



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Strategies for Spending a Successful Day with a Person with Alzheimer's Disease

1. Prepare Yourself

- Rest, relax, exercise, do something special for yourself.
- Get up early and have your bath.
- Read and study some aspect of dementia so you are better informed.
- Make a plan for the day – allow for alternatives.

2. Prepare the Environment

- Clear the clutter away.
- Have all materials/equipment available.
- Plan for a minimum of people and interruptions.
- Turn off TV, stereo, etc. Use soft, favorite music if you wish.
- Arrange for any necessary help.

3. Prepare the Person with Dementia

- Awaken gently.
- Follow his/her rhythm. Avoid rushing, stress and expectations.
- Make necessary activities such as grooming, dressing, and bathing enjoyable. Take your time and chat as you work, share a cup of tea, allow for frequent rest periods.
- Simplify everything- clothes, procedures, routines and expectations.
- Focus on what the person can do. You supply the pieces he/she can't do.
- Avoid asking questions. Give information instead.

Wrong: "Do you want something to drink?"

Right: "Let's have a cup of tea together."

- Don't criticize. Try to find the part of the situation that is positive or funny.

4. Enjoy the Day

- Gentle wake-up or natural wake-up, small conversation, juice or tea.
- Toilet routine, groom hands, face and tea.
- Breakfast in robe. Avoid cutlery, fussy table settings and hard-to-manage food. Serve favorites- one at a time.
- Rest and talk about good times, old memories and family. Use pictures to assist with remembering.

- Dress in simple, comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Assist with toileting.
- Go for a gentle walk - hold the person's arm or hand. Chat about good times and memories.
- Rest with music, a pet, give a shoulder massage - give something to drink.
- Serve a simple lunch - finger foods, favourites. Use a tray and eat where the person is. If they must move about, give them something to eat on the move.
- Short walk, time in an enclosed garden or favorite enclosed room. Surround with favorite objects, pets and music. THIS IS REST TIME FOR THE CAREGIVER – and the person with dementia.
- Include in some “helping” activity sweeping, scrubbing fruits/vegetables, polishing silver, dusting, folding. Ask them to help you. **Any** effort is perfect - even if they make a mess!
- Rest. Develop a safe, comfortable area where the person can rest or move about or “work” without the confusion of the whole area.
- Long walk/short drive/ story reading/music. Arrange for someone to assist primary caregiver with this activity. Use Day Care, therapeutic companions, home support and volunteers.
- Simplified dinner. Allow time, serve favorite foods and include the person in conversation. Present liquids in many different ways (e.g. popsicle, eggnog, shakes). Invite one friend or family member to join you.
- Walk or dance for brief exercise.
- Provide a gentle, comfortable bath or shower.
- Help the person with night attire.

Source: Freely adapted from Moyra Jones Resources, Moyra J. D. Jones