

IDEAS

FOR A BETTER VISIT



Helpful ideas to better prepare you for visiting in a long-term care facility. Making every visit easier, more fun, and more enjoyable.

DEVELOPED BY THE IDEAS INSTITUTE
FUNDED BY THE MT. SINAI HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

WHEN HEARING IS A PROBLEM

"My father never seems to hear what I say to him. He wears hearing aids but they do not help. I must yell over the loud TV when I visit."

WHAT TO DO:

- Eliminate distractions or other sounds
- Turn off the TV or radio
- Close the door to the room
- Move to a quieter area
- Face the listener and gain his attention before beginning to speak
- Do not chew gum or cover your face while talking
- Speak in a deeper (low pitch) voice – it will be easier to hear
- Speak slowly and clearly, but do not shout
- Use gestures to help the understanding of words
- Write information in bold printed letters to make sure the message is understood
- Speak to ear with better hearing
- Ask questions to make sure the listener is following the conversation



Ask a nurse to check the hearing aid. It should be turned on and contain a working battery. If problems with the hearing aid persist, ask for a referral to a licensed audiologist or physician. If the person does not have a hearing aid and is having trouble understanding you, a hearing evaluation may be needed.

Good hearing is important for effective communication.

4

WHAT DO YOU SEE?




WHEN VISION IS A PROBLEM

A person who has low or partial vision can learn to make the best use of it. There are ophthalmologists and optometrists with special training in low vision. An examination may be appropriate. Among older persons, low vision can result from eye conditions such as cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, or as a result of a stroke.



HELPFUL HINTS:

- Try magnifiers or high intensity lamps for reading or close up tasks
- Position needed items so they are in the field of vision
- Use a programmable telephone with large or raised numbers
- Keep the environment the same – do not rearrange items in the room
- Contact the local sight center for product and activity information

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT THEY SEE:
	BLURRED VISION <i>As in cataracts or diabetic retinopathy</i> Sit in a well-lighted area
	LOSS OF CENTER VISION <i>As in macular degeneration</i> Sit to the side of the person during visits
	LOSS OF SIDE VISION <i>As in glaucoma or stroke</i> Sit in front of the person during visits

5

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

WHEN TALKING IS A PROBLEM.

Even though a person may have difficulty speaking or understanding conversation, individuals still have a desire to communicate. Ask for advice from a Speech-Language Pathologist for tips about effective methods of communication.

"When I visit my mom, she asks me the same questions over and over. What can I do to satisfy her and not upset myself?"

WHAT TO DO:

- Realize that your mom cannot control her memory problems
- Answer her questions or ask for some other details to move the conversation along as a helpful distraction
- Do not argue
- Write out the answer in large print and hand it to her. Every time she asks the question refer her to the answer on the card



"When I visit my father, he is too weak to speak for himself."

WHAT TO DO:

- Ask questions that only require a yes/no, nod or hand squeeze
- Show you care by gentle touch
- Bring someone along for the visit – He may enjoy listening to your conversation
- Talk about things that would be of interest to him
- Bring along a photo album and share some stories
- Read to him about current events or topics of his interest from magazines

6

"My grandfather is easily confused and doesn't seem to understand what I say. When he speaks to me he sometimes uses words I can't understand and often doesn't remember who I am."

WHAT TO DO:

- Find a quiet place to visit
- When you come to visit say "Hi Grandfather, it's _____"
- Be aware and sensitive to his body language and facial expressions
- Use simple vocabulary and short sentences – avoid "baby talk"
- Give instructions – one step at a time
- Be patient
- Ask yes/no questions – "Do you want coffee?"
- Ask simple choice questions – "Do you want to go for a walk or watch TV?"
- Do not change conversational topics frequently
- Give him enough time to answer – even if it takes a few minutes
- When he can't say a word, encourage him to point to or describe the item
- Use gestures to help him understand what you are saying
- If you can't understand, make a caring comment such as "This must be frustrating for you." "I wish I could understand what you said." "Let's try again later." "I am just glad to be with you."



7