

Celebrating the Holiday's with Person's with Dementia, Caregivers and Family and Friends

By: Bonnie Fitzgerald, Client Support Coordinator

The holiday season is a busy time of year with the preparation for festivities. Choosing a tree, decorating the house, shopping, cooking, baking and making travel arrangements can be both joyous but also tiring.

The holiday season can also bring upon stress. Symptoms of stress can be experienced by both care providers and persons with dementia. It is important to keep in mind that changes to regular routines, large gatherings and busy schedules can result in increased confusion and/or memory problems for persons with dementia.

Helpful tips for persons with dementia and care providers to avoid holiday stress:

For the Person with Memory Loss

- Keep to your normal routine as much as possible
- Recognize that you may not have as much stamina for large gatherings or activities as you use to
- Be realistic-try not to plan too many activities on one day
- Plan time to rest and re-energize
- Think about the traditions that are most important to you and focus on these

For Care Providers

- Set realistic goals and expectations for yourself
- Permit yourself time to go out with your family and friends
- Accept all the help you can get!
- Consider doing a potluck and buy baked goods
- Allow yourself time to rest
- Be your own "Santa Claus". You deserve it!

For Family and Friends

- Prepare your guest for the kinds of behavior they may see, such as unusual table manners and difficulty remembering names
- Ask them to introduce themselves to the person with dementia including their relationship to them
- Ask them to consider giving unwrapped gifts or use gift bags. A person with dementia may not respond to gifts as they did in the past
- Reassure them that their visits are important to you, even if your time together is short. It does not matter if the visit is not remembered afterwards. Enjoying the moment and the good feelings which experienced, are what is important

Celebrating the holiday season is about reminiscing, sharing and creating memories that last a lifetime. May your holiday season be a safe and happy one.

Alzheimer Society

PETERBOROUGH, KAWARTHA LAKES, NORTHUMBERLAND & HALIBURTON

If you feel you would like support please call the Alzheimer Society of Peterborough, Kawartha Lake, Northumberland and Haliburton.

Peterborough and Northumberland Office - 705-748-5131 or 1-800-561-2588

Karwartha Lakes and Haliburton Office - 705-878-0126 or 1-800-765-0515