden
- Go for a walk together if they are able
- Visit different parts of the home
- Pamper the person: Comb hair, massage hands, give backrub
- Update on daily news, family news, read newspapers, look through magazines
- Enjoy music, pets
- Decorate the room
- Take care of shopping needs
- Watch a favorite TV program together
- Play a game
- Enjoy silence
- Reminisce: look at photographs, create a life storyboard

Here is a list of more meaningful activities to do together: <https://dementiahelp.ca/virtual-program-categorie/meaningful-activities/>

More resources and readings:

- Caregiver Checklist for the Middle and Late Stages: <https://dementiahelp.ca/understanding-dementia/resources-factsheets/>
- Retirement Home and Long Term Care Support Group for Caregivers: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/support-group-long-term-care-and-retirement-home-registration-104479892170>
- Meaningful Activities Webinar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HujCUc7AOxk&feature=emb_logo
- My Life Story: https://mkodsorcwebsiteunago.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/My_Life_Story_-_EN.pdf
- On-demand Learning Module – Adjusting to long-term care: <https://dementiahelp.ca/understanding-dementia/on-demand-learning/>

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