

Tips for Nursing

These are various strategies nursing can use during functional tasks to improve resident participation and function. Not all will be appropriate for every resident. Nursing and therapy should collaborate to determine which are appropriate for the resident. Some things that all staff can do to improve function with the person with dementia include:

- Provide one-step commands
- Use short, simple sentences
- Use an active, not passive voice
- Speak slowly
- Repeat and rephrase sentences as needed
- Be flexible
- Use nouns, concrete vocabulary and specific names
- Be as literal as possible
- Communicate **with** the resident, not “at” the resident
- Utilize gestures and facial expressions along with speech
- Monitor tone of voice and keep a calm demeanor
- Allow adequate time to process information and to respond
- Use the same procedure, routine or verbal direction for functional tasks throughout the task
- Grade activities based on resident response
- Keep tasks simple and of interest to the resident
- Provide soothing activities (e.g., brushing hair, applying lotion)
- Praise and encourage the resident often
- Encourage automatic responses and keep conversations going with comments such as “Oh, how nice,” or “That’s great”
- Limit distractions in the environment
- Use routines and keep the environment and approach consistent and familiar
- Design activities and interactions to perform **with** the resident, not “for” the resident
- Encourage resident to use other senses such as touch, taste and smell to recognize objects
- Make the environment secure and as hazard-free as possible
- Tolerate pacing and wandering providing the resident is safe
- Continue the same topic of conversation as long as possible
- Always establish eye contact prior to addressing a resident
- Avoid open-ended questions -- instead pose yes/no questions or offer choices
- Label objects in the environment
- Educate staff and family to these same tips

Cueing Strategies to Improve Functional Performance

- Repeat functional questions several times with a short delay between each presentation – about 5 seconds should do it
- Demonstrate the activity to the resident
- Use series of pictures that symbolize activity (e.g., sequencing cards)
- Use hand signals, pictures and facial expressions
- Provide one or two visual choices
- Provide familiar visual stimuli within environment (e.g., memory notebook, personal blanket)
- Provide familiar sounds within environment
- Provide tactile stimulation along with verbal instruction
- Talk about familiar and directly observable topics
- Provide cues when changing topic
- Use redirections (e.g., redirect resident to given topic/task if have decreased attention)
- Use a Hand-over-hand technique during functional activities
- Utilize multi-modality cueing (e.g., visual, verbal, tactile, initiation, signage)