

## DEMENTIA CARE KIT TIP SHEET

### ACTIVITIES and CARE INTERVENTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

*For questions about kit contents, please contact either your Team Leader or the Coordinator of Volunteers at your site*

Although you may already have experience working with a person who has dementia, this guide is here to help you, should you get “stuck” for ideas. The contents in this kit are meant to stimulate conversation with the patient, create a higher quality visit experience, encourage memories and stimulate his or her mental abilities. *Please ensure that this time is unhurried and enjoyable.* Avoid “quizzing” or correcting any choices or decisions made by the patient as this may cause stress. Be guided by the patient’s verbal and non-verbal communication – if any activity seems to become too stressful, tiring or confusing to the patient, please discontinue. **Thank you for using this kit to enrich the visit with your patient.**

Materials/Activity	Details & How to use	Benefits to the person with dementia
<p><b>“LOOK BOOKS”</b> or picture calendars with photos such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ nature scenes</li> <li>♦ pet variety</li> <li>♦ cars</li> <li>♦ travel scenes</li> <li>♦ people</li> <li>♦ favorite foods</li> <li>♦ religious items</li> <li>♦ flowers</li> <li>♦ sports</li> <li>♦ holidays</li> <li>♦ military insignia</li> <li>♦ others</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: If “Look Books” have minimal text, this may prompt person to read and recall information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Sit side-by-side with patient</li> </ul> <p>Describe the picture to create light, <i>non-detailed</i> conversation using photos as the focal point (<i>takes “pressure” off patient</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ <b>Watch non-verbal/visual cues to determine if patient appears stressed or tired</b></li> <li>♦ <b>Gently ask patient if pictures or conversation is causing patient to be tired or upset</b></li> <li>♦ Encourage patient to read if able</li> </ul> <p>Memories or conversation may create pleasant or unpleasant memories or cause confusion due to mental abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Photos may encourage conversation about non-medical topics that are more familiar and comfortable to patient</li> <li>♦ Memory-making may create higher quality of life (at least during time of visit)</li> <li>♦ Helps create a sense of relationship with another person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>FOLDING LAUNDRY</b></p> <p>Fabric scraps, washcloths, small towels, napkins or patient’s clothing</p>	<p><b>CAUTION</b> – This activity might prove very frustrating or <i>harmful to person’s self-esteem</i> if it is beyond their mental and/or physical capabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Assess patient’s capabilities to fold laundry-like materials, wrap ball of yarn or sand wood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Repetitive motion and stimulation of touching fabrics, yarn and wood is helpful</li> <li>♦ This activity encourages the patient to perform constructive work duties</li> </ul>

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<p><b>WRAPPING YARN OR SANDING WOOD</b></p> <p>Ball of yarn, sandpaper, block(s) of wood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Explain that you need help (folding, sanding, wrapping); ask person if they might like to assist you</li> <li>♦ <i>If they do not, discontinue the activity idea OR do it yourself and see if they join in later.</i></li> <li>♦ Lightly converse during activity; Emphasize no “right” or “wrong” to how things are folded, wrapped or sanded.</li> <li>♦ Note the difference in colors, textures, etc. as you fold/wrap your items; <i>“I like this one – it’s very soft.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Patient may feel meaningful contribution to their life or to the household tasks</li> <li>♦ This activity does not require a verbal response from the person</li> <li>♦ Make sure to say “thank you” – appreciation will support the patient’s self-esteem</li> </ul>
<p><b>CARDS and CARD PICTURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ 3 different decks of different cards</li> <li>♦ Hat or box</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Ask person to shuffle cards together; work together to sort cards according to card pictures <b>OR</b></li> <li>♦ Ask person to locate a certain types of card pictures; <i>“let’s look for all of the red cards”</i>; ask them to toss cards into a hat or box <b>OR</b></li> <li>♦ <b>Watch non-verbal/visual cues to determine if patient appears stressed or tired</b></li> <li>♦ <b>Gently ask patient if activity is causing patient to be tired or upset</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Promotes relationship building (person-centered care)</li> <li>♦ Fun – may encourage laughing</li> <li>♦ Stimulates memory capabilities</li> <li>♦ Does not require a verbal response</li> </ul>
<p><b>READING MATERIALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Current newspaper (<i>community journal, Plain Dealer</i>)</li> <li>♦ Magazine – of interest to patient</li> <li>♦ Childrens’ nursery rhymes, poetry or classic stories</li> <li>♦ Joke Book (appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Page through materials together; point out headlines or titles that are interesting</li> <li>♦ Ensure that you read loud enough</li> <li>♦ Hold materials so person can see words and photos</li> <li>♦ If emotions are created due to reading or looking at photos, gently explore with conversation or questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ People often enjoy having someone read to them; it does not require a verbal response from them</li> <li>♦ It informs the patient of current events</li> <li>♦ Readings may encourage conversation</li> <li>♦ Readings may encourage laughter</li> </ul> <p><b>CAUTION:</b> be aware of reading “bad news” articles as they may be upsetting or confusing for the person</p>
<p><b>SORTING</b></p> <p>Nuts and bolts Colored socks – all mixed up Lids of various sizes and shapes Pieces of material</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Select &amp; mix together items for sorting - no more than 2 or 3 obviously different types of items</li> <li>♦ Ask person to work with you to sort according to colors, size, shape, or type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Stimulates memory capabilities</li> <li>♦ May prove enjoyable to person</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If the matching is <b>not</b> correct, ask person how they sorted <i>“tell me about those lids...”</i>; no <i>“wrong”</i> statement should be used</li> <li>♦ Encourage independent decision making, however do not offer too many choices</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PUZZLES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Choose puzzles that are simple, yet age appropriate</li> <li>♦ Use puzzles with a limited number of pieces – you may wish to assemble all but a few remaining pieces prior to engaging the person; he or she can help finish what someone else <i>“left”</i></li> <li>♦ Encourage independent decision making, however do not offer too many choices</li> <li>♦ Create calm atmosphere and converse lightly while connecting puzzle pieces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Stimulates memory capabilities</li> <li>♦ May prove enjoyable to person</li> </ul>
<p><b>TRACING THE PERSON’S HAND</b> Blank paper Pencil, pen or crayons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Trace around person’s hand on paper</li> <li>♦ Explain what you are doing; talk about the many things we do with our hands (paint, build things, pet animals, cook, sew – thinks that might have meaning to person)</li> <li>♦ Write the person’s name on the hand <i>“this is Sandra’s hand”</i></li> <li>♦ Ask the person if she would like to color or decorate the hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Allows for physical contact</li> <li>♦ Validates the person’s identity</li> <li>♦ Person can participate in enjoyable activity that may allow memory discussions</li> </ul>

(CREATED 10/2012)