

CONNECTION CLUES



Welcome to Connection Clues

'Connection Clues' is the first of a group of four Treasure Hunt resources, developed in The Treasure project. Connection Clues can be used on its own, or alongside the other resources in the Treasure Hunt pack.

The 'Treasure Hunt' resources are designed to generate space for you to think about how you are before, during and after the visit. The resources also offer a bundle of ideas for you to possibly try out during the visit which may go some way in creating opportunities for connection.

What kind of Treasure Hunt is this?

At the heart of the idea of a 'Treasure Hunt' within the Treasure project, is the view that there are gems and treasures to be found when engaging with people in the later stages of dementia. The gems and treasures to be found are moments of feeling connected.

To go on a Treasure Hunt is to be open and intentionally look for opportunities for connection, with the person with dementia, in ways which might be new or a bit different to what you have tried before. The treasures to be found might be in the tiniest of moments, a small spark or a new discovery.

Connection Clues

Connection Clues is a resource which can be used during your online visit with your family member/friend. Finding ways to generate conversation, particularly if the person you are visiting uses few or no words, in an online context can be extremely challenging. The Connection Clues are a range of ideas for you to try out during the visit, which may generate laughs, interactions that don't rely solely on words and small sparks of energy or interest.

Purpose: To offer ideas to expand how you approach being together with your family member/friend online.

Minding our P's and Q's: Pace, Pause, Questions and Play

Some Things to Keep in Mind When Communicating with People with Dementia.



Pace

It can be useful to think about the speed at which you speak, and slowing this down if you tend to speak quickly. As you slow down your speech you may want to think about how you can convey a message through your tone of voice, facial expressions or hand gestures.



Play

The focus in The Treasure We Seek approach is on playing around with different ways of engaging. While the person may not fully understand the meaning of what you say they may enjoy seeing you playing around with words you use. For example singing a short sentence instead of speaking it, saying hello in a different language, using words from the past that are less common now.



Questions

Try to use questions sparingly. Perhaps use other ways of exploring what the person is feeling and thinking – we share some ideas for this below.



Pause

After you have said something, take a pause break to let your family member/friend hear and digest what you said. You may need to experiment with what works best in terms of length of pause.

What's Involved in Connection Clues

There are 20 Connection Clues. Each Clue proposes an action for you to do during the online visit. A significant number of the Clues suggest that you start by thinking about things that bring you joy or that interest you; the reason behind this is that the emotion you are experiencing when you are doing the action, perhaps more than the words you speak, will be communicated to your family member/friend.

The Clues have been designed to offer a wide range of options- some may feel like a good fit for you, others may sound 'a stretch too far'- go with what feels right for you.

As we don't know how, or if, the person will respond, the clues are a way of moving away from the idea of having a two-way conversation, to thinking about different ways of spending your time together.

We suggest that you:

- Read through all the clues
- Aim to find 1 or 2 that you could imagine trying out during an upcoming visit.
- Gather anything you need for the actions you have selected
- Give 1 or 2 a go during the visit if it feels suitable
- During the visit stay on the look-out for anything that appears to generate a small spark of interest or energy for your family member/friend.

THE TREASURE WE SEEK

Feeling connected with people living with later stage dementia



Sing a song that you liked as a child



Read a poem that is enjoyable for you to read.



Share a song or a piece of music that is meaningful for you.



Bring a flower or leaf from outside and carefully show what you like about it.



Start the call with an extra enthusiastic hello, by saying hello in some different languages followed by the person's name.



Begin the call with a piece of music that your family member/friend might associate with you.



Notice something about your family member/friend clothes, hair, surroundings and share what you notice.



Can you think of words that rhyme with your family members/ friends name to make a short poem? Say their name and the words that rhyme.



Bring a cup of tea/coffee and something you like to eat to the call, show and tell your family member/friend how they taste and smell (you may have arranged for them also to have something to eat or drink).



Bring a bowl of fruit – see how many other uses you can think of for the fruit. Could the banana be a fishing rod?



Bring an object that belongs to your family member/friend. You may want to slowly describe the detail of it, or share a story about it.



Share a piece of juicy news – lean in close to share it like you are sharing a secret.



If both of you like make-up, put some make-up on during the call and ask the person if they like it.



End the call by thanking the person for being on the call, and share with them something you enjoyed during the call.



Create your own Connection Clue and add it to the bundle.



Read a few lines from a poem that your family member/friend knows. Read them in different ways such as: softly, with gusto, accompanied by actions and notice how they respond to each version.

THE TREASURE WE SEEK

Feeling connected with people living with later stage dementia



Play music that you both like to dance to; move your face, shoulders, hands big style.



Show any object from your home that you love, and share what you love about it.



Play a song you know your family member/friend likes. Try out different ways you can join in like clapping, humming, whistling.



Share a piece of juicy news – lean in close to share it like you are sharing a secret.

One Small Treasures

Is there one small treasure, a moment or feeling – however small or brief – that you would like to hold on to from the visit? If something comes to mind write it down, to keep it as part of the Treasure Chest you are creating here.

