

## EMS- COMMUNICATION TIPS & VISIT SCRIPT

<b>DO'S</b>	<b>DON'TS</b>
<i>Schedule visits at time of day when they are usually at their best (avoid late afternoon/early evening due to sundowning)</i>	<i>Speak too loudly</i>
<i>Minimize distractions- turn down/off the TV, loud music</i>	<i>Say "Don't you remember?" This can cause anger and embarrassment.</i>
<i>Keep your tone and body language friendly and positive</i>	<i>Point out mistakes. It can cause embarrassment and derail the conversation</i>
<i>Make eye contact and stay at their level (kneel down if they are in a wheelchair)</i>	<i>Assume they don't remember anything. Many people with dementia have moments of clarity</i>
<i>Introduce yourself each time</i>	<i>Take mean comments personally. Dementia can cause more irritability, fear and anger</i>
<i>Speak slowly and in short sentences with only one idea per sentence (eg, Hi Mary, I'm Bob. What a beautiful day.)</i>	<i>Talk down to them. They are not children and should still be shown respect</i>
<i>Give them extra time to speak or answer questions; avoid temptation to answer for them</i>	<i>Talk about them with other people as if they are not there</i>
<i>Use open-ended questions; there are no right or wrong answers</i>	<i>Give multiple choices. Instead, say "Do you want milk or water?" Or show the options to make easier to pick</i>
<i>Be okay with sitting in silence and know that words are a small part of communication. Observe body language</i>	<i>Ask what they want to talk about or ask multiple questions.</i>
<i>Follow their lead</i>	<i>Force conversations or activities</i>
<i>Validate their feelings. Allow their expression of feelings</i>	<i>Argue or correct their feelings. Instead say, "You sound upset. I would be too."</i>
<i>Meet them where they are at. Enter their reality. Go with the flow even if their conversation is untrue or does not make sense. Act like you've heard everything for the first time.</i>	<i>Correct their comments if they are untrue. If the person talks about taking a trip to Paris, talk about it as if it's happening or discuss other trips</i>
<i>Share and discuss memories of the past. They are more likely to remember from a long time ago</i>	<i>Discuss memories if the person seems distraught or uncomfortable. Instead, attempt to redirect</i>
<i>Participate in an activity they enjoy such as reading out loud, looking through photo albums, working on a puzzle</i>	<i>Assume that an activity they enjoyed one day, they will enjoy the next. Dementia can change things day to day</i>
<i>Give hugs, pats on the back if the person gives permission and enjoys it</i>	<i>Crowd their personal space. This can make the person feel cornered and unsafe</i>
<i>Remember you are in their home and their personal space.</i>	<i>Grab items in their home without asking. Instead, say "Can I look at this beautiful picture?"</i>
<i>Give compliments.</i>	<i>Make comments that could be interpreted as negative.</i>

**Script:**

While keeping the above Do's and Don'ts in mind, understand that it's normal and okay to feel nervous with the initial visits. Remember, this is about them. Focus on the individual and the outcome to be achieved. Understand that each day, each situation can be new to the person with dementia. Preparing, being positive and flexible are the keys to a successful visit.

\*\*To be culturally respectful, begin each greeting by addressing them by Ms. or Mr., and then ask them how they want to be addressed.

- A. **Initial Call:** *"Hi Ms. Smith, my name is Bob. I am a paramedic in Verona. Sally at your church called us on your behalf. We have a special program for people in our community where we check on them sometimes. I would like to come visit with you soon. Is that okay?"*
  - a. **If person says 'no':** *I understand you're busy. I'm sure you do have everything taken care of. I'd like to do meet with you once to check in and tell you more about what I do.*
  
- B. **Initial Visit:** *"Hi Ms. Smith, my name is Bob. I scheduled a visit with you today. May I come in? You look very nice. That is a pretty sweater! What a beautiful home you have."*
  - a. **If not eligible** (eg, does not live alone, probably no dementia, has services):  
*"Well, Ms. Smith you seem to be doing well and taking good care of yourself. I know of some great people at the ADRC that are able to help you if you do have any questions come up. Their number is 240-7400."*
  
- C. **Redirection or Conversation Starter:** *"Hi Mr. Rogers, I understand you are tired today. I am too! It's cold outside. May I come in to schedule another time? Is this your cat? I love cats!"*

*"Hi Mr. Ingalls, I am so happy to see you. Could I meet your dog? I love dogs!"*

*"Look what I found outside your door...your newspaper! I would like to look at it with you."*

*"Tell me more about this blanket..."*

*"Tell me more about this plant..."*

*"This is a beautiful picture. Tell me about your memory of this..."*