

Elements of Friendship and Dementia Care

Friends Know Each Other's History and Personality

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Becomes the *person's* memory
- Is sensitive to the *person's* traditions
- Learns the *person's* personality, moods, and problem-solving style

Friends Do Things Together

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Involves the *person* in daily activities and chores
- Initiates activities
- Ties activities into the *person's* past skills and interests
- Encourages the *person* to enjoy the simpler things in life
- Remembers to celebrate special occasions

Friends Communicate

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Listens skillfully
- Speaks skillfully
- Asks questions skillfully
- Speaks using body language
- Gently encourages participation in conversations

Friends Build Self-Esteem

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Gives compliments often
- Carefully asks for advice or opinions
- Always offers encouragement
- Offers congratulations

Friends Laugh Often

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Tells jokes and funny stories
- Takes advantage of spontaneous fun
- Uses self-deprecating humor often

Friends Are Equals

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Does not talk down to the *person*
- Always works to protect the dignity of the *person*, to "save face"
- Does not assume a supervisory role
- Recognizes that learning is a two-way street

Friends Work at the Relationship

In dementia care, a Best Friend

- Is not overly sensitive
- Does more than 50% of the work
- Builds a trusting relationship
- Shows affection often