



## 12 Tips for Interacting with People with Dementia

1. Be open hearted. People with dementia respond well to genuine hospitality.
2. Speak directly to the person. Assume that he/she is capable of responding.
3. Be patient in waiting for a response. It takes people with dementia longer to process information, especially when they are in a new environment.
4. When greeting a visitor with dementia, make eye contact with the person. Get to eye level.
5. Introduce yourself. Ask, "And you are?"
6. Do not automatically try to shake hands, as some people with dementia may not wish to be touched. Museum and security staff should be aware of this, and use discretion and judgment in initiating any form of physical contact.
7. Give clear directions to places such as waiting areas and restrooms. Do so one at a time, and use gestures to clarify directions.
8. When giving a group tour, introduce the group leader and provide a nametag in a large, bold font for each participant.
9. Use simple, bold signage to enhance orientation (For example: 4<sup>th</sup> floor go right →). These signs may be generated specifically for the visit.
10. When moving through the museum on a group tour, be clear about where you are going. For instance, say, "We are taking this elevator to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor."
11. Include people with dementia in the conversations and activities.
12. Listen. Don't let the existence of dementia interfere with the insights that people with dementia have to share.