



Dementia Care in the Time of COVID-19: 30 Activities That Can Be Done in 30 Seconds or Less

Every interaction can create a moment of connection. This coronavirus-sensitive list offers just a few ideas for maintaining critical socialization and engagement in this time of crisis.

1. Greet the person by his or her first name	Helps the person feel known; sometimes a first name is best
2. Make eye contact and smile	From 6 feet away you can briefly lower your mask
3. Tell someone he or she is loved	Reassuring words always help
4. Give a sincere compliment	It only takes a few seconds and lifts the person's spirits
5. Ask an opinion	Shows you value the person
6. Blow up a balloon and enjoy a simple one-on-one balloon toss	Pop it when done for infection control
7. Evoke a happy memory from the person's Life Story	Even with dementia, the person often remembers special achievements or big life events
8. Slip a little treat to someone	Chocolate almost always lifts the mood!
9. Show off some family photos or photos of your pet	Children and pets are popular choices
10. Look at or create a flower arrangement together	Admire the colors and textures
11. Ask for advice on a recipe	You might learn some new techniques
12. Tell a funny story or joke	Laughter reduces stress and builds connection
13. Ask the person to mimic your dance moves to fun music playing in the background	Exercise and movement are good for the brain and body
14. Play a song from your phone	Find out what type of music your resident likes best and play his or her favorite song or singer
15. Try on some funny hats	It's okay to be a bit silly, just be safe and don't share the same hats

30 Activities in 30 Seconds (continued)

16. Step onto a patio or enclosed courtyard for fresh air	Sunlight fights depression and the outdoors is life affirming for all
17. Hum a tune	Music and song lyrics remain even when dementia impacts words and language
18. Blow a kiss	This playful old ritual shows affection; you might get one back (from at least 6 feet away)
19. Demonstrate a jumping jack	Guaranteed to add some fun to the day
20. Recite a poem	Can evoke meaning and emotion
21. Spell someone's name	A very personal activity, and especially interesting if the person has an unusual name
22. Model your collection of interesting scarves	Brainstorm different things you can do for fun with a scarf—a tug of war?
23. Ask for help with a chore	People with dementia, like all of us, have a need to be needed
24. Ask an open-ended question to promote conversation	"Tell me more about the people in this photograph"
25. Comment on something interesting in a resident's room	"Did you make this quilt?"
26. Do some brain aerobics with simple word associations	Up and... down, top and... bottom, salt and... pepper, etc.
27. Brainstorm desserts you are craving or comfort foods	"What's better, mashed potatoes with gravy or macaroni and cheese?"
28. Do some trivia about your hometown or city	Make lists of noted local stores or restaurants
29. Do a survey or take a vote on a popular topic	Who is a cat person? Dog person? Both? Neither?
30. Make the heart sign with your fingers and hands	Who doesn't benefit from being told her or she is loved?