

# LEADERSHIP

## **Dementia: Tips On Getting Attention – And Keeping It**

Remember the following pointers during any kinds of activities or interactions when you want to maintain attention from dementia patients, either as a group or individually!

**Cueing.** A cue is the same thing as a reminder. During activities try different forms of cues.

- **Visual** – any type of cue that the patient can see.
  - Make eye contact
  - Make large gestures or movements
  - Point
  - Talk with hands
  
- **Verbal** – any type of cue that is spoken to a patient.
  - Speak loudly
  - Speak clearly (often this requires you to slow down your normal rate of speaking)
  - Frequently use the patient's name
  - Face patient when speaking
  - Make eye contact when speaking
  
- **Tactile** – any type of cue that involves touch.
  - lightly touch patient on the arm
  - rhythmically tap on the patient's knee
  - hold or shake patient's hand
  
- **Cognitive** – any type of cue that might spark memory or thought.
  - A familiar song, for example, "Happy Birthday"
  - A familiar rhythm, for example, "shave and a haircut",
  - A familiar sound, for example the doorbell sound or whistling

**Interrupting Expectations.** When you interrupt the expectations of a patient often this results in drawing attention to the present moment. Some examples are below.

- **Unexpected silence** - make a break in sound during an activity
  - stop speaking (unexpectedly)
  - pause a cd (unexpectedly)
- **Unexpected movements** - Begin or stop movement during an activity
  - freeze in an unlikely position (unexpectedly)
  - Jump, wave, dance
- **Unexpected sounds** – Make a sound during an activity
  - Clap (unexpectedly)
  - Make a strange mouth noise like "zzzzzz" or "brrrrrrrr" (unexpectedly)
  - Click your tongue
  - Fake an accident (i.e. dropping papers on the floor)

Overall, PRESENT Yourself! You are important; you are a leader. Be one! Remember to command and move the energy, notice the space you are in and maximize it, and have fun!