



Helpful tools and techniques to support a person with dementia and their carer

1. Don't underestimate the skills that you already have in working with people. Be polite, respectful, use your common sense, stay calm. Be friendly and approachable. SMILE.
2. Take your time and help the person with dementia and their carer not to feel rushed or hurried.
3. Offer the help that would be acceptable to the person with dementia and their carer – 'May I show you where the lavatories are?' 'Would you like me to pick out the coins for you?' 'May I help you?'
4. If the person with dementia is unable to remember their PIN reassure them to reduce their anxiety and ask if they would prefer to sign for their items instead.
5. Remember that we communicate most through our body language. Watch carefully how the person with dementia is moving, using their arms, their facial expression. This might help you understand the message they are trying to get over to you if you can't understand what they are saying.
6. Try not to interrupt or finish off the persons sentences. This is really unhelpful. Wait patiently and use reassuring eye contact and gentle smiles.
7. Stay focussed on the person with dementia and their carer. Try not to let yourself be distracted by the things around you, don't start conversations with others.
8. Make sure that you are using excellent body language yourself. Try to be on the same level as the person with dementia and/or their carer. Don't use sudden or potentially threatening gestures.
9. You can use words and body language to communicate and you can write things down or use pictures if this would help.
10. Tell the person with dementia if you really cannot understand them. They are adults and would probably appreciate your honesty and that you tried rather than feeling 'fobbed off'. Ask for help.
11. If the person with dementia has taken something or not paid for a service they have received you need to know how to deal with this sensitively. If you know the person with dementia you might be able to stop them and remind them that they need to pay without causing added distress. If you do not know the person you need to initiate your organisational procedures. BE SENSITIVE.
12. If the person with dementia or their carer is very distressed, offer to make them a drink or get them some water and guide them to a quiet place to sit. Remember that if you need to access more help for the person with dementia and their carer they are likely to be in an incredibly distressed state so offer reassurance at all times.
13. Ask the person with dementia or their carer if there is anyone that you could contact for them. SENSITIVELY check if there is a name or address or contact number on their person – wallet, purse, pocket.
14. Make use of your Community Police Officers, local disability services and social services departments for advice if need be.
15. Contact the Emergency Services as a last resort or if the person or their carer seems to be at serious risk to themselves or others.