

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN CARE (FIC) INTERVENTION QUESTIONS AND IDEAS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Instructions: The following ideas often help family members as they form partnerships with staff caregivers. The list is intended to help you, as a family member, think about your concerns for care of your relative with dementia, and also some approaches that have been successful in providing high quality care. We encourage you to discuss these ideas with other family members.

Questions to Think About

- What have been some of the best things about being a caregiver?
- What have been some of the most challenging things about being a caregiver?
- What things would be helpful for staff to know about your loved one?
- How would you like to be more involved in your loved one's care?
- What things do you like best about the nursing home's care, staff, environment and activities?
- What things would you like to change?
- What things would you like to see done for your loved one that aren't currently done?
- List the specific care needs of your loved one. What are some ways to meet those needs?
- What do you hope will happen in your partnership in care with the staff?
- What concerns do you have about your partnership in care with the staff?

Suggestions for Family Involvement

- Tailor the type and amount of care you are involved in to meet your own interests/abilities, as well as those of your loved one with dementia.
- Feel free to be as involved in care as your time and energy allows.
- Do not feel obligated to do a certain amount of care.

Ways for Family to Be Involved in Care

Art Activities: Paint, draw, make a collage or work with fabrics. Sculpt with clay together.

Share Information: Talk with the staff about your loved one's life and personality. Help staff with one or more project that is aimed at knowing your family member's life-long interests and experiences.

Personal Care Activities: Comb or style your loved one's hair. Massage hands, face, arms, neck or back. Bring in a special perfume or shaving lotion. Apply make-up or nail polish.

Exercise: Walk, dance or toss a ball together. Do range of motion exercises.

Reminisce: Talk together about past events such as childhood memories, special occasions, occupations, relatives, pets or food. Bring in old photographs, magazines or catalogues to share. Prepare a scrapbook to share with your loved one and the staff.

Recreational Activities: Go outdoors together to walk, sit or garden. Do routine household tasks together such as laundry, sweeping, dusting or cooking. Play card games or do jigsaw puzzles. Grow some plants indoors. Watch sports, videos or favorite TV shows together. Bring a favorite pet to visit.

Music Activities: Listen to tapes/digital recordings of favorite music. Sing together. Play musical instruments. March, dance or clap to music together.

Eating Activities: Bring in a special food to enjoy with your loved one. Eat a meal together or assist your loved one at mealtime.

Ideas for Successful Communication with Your Relative

- Use a soft, calm tone of voice.
- Approach your loved one from the front.
- Maintain eye contact at a face-to-face level. Smile.
- Identify yourself by name. Call your loved one by name.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Use as few words as possible.
- Give brief, one step directions. Repeat as necessary.
- Praise success and emphasize the positive.
- Use familiar words and cues.
- Use objects, pictures and gestures to help communicate.
- Be patient and reassuring.
- Avoid quizzing (e.g., Do you know my name?).
- Wait for your loved one to respond.
- Minimize noise and distractions.
- Talk on an adult-to-adult level. Avoid baby talk.
- If your loved one becomes restless or agitated, ask the staff for assistance.

Ideas for Visiting Your Relative

- Plan your visits to allow your loved one adequate sleep and rest.
- Try to limit visits to one hour (to avoid fatigue), followed by a break.
- Limit visitors to two at a time (to avoid over-stimulation, or too much going on at once that can be stressful for the person with dementia). Children are also welcome for short visits.
- Show affection when the visit begins. When leaving, give a kiss or hug good-bye and leave quickly.
- Encourage your loved one to continue with usual unit activities during your visit. Join in on activities.
- If signs of fatigue are evident, end the visit and allow your loved one to rest.

Partnerships in Care

You will meet with staff leaders to discuss how you would like to be involved in the care of your loved one. You and the staff will develop an agreement that describes your and their involvement. Please feel free to share your thoughts about the care that your loved one receives. It is important to remember that you and the staff are partners in providing care.