



Etiquette for Visiting with Seniors

- Treat each person as a unique individual.
- Use adult language and tone: Avoid baby talk or “elderspeak”. This is patronizing. (Elderspeak is characterized by simplified speech using exaggerated pitch and tone, simplified grammar, limited vocabulary and a slow rate of delivery.)
- Respect individual’s privacy.
- Keep communication eye-to-eye whenever possible. Try to visit at the same level, either sitting while they are sitting or standing when they stand, to avoid looking down on the elder.
- Be sensitive to individual needs such as hearing loss, vision impairment, etc. You may need to position yourself directly in front of the older person so they can see you better to be able to read your lips and your facial expressions. Don’t chew gum or candy as it hinders communication.
- Treat each individual with respect and courtesy.
- Avoid slang terms/words used by the younger generation that older persons may not understand. Also be sure to avoid humor that they may find offensive due to their particular life experience.
- Respect the older person’s schedule. Don’t visit in the middle of a meal or during their afternoon nap time. You should always schedule your visit in advance. It’s not such a good idea to pop in unexpectedly.
- Older adults may engage in life review. Listen and affirm individuals’ thoughts.
- Older adults may openly discuss death. Accept this invitation to discuss this important topic. Kindness, frankness, and genuine concern are always appropriate.
- You may hear things from individuals that cause concern. Bring these to the attention of the person in charge. Follow-up to ensure that your concern has been addressed.

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