FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS VISITING SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA

Before You Visit

A quick guide for anyone coming to a holiday gathering this year - what you might notice, and simple things that help.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOTICE

- **They may not recognize you right away.**
  This can be part of the disease, not a reflection of how much you matter to them.
- **Crowds and noise are tiring, fast.**
  A room full of overlapping conversation can be genuinely disorienting.
- **Afternoons and evenings may be harder.**
  Confusion or restlessness often increases later in the day.
- **The visit may be short.**
  Ten good minutes can matter more than two long hours.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Approach from the front.**
  Get into their line of sight, at eye level, before you speak.
- **Lead with your name and how you know them.**
  “Hi Dad, it’s Michael, your son. So glad to see you.”
- **Start with a story, not a question.**
  Share a memory instead of testing whether they remember it.
- **Keep the conversation calm and simple.**
  Speak slowly, let one person talk at a time, and move to a quieter space if they seem overwhelmed.
- **Follow their lead on when to go.**
  Focus on the quality of the visit rather than its length.

PHRASES TO SKIP

SKIP: “Do you remember me?”
TRY: “I was just thinking about the time we…”

SKIP: “I already told you that.”
TRY: Just answer again, as if it’s the first time.

SKIP: Correcting or arguing over details
TRY: Acknowledge the feeling and gently redirect.