



HOPE HAVEN
SAVANNAH RESPITE

VOLUNTEER TIPS

Approach members from the front and make eye contact.

Members may have lost peripheral vision, so it can be disconcerting to be approached from behind.
Get down on eye level rather than standing above someone seated.

Use inviting language when introducing activities to members.

I could use your help with this art project. I need a partner for volleyball.
Let's help Cathy answer these trivia questions.

Ask opinion-based questions so members can talk without relying on memory.

What do you think about the beat of this song?
Do you want to stretch your legs and walk a lap around the room with me?
If members seem agitated, ask them what they would like to do or simply be present with them.

Give choices when asking a question.

Are you enjoying your mashed potatoes or fruit salad more?
Do you like card games or board games?

Allow time for messages to be processed and reinforce speech with gestures.

Don't be afraid of silence. A member may be processing and need time to respond.
Break tasks down to simple steps - one or two at a time.
Watch for nonverbal expressions - members may project their emotions through gestures or behaviors.
If we make eye contact, use words, and make gestures, our message is being understood in 3 ways.

Avoid correcting members - live in their reality.

Our members may believe they are somewhere else or in another time frame. Embrace their reality.

Positively reinforce our members and set them up for success.

You look great in that sunny yellow apron. The last time we played this game you had great precision.
During brain games and activities, let the members say the answers and be successful at the task.
Express your thanks. "Thanks for coming today, it is always more fun when you are here."

Empower members to do activities by themselves.

There is no "right" way to do a project, game, etc. Allow members to do projects, games, etc their way.
As a volunteer you are there to guide and support members and ensure they are safe.
If a member is happy doing a project and does not want to move to the next activity, let them continue.

Speak slowly, clearly, and with a respectful adult voice.

Speaking in sing-song tones or ordering someone in an authoritative voice is insulting for adults.
Use short, clear sentences. **KISS** - **K**ee **I**t **S**imple and **S**low
Avoid using idioms (ex. hold your horse, break the ice).

Allow a member to do an alternate activity - be flexible.

Encourage participation: "Let's give it a try. It could be more fun than we think." But if they choose not to participate, offer an alternate activity such as helping set the table (members want to feel purposeful).
Members may need a quiet moment; provide a safe space away from the main group.