

Meaningful interaction



Living with dementia is challenging as it is. But with good communication, meaningful interaction and appropriate support, we can create an environment where people living with dementia will be accepted and embraced.

What makes interaction meaningful is the personal attention that forms the basis of what you do and experience together.

Join in their world and reality and see the person as they are, with all the abilities, feelings, thoughts and memories that still remain.

The following tips may help to establish a meaningful interaction with someone who has dementia. Encourage them and give that special person with dementia the feeling that you really see and hear them.

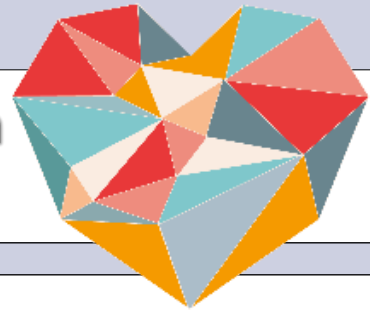


Forget dementia, remember the person



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
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6 Tips for meaningful interaction with a person with dementia



Empathize

By empathizing with someone with dementia, you can understand him or her better and you are better capable to support and interact. Accept and embrace all the behaviour and feelings that are part of this person.



Focus on possibilities

Do not focus on what a person no longer can do, but look at what they still can do. Give compliments if things succeed and go well, how small they might be. This makes a world of difference to someone with dementia.



Take them seriously

Take people with dementia and what someone is saying seriously. Find out what he or she means by asking more questions or repeating words and phrases. It may well be that a story does not make sense to you at all, but that there is certainly a message in the story that this person wants to tell.



Show commitment

Always show interest, even if you already know the story someone is telling. Ask how someone experienced it and the feelings with this. Make sure your involvement is genuine. People don't let themselves be fooled, so neither do people with dementia as they are sensitive for non-verbal signals.



Wishes & needs

No matter which stage of dementia, try to match the wishes and needs of the person you are interacting with. Don't think or assume you know already, but consciously consider what this person living with dementia actually wants or likes.



Don't take over

Help someone with dementia to remain as independent as long as possible and encourage them to do as much as possible for themselves. It may be easier to do things yourself but see what they can still do and offer support when necessary, before taking over.

*Make sure any of the person's other needs are met before you start with anything.
Ensure that they are comfortable!*

