



# MEMORY CARE HOME SOLUTIONS<sup>®</sup>

HOLIDAY GATHERING

TIPS AND GOOD TIDINGS

## AVOID OVERSTIMULATION

1

When the family gets together, things can be loud! Lots of conversations and simultaneous activities can be stressful and overwhelming to a person with dementia. It is simply too difficult to process all of these things at the same time.

Consider the number of people in the same room or at the same table as the person with dementia during meals and activities. If you know ahead of time, you may be able to develop a good plan so that the person can still enjoy conversation and company with all family members, just not all at once. Talk to the family ahead of time about what will work best for your loved one.

## CHANGES IN ROUTINE

A person with dementia will function best if their day to day routine stays consistent. This helps things feel automatic and comfortable. During the holidays, to some extent, we cannot always control how the day will go.

Consider aspects of the person's day-to-day routine that can be maintained during or around the holiday events or family gatherings. For example, you may not be able to control what exact activities are occurring during the day, but if wake time, bed time, and mealtimes can be kept as close as possible to the person's regular schedule, this can help.

2

## UNCERTAINTY

3

Sometimes a person with dementia may repeat the same questions over and over about what the plans are for the holidays. Sometimes the person may become anxious about plans.

Consider how your loved one responds to getting news about upcoming events. Sometimes it helps to “not advertise” too far in advance, if the person becomes very anxious about what event will be happening. If the person is very excited about the event but wants more and more details, consider putting up a note on the fridge or on the calendar with the important details. Then, instead of repeating the same answer each time, try saying, “I don’t know – let’s check the calendar!”

## ENGAGEMENT

It may be hard for a person with dementia to engage in conversations at family gatherings as they once did. This could be due to memory loss, uncertainty around who they are with, or not being aware of the occasion.

To help promote engagement and conversation, reminisce about past holidays. Use this time to talk about holidays past, present and future. Discuss favorite traditions growing up, holiday blunders or favorite songs and folk tales. These are perfect ways to engage a person living with dementia and allow them to participate in conversations with familiar memories.

4

The holidays can be a very exciting time...

and a stressful time too!

When you are caring for someone with dementia, you may notice that the holidays bring even more stress.

People with dementia benefit from a consistent, structured, daily routine with meaningful activities.

The holidays do not always favor consistency, restfulness, and quiet.

If you are experiencing challenges around the holidays these are a few reasons why this may be the case, so use these tips & good tidings to make sure your family gatherings are happy for all.