



Ways to Engage with People Who Have Dementia & Alzheimer's Disease

People living with Alzheimer's disease can feel isolated and alone. Finding ways to connect with them not only helps them feel as though they're still a part of things, it enriches both their lives and the lives of those around them. As you plan activities, think about what the person loved *before* their diagnosis. Did they love flowers? Cut out some out from a magazine and "arrange" them in a bouquet or pick real flowers from a friend's garden. If you start with things they enjoyed, you're more likely to have a positive interaction. And remember, large groups and noisy environments can be confusing when a person has Alzheimer's disease, but social interaction is still very important. Keep activities simple and relaxed, try the following to get started.

- Take a leisurely walk in nature or sit in a scenic garden.
- Go out for lunch or coffee, look for locations with relaxing environments.
- Draw, paint, color, dance, or sing! Even playing music that you know they enjoy can be a powerful experience.
- Look through family photos or cut up a magazine to make a scrapbook. Try telling stories about what's going on in the pictures.
- Visit museums, some even have special programs for people with cognitive impairments.
- Interact with animals. Take a dog on a walk or bring one to visit. Make sure that the person likes dogs and that the dog is calm and relaxed with people.
- Spend time doing every day activities like making a meal, baking, or washing the car.
- Do a simple puzzle together.
- Become a Dementia Friend. A Dementia Friend is someone who learns about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action. Learn more by visiting DementiaFriendsUSA.org.

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For more information, visit www.pbs.org/EveryMinuteCounts.

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