Reduce Stress and Distress in Dementia
Proactive and Preventative Strategies

**Rule out Physical Factors**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Urine</th>
<th>Dietary Intake</th>
<th>Pain</th>
<th>Fluid Intake</th>
<th>Bowel Monitoring</th>
<th>Medication Review</th>
<th>Bloods</th>
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*Is the onset of distress sudden? This could be DELIRIUM. Common signs include confusion, disorientation, reduced alertness, changes in behaviour, disorganised thinking, hallucinations, and delusions.*

**Maintain Social Contact**

Look at PHOTOGRAPHS of family/friends and engage resident in CONVERSATION - help the resident to focus on happy memories/good times.

If a resident wants to leave, try to find out where they want to go. VALIDATE their EMOTIONS e.g.

“I can see you are very worried about your children, let’s see if we can find out where they are for you”

If appropriate, EXPLAIN why family/friends cannot visit – COMMUNICATION CARDS may help:

Try to facilitate PHONE/VIDEO CALLS with family & friends:

http://www.aphasiafriendly.co/covid-19-accessible-information.html

**Consider Environmental Factors**

- **Support Activity**
  - Provide ROUTINE and PREDICTABILITY as far as possible – write the daily plan on a whiteboard that is in view and tick off each activity once completed.
  - RELAXATION techniques e.g. hand massage, playing music from Playlist for Life, mindful breathing.
  - RUMMAGE BOX with favourite/meaningful objects.
  - Try MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES related to previous jobs, roles, routines and things the resident used to enjoy.

**Maximise Communication**

Use SHORT, SIMPLE SENTENCES/QUESTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS e.g. “I can see you are upset right now, I would like to help you to try and take your mind off things, shall we listen to your favourite music?”

LISTEN to what the resident is saying & GIVE THEM TIME TO PROCESS & RESPOND to what you have said.

Every time you meet the resident, say HELLO, tell them YOUR NAME, and what YOUR ROLE is e.g. “Hello Sadie, it’s Claire, I’m the nurse, is it okay if I help you with...”

If you are a GG&C health or social care worker you can access psychological support by calling the COVID-19 staff support line on 0141 303 8968, Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm.