

Notes for Carers of People Supporting Online Interactions

Coming on a Treasure Hunt

Welcome to these notes which have been developed as part of the 'Treasure Hunt' set of resources, developed in the Treasure project. These notes have been created to offer suggestions to those who are facilitating an online interaction between a person living with dementia, and their family member/ friend.

About the Treasure Hunt

At the heart of the idea of a 'Treasure Hunt' within this 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 may have been tried before. The treasures to be found might be in the tiniest of moments, a small spark or a new discovery.

About these notes

These notes are part of a wider set of resources called Treasure Hunt resources. The Notes may be particularly useful if the family member/ friend of the person you are supporting is using other resources in this Treasure Hunt set as part of the online visit. They may also be of interest more generally when preparing for online interactions, even where the other Treasure Hunt resources aren't been used.

Using these notes

This document has four sections:

- 1) About You
- 2) The Preparation
- 3) The Dance
- 4) The Treasure Box

It takes approx. 10 mins to read and think through. We suggest that you:

- Read through the Notes
- Take a little time to think at the Pause breaks
- Have a conversation with colleagues, or family member/friend or person with dementia to chat through what you might try out during an online visit

1) About you

Some of the suggestions in these Notes may be things you already do, others may offer a new slant or approach which you may like to try out. The starting point with the suggestions in these Notes, is that you already have expertise and skill in engaging with people with dementia, and that your expertise and skill is of tremendous value for the online interaction.

Pause Break - *Take a moment to think about what you are pleased about in relation to how you connect with people with dementia who you support, and their family members/friends.*

2) The Preparation

Some questions and ideas you might like to consider in preparing to facilitate an online visit:

Knowing the People

How might your knowledge and understanding of the people involved in the visit support the connection between them:

- What do you already know about the people involved in the visit that is important to bear in mind for the online visit?
- Are there things you would like to find out from the family member/friend, for example their hopes and ideas for the online visit?

Environment

How can the environment be as suitable as possible for the visit:

- What sounds might be helpful or be a distraction during the visit?
- What type of seating and seating arrangement would work best for the person you are supporting and for you during the call?
- Are there other objects that might be possible to have ready in the environment that could be brought in to the chat on the online visit- for example flowers, photos etc.?

2) The Preperation (cont...)

Sensory Elements

How can the sensory experience for the person you are supporting be as pleasant for them as possible:

- Are there any textures, such as a blanket or rug, that the person you are supporting might enjoy having with them during the visit?
- Are there any smells that the person you are supporting could experience during the visit- for example fresh flowers, fresh baking?

The Technical Bits

It can be worth checking the following before the call begins:

- Sufficient charge in the battery of the device you are using
- WiFi connection
- Microphone volume on your device up to the maximum (for the benefit of the family member/friend on the call)

Making It an Occasion

Are there ways of helping the visit to feel like an occasion, if this is something the person you are supporting would value. For example:

- Supporting them to brush/comb their hair/ put on some make-up.
- Having refreshments – this could be something that could be co-ordinated with family member/friend that they are also having tea/cake during the visit.

2) The Preperation (cont...)

Pause Break - *What is your response to the suggestions above? Are there particular ones that stand out for you as something you might want to take forward?*

3) The Dance

The Dance refers to the way that you tune in to the flow between the person you are supporting/ and the family member/friend in order to help facilitate the online engagement.

It may mean at times stepping forward and being quite involved in the conversation, and other times stepping back and letting the person you are supporting and their family member/friend have their own time together.

Stepping Forward and Stepping Back

Thinking about your natural style when present during visits (online or in-person) between people with dementia and their family member/friend.

Pause Break - *Do you tend to be someone who 'steps forward'? Is quite engaged in the conversation? Tends to want to help by being a voice for the person with dementia? Comes up with topic of conversations? Or someone who tends to 'step back'? Is more in the background, or offering more silent support.*

How might you pick up when it would be useful for you to step forward and take an active role in the conversation or step back and be more in the background?

3) The Dance (cont..)

Eyes and Ears to the Dance

As well as knowing about the person's recent days or weeks and perhaps bringing this to the call, you also might have the opportunity to spot how the person you are supporting is responding during the call (that their family member/friend might not be aware of) and share this with them.

Bringing New Elements to the Dance

Have a look at the Connection Clues and see if there might be one of these that you would feel up for introducing to the family member/friend to bring in to the call.

4) Treasure Box

Is there one small treasure, a thought, emotion, experience, from reading these notes that you would like to hold on to for yourself or share with others? If one comes you to mind, you might want to write it down and hold onto it for future reference.