

NAMASTE TRIAL

The Namaste Care Guide



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What is Namaste Care?

'Namaste' is an Indian greeting which means 'to honour the spirit within'. The Namaste Care programme was developed by Joyce Simard in the USA, and seeks to give comfort and pleasure to people with advanced dementia through engagement and meaningful activity, fun, sensory stimulation, especially through the use of touch and movement.

People with advanced dementia often find it difficult to communicate and interact with other people. This means that they are no longer engaging in the ongoing group activities of the care home. People with advanced dementia living in care homes sometimes spend long hours alone in their rooms, and care home staff can find it hard to engage them with the day to day activities in the care home.

The Namaste Care programme is based on best practice dementia care and best practice end-of-life care. None of these core elements are anything new. However, what is different is that Namaste brings them together in a single care programme. The programme is conducted seven days a week, for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. It is run by the staff already working within the care home, and does not require expensive equipment. It imposes structure on the 'empty time' for residents with advanced dementia when they are not engaged in personal care or mealtimes.

What everyone needs to know about the Namaste Care programme

- The overall aim is to enhance quality of life for residents with advanced dementia
- Namaste Care is based around sensory experience: music, massage, colour, taste and scents
- Dementia is a terminal illness and acute hospital admission has little to offer people in the later stages of dementia who are best cared for in the care home
- For people with advanced dementia the aims of their treatment are comfort and pleasure and the final goal of care is a peaceful dignified death in the care home
- Namaste Care depends upon the involvement and commitment of every member of the care home team, and where possible family and friends



The Namaste Care Process



People

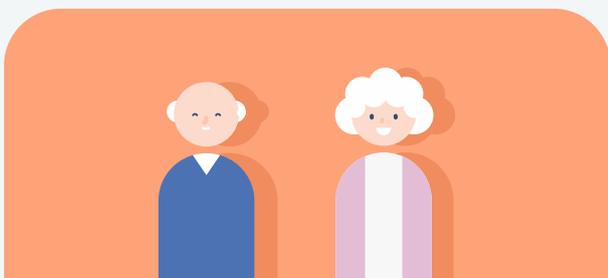
Let everyone know about Namaste Care – a meeting is essential for staff and carers.

Choose and train Namaste Care Champions. They are individuals committed to dementia care and able to provide leadership.



Space

Prepare the Namaste Care space: choose your space, find equipment, obtain and stock it with supplies.



Select residents

Identify residents to be part of Namaste Care.

Before the residents are invited into the Namaste Care space, where possible, have a family meeting to discuss this and to learn their life story.

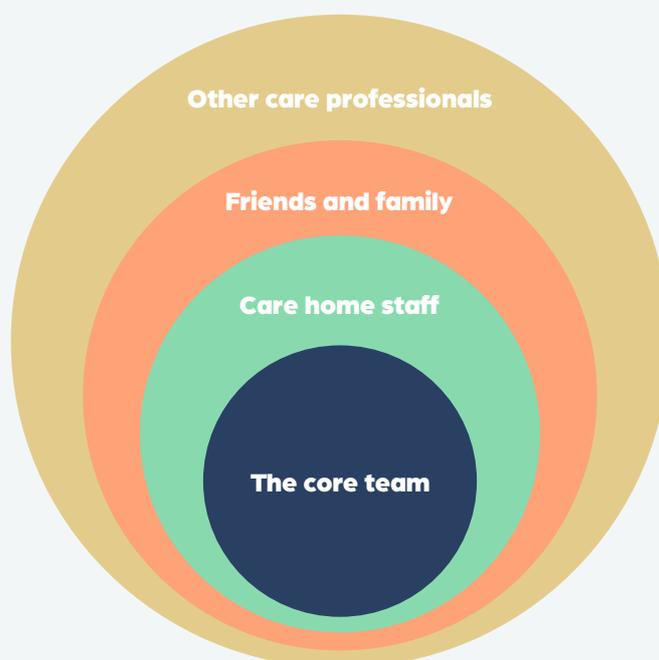


Deliver Namaste sessions

Deliver Namaste Care sessions twice a day for two hours, every day.

Focus on personal attention, touch, fun and movement. Offer regular drinks and snacks.

Preparing people and organisations for Namaste Care



Core Team: The 'Namaste Champions' run the programme daily and lead it within the care home. They are present whenever a Namaste Care session is running.

Care home staff: Everyone needs to be 'on board' with the change, and understand why the Namaste Care programme is being introduced.

Families and friends: Let everyone know about the Namaste Care programme who is involved with residents within the home.

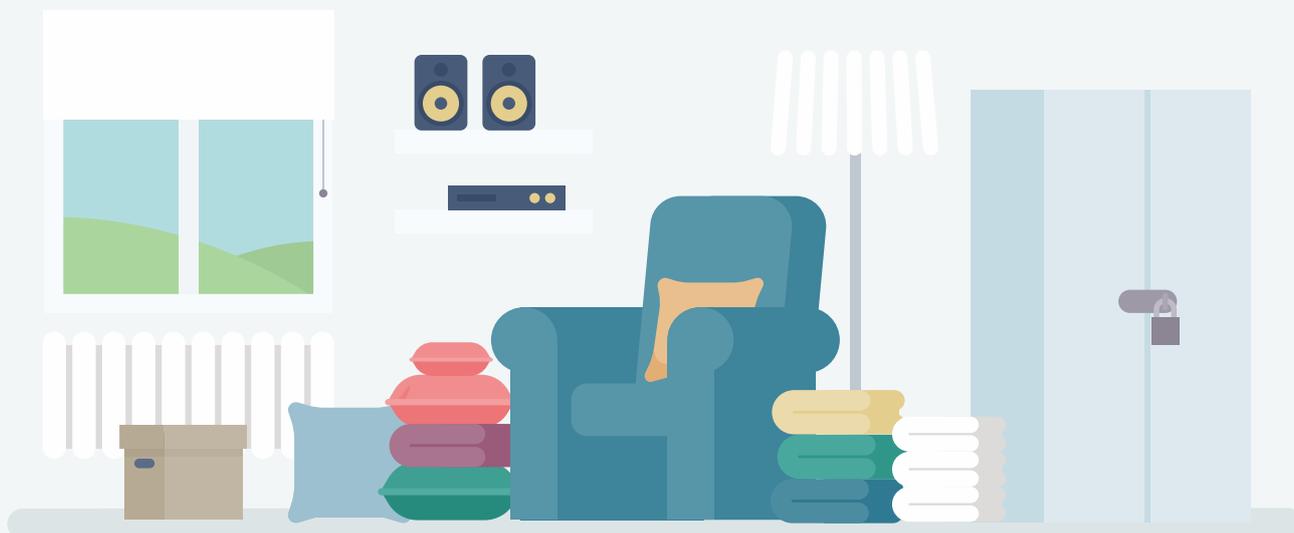
Other care professionals: Everyone who visits the care home professionally needs to understand the changes that are being introduced and the reasons for introducing the Namaste Care programme.

A meeting for residents, family, friends, care home staff and care professionals at the start of the programme is essential to explain the programme and share ideas.

The Family Meeting

Once potential residents have been selected, it is important that the manager, where possible, sets up a meeting with individual family/friends. The meeting provides an opportunity to explain the change in care to family/friends. It also provides an opportunity to learn from the family member about the resident's life story and engage with them in finding ways to bring pleasure and trigger memories for their family member. If the resident has a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health they should be part of this discussion and must be invited.

Preparing the Namaste Care space



Desirable features for the Namaste Care space

- A cupboard that can be locked, a fridge, sink with running water, smoothie maker
- Curtains or blinds
- Equipment: A DVD player/DVDs, growing plants, beautiful pictures, ornaments relevant to residents
- Room should be warm and feel calm
- A window overlooking a garden, bird table, door to outside

Namaste Care has a designated space, where everything can be left in place, supplies can be locked away after the session and there is no danger of more active residents going into the room and damaging growing plants or fragile ornaments by mistake. The environment must be made 'special', i.e. welcoming and homely, with natural or slightly dimmed lighting, perhaps attractive scents, such as lavender from an aromatherapy diffuser, and with soft music playing. It should enable a feeling of calm. This is ideally a separate room, but could be space within another room, or a room which is also used for other purposes at other times.

General supplies for the Namaste Care space

- Welcome sign
- Name tags for staff
- A music system and a variety of music
- An aromatherapy diffuser or method of scenting the room
- Pillows for positioning
- Blankets/rugs/quilts (colourful)
- Towels
- Face cloths
- Q-tips
- Bowls in which to soak hands
- Soap dispenser
- Cream for moisturising skin
- Hypoallergenic baby oil for massage
- Gloves and laundry bags in case of accidents
- Disposable wipes
- Hand sanitiser
- Drinking cups that can be labelled
- A rummage bag with silky, tweedy, velvety scraps of material, bubble wrap, etc.
- Folding chairs for Namaste Care workers and visitors

Personal supplies for each resident for the Namaste Care Space

- A clearly named wash bag containing:
 - Hairbrush and comb
 - Nail clippers
 - Emery board
 - Face cream
 - Lip balm
- Items supplied by the family, e.g. perfume and make up for women, after shave for men (if used)
- A named storage bag for each resident, e.g. a plastic zip bag to keep a blanket/rug or quilt and/or pillow and perhaps a life-like doll or animal
- Memory box and personal items



The Namaste Session

<p>In the morning, before Namaste Care</p>	<p>Usual care arrangements for personal hygiene and dressing needs and breakfast.</p>
<p>Prepare the Namaste Care space</p>	<p>SPACE: Namaste Care Champion (and/or assistants) prepares the space and gets ready to greet residents. Set the lighting, put on gentle music, put on room diffuser.</p> <p>PEOPLE: Familiarise self with residents attending that session and their needs.</p>
<p>Welcome the residents</p>	<p>Bring, greet and settle residents. All care staff are involved in bringing and settling residents.</p> <p>Greet by name, touch them, welcome them, carers introduce themselves and the session.</p> <p>Make residents comfortable in easy chair, tuck up with blanket</p> <p>Assess for pain or discomfort.</p>
<p>During the Namaste Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sound: vary the volume, tempo and style of music every 40 minutes, after 10 minutes of silence. Read aloud from familiar texts of poetry, relevant to residents. ● Scent the room, perhaps varying floral, citrus and wood aromas. ● Attend to the residents with hand massage, pamper them with a facial with warm flannels to the face and hands, brush their hair or provide a foot spa. Perform activities carefully and slowly. ● Offer food and drink treats constantly. ● Speak appreciatively and affirmatively to residents. Focus on the now. ● Offer the chance to hold a simulated baby or animal ● Offer touch sensations from rummage box, hearing sensations from musical instruments. ● Offer familiar objects from personal memory box. ● Enable movement as able. ● Allow and enable naps or sleep time. Ensure everyone is awake and alert for their meal: play brighter music (e.g. showtunes), fun activities such as blowing bubbles. Say farewell to residents by name and thank them for coming to the session.
<p>Preparing to close the Namaste Care session</p>	<p>Ensure everyone is awake and alert for their meal: play brighter music (e.g. showtunes), fun activities such as blowing bubbles. Say farewell to residents by name and thank them for coming to the session.</p>

A Namaste Session in detail

Before the session



Lighting

- Lighting in Namaste should be natural. Soft lighting reduces the shadows and makes everyone look better. Wall lamps with soft bulbs create a homely atmosphere. Bright overhead lights could be dimmed with a dimmer switch, or with a special lampshade. You may need a blind to exclude bright sunlight. Some care homes have special bubble tube lamps.



Music

- Music has the power to unlock memories and emotions. It is a cornerstone of the Namaste Care programme and the Namaste Care worker should think carefully about the music for the day, drawing on knowledge of the resident from the meeting with family members. During each session she/he needs to observe how individual residents respond to particular pieces of music.
- At the start of the day, soft, gentle, classical music may be effective. Even though the music is gentle, you may need to play it quite loudly because many residents have poor hearing.
- If you play music continuously, people stop hearing it. So, after around forty minutes, have ten minutes of silence before starting the music again. Relaxation music, which has a slow rhythm, can slow the heartbeat and help the body to relax. For a change, you can put on a recording of birdsong or waves on the seashore.
- Music triggers memories. The music the residents loved when they were younger may have associations for them. It is then important to observe whether the resident's quality of attention and engagement changes and the effect of the music on the other residents in the group.
- If a piece of music makes someone sad, offer them comfort and support but do not immediately stop playing the music. The person may have been bottling up certain emotion and the music enables them to be in touch with and express their feelings. You should think carefully about whether to play that piece of music again.





Scent

- Scenting the room immediately creates the sense of somewhere 'special'. Have at least three options to vary the scent. We suggest using floral oil, a citrus oil and have an electric aromatherapy diffuser, you can put the oil into the container, switch it on and the room will be scented. If you do not have a diffuser, put two to three drops of essential oil into water in an ironing spray bottle and spray the room.
- When using aromatherapy oils, you must be aware of the safety issues involved, particularly for residents and staff. The care home should have a policy for their use and storage. Do NOT use scented candles!

A resource that may be useful to refer to is [here](#).



Drinks

- Try and arrange for the kitchen to bring a trolley with a jug of water and a choice of juices, e.g. orange and cranberry. Each Namaste resident must have an individually marked cup. It may be easiest to use paper cups and a marker pen. You will also need straws. There should be 'thickener' on the trolley for anyone with swallowing difficulties. The needs of residents with swallowing difficulties must be identified, and the right amount of thickener for a quantity of fluid must be known by the Namaste Care worker.



Food treats

- People with dementia often have a sweet tooth, which is a good way to increase their calorie intake. Fruit is usually well-received, especially orange slices, pineapple chunks, banana slices or strawberries in the summer. A bowl of pureed fruit for people with swallowing difficulties is important. A smoothie maker would be very beneficial. Other examples of food treats are small pieces of bread and butter and honey, cake and ice cream.



At the start of the session



Welcomes

- Hang up the 'Welcome to Namaste Care' sign.
- Greet residents as they arrive (brought by other staff members). There are likely to be 4–8 residents in a session.
- Eye contact, touch and a personal greeting as they enter the room is important.
- Wear a name badge with a large font.



Make residents comfortable

- Settle residents, with assistance of the staff who brought them. Might they need pillows or a footstool?
- Avoid wheelchairs unless expressly designed for long term seating for that resident.
- Tuck them up with their own soft blanket or quilt, this can help people feel safe, and can be a cue to stay in the chair.



Comfort assessment

- Settling the residents is the ideal time to assess them for discomfort and pain. Signs of discomfort include whether the resident flinched or moaned when they moved, whether it was difficult to position them comfortably and whether they look comfortable.
- There is no point in working to engage the resident in activity if they are in pain. The resident should be assessed for pain using a validated pain assessment tool. If the Namaste Care worker assesses that the resident is in pain, she/he should involve the nurse to ensure the resident's pain is appropriately managed.



During the session



Offer food treats and drink

- As soon as a resident has been settled, the Namaste Care worker should offer them a drink. People are more likely to eat and drink well when they are relaxed and enjoying themselves. Therefore, offering frequent drinks and tempting people with food treats throughout the session is a priority.
- Labelling the cups is a good way to prevent giving one person another person's drink.
- In Namaste, the care worker can take advantage of spending long periods with residents with advanced dementia by helping them to take sips and swigs of a drink and to eat the food treats whenever they are awake and receptive



Pampering

- Going to be pampered at a spa has always been a luxury and the aim of the Namaste session is to capture that enjoyable experience. The care that is given in Namaste Care is different from the care that is given to residents when care workers help them with their morning hygiene needs.
- Hands and face experience with a hot face cloth. This should be a luxurious experience for the resident and enjoyed by the care worker. The aim is pleasure not cleanliness. The flannel should be hot/warm and ideally the towel should be warmed on the radiator (or with a hairdryer). If a resident has hand contractures, then soaking their hands, and making a gentle waterfall over them will often allow the muscles to relax and the hand to open up. The resident's hands and face must then be patted dry with a warm, fluffy towel.
- The Namaste Care worker should consciously make eye contact with the resident and talk appreciatively and affirmatively, e.g. praising bright eyes, fine skin, or thick hair. This is also a chance to talk about the resident's past, using examples from the life story supplied by the family.
- No gloves are worn during Namaste Care. There is no need to wear gloves for pampering unless there is a risk of infection or the care worker has to come into contact with body fluids. Taking gloves off allows for closer contact between residents and care workers.



During the session



Touch

- Touch is a fundamental means of human communication. We all need touch as part of our lifelong need to be cared for, nurtured, valued, and, most importantly, loved. However, when people are elderly or sick, they can become starved of touch.
- One-to-one contact with other people is known to be the most powerful stimulus to engagement for people in the late stages of dementia. Touch may involve just stroking someone's hand or hair or it may be a hand rub or massage. Nurses and carers touch the people they care for every day, but usually while doing a task, e.g. washing and dressing. In Namaste Care touch is used purposefully to connect and communicate with the resident and to express affection and reassurance.
- If a resident does not like touch then this must be respected. However, it is important to try and find other ways to communicate with that person. So, when everyone has been greeted and settled and has had a Namaste wash, a hand massage may be the best form of meaningful activity for many people.



Life-like dolls

- If a woman or a man forms an attachment with a life-like doll, then this may allay their anxieties and give them a focus for their love and longing to give care rather than just receive care; it may also give them a sense of control. As with every activity, knowing the person's life story is crucial. For example, a person may have lost a baby or never been able to have a child and therefore a baby might have negative associations.
- Giving a doll to an adult is potentially problematic. It can be seen as infantilising or patronising the person. It would be unwise to try 'doll therapy' without discussing it first with the family. It may also help to give the family written information about doll therapy.
- If the family chooses to explore whether their relative will benefit from a doll (or a dog or cat if that seems more appropriate), then a doll should be introduced to the resident. There should be no attempt to trick the person into believing it is a real baby. The doll should NOT be one that cries or blinks or wets itself! Ideally, the doll should have a slight smile. The doll should be introduced as a doll, or perhaps left beside the resident so they can choose to interact with it or not. If they choose to believe the doll is life-like, then this comes from their own imagination or perhaps their need.

- Similarly, life-like cats and dogs can be a great source of comfort and pleasure to people who have enjoyed animals all their lives. The same precautions should be followed for life-like animals as for life-like dolls. Introducing a life-like pet should be discussed with relatives and there should be no attempt to deceive the resident. If a resident has a doll or life-like animal they enjoy, this should be given to them as soon as they arrive in the Namaste session. It may be that they get so much pleasure from the doll/animal that it stays with them and is not just used in the Namaste session. If however the doll or animal does not accompany them at all times, it should be stored in their own bag with their blanket/pillows.



Fun

- A room full of sleeping residents is not the aim of Namaste Care. The Namaste Care worker should aim to engage people's interest and attention with stimulating activities. For some this will just be enabling them to experience a pleasant/interesting sensation. So whilst Namaste care incorporates life story work it is also important to offer new and delightful opportunities in the Namaste Care space. Be creative. Incorporate fun – blow bubbles, toss a balloon, wear a silly hat, sing and dance.



Rummage box

- Rummage boxes containing a collection of materials of different textures, can be brought to the resident who can explore and experience the various textures. If the resident is enjoying touching the materials, they may like to stroke their face and hands with them. If the resident is not interested, the rummage box should be taken elsewhere.



Musical instruments

- The Namaste Care worker can show the resident a tambourine or rainmaker instrument, demonstrate how it works and use smiles and nods to show appreciation and enjoyment when it is played. Try to help them focus their attention on the instrument. If they are not interested give up, but if they like it leave it with them. You may be able to support them to use the instrument by moving your hands with their hands.



Memory box

- A resident's personal memory box provides an opportunity for the Namaste Care worker to sit with the resident and talk about what is contained within it, reminiscing about the past. Handling familiar objects can sometimes trigger reminiscence.



Reading aloud

- Poetry is like music; it lingers in the brain and is often a powerful emotional experience. Reading aloud may have been a familiar activity for the resident in the past, and many older people learned poems by heart at school, and nursery rhymes at home. Sometimes it can be hard to keep up a flow of conversation when the person with dementia is unable to answer. Reading aloud enables the care worker to keep up a flow of language which may be stimulating or soothing for the person.



Movement

- Gentle movement to music is fun (dancing!), and creates a connection between the resident and the care worker. It is also good for the resident's circulation, suppleness and mobility. People respond to over stimulation in different ways some become agitated whilst others withdraw. It is important to create a space that offers controlled stimulation – it enables those who are over stimulated to relax and those withdrawn from the situation to respond.



Sleep

- After pampering and a hand massage residents with advanced dementia may doze off. The morning rush, being washed and dressed and having breakfast can be tiring for all the residents. Therefore, a nap is natural and beneficial. Residents who are agitated and find Namaste Care relaxing may sleep, which will provide them with relief and respite from their agitation.



Finishing the session



Lunchtime

- Twenty minutes before residents have to leave Namaste Care in order to be made ready for lunch, the Namaste Care worker needs to make sure that everyone is awake and alert for their meal.



Play lighter, brighter music, initiate fun activities

- This is a good time to play residents' favourite music, such as dance music or show tunes from the 1940s and 1950s; choose something rousing and cheerful. Blow bubbles, toss a balloon, wear a silly hat, sing and dance.



Bring the world into the room

- Seasonal flowers are a perfect way to try and orientate people to the time of year. For example, a basin of grass that has been recently mown or autumn leaves or snow can all help to orientate the person to the time of year.



Closing the session

- At the close of the session the Namaste Care worker must say goodbye to each resident in turn, using their name, and thanking them for coming to the Namaste session. The care staff are all needed again to bring the Namaste Care residents out of the room to be made ready for lunch. They then tidy the room ready for the afternoon session.

The afternoon session



Timing

- The Namaste room re-opens after lunch at 2 pm or 3 pm, according to the care home's routine, and once again the Namaste Champion (this may be another member of staff now) looks after a full assignment of 4–8 residents.



Activities

- The afternoon session follows a similar pattern to the morning session, but with different activities. For example, foot soaking and foot rubs can replace the hand massage and, if there is time, nail care and/or hair care can be performed.

The afternoon may also be a time for a nature DVD or an old musical. The session will close with a lively goodbye to each individual.

Visitors

Other residents may 'drop in' and visit the Namaste session. All should be welcomed and if they are willing given a Namaste experience. Any resident may benefit from the peaceful atmosphere and the sensory approach, especially if they are anxious.

Family visitors/friends are welcome in the Namaste room, but if they prefer to visit their relative somewhere else in the care home, then that should be arranged. Family visitors usually enjoy the care programme and meeting other relatives, and they should all be encouraged to join in with the activities. They will quickly sense that the atmosphere in Namaste is peaceful and calm and will understand the need to talk quietly.

Other members of the care staff are always welcome in the Namaste room and should be encouraged to participate in the programme's activities. They must respect the atmosphere in the room and the intention 'to honour the spirit within' each person in the room, i.e. resident, staff or relative.

If a resident is distressed

Namaste Care will often soothe someone who is agitated or distressed. If a person is not coping with being with other people in the Namaste session, then trying music, fragrance and therapeutic touch in their own room may enable them to relax and become calm. It may be possible to accustom the person to Namaste Care and gradually introduce them to the group.

When a Namaste Care resident is dying

When a resident who has received Namaste Care is dying, the Namaste Care worker can bring the music and fragrance they enjoyed in Namaste to their room and all personal care can be given as a gentle, pleasurable experience. Family can be shown how to do hand massage and mouth care, if that is appropriate, because involvement in physical care is often beneficial to family/friends. When someone is dying, 'honouring the spirit within' is the guiding principle of their care.

Equipment and seating

Wish list for Namaste equipment

- A trolley for equipment for the session and to take equipment to a resident's room
- Green plants
- One or two life-like dolls
- Life-like cats and dogs
- Life-like singing birds
- A fridge for food treats
- Smoothie maker
- Picture books
- Poetry books
- A variety of essential oils
- Tambourine and rainmaker
- Pictures and ornaments
- A DVD player and appropriate films with a screen to show them
- Foot spa

Seating

People with advanced dementia often need special chairs because they are usually frail and immobile, and often have contracted limbs. It is therefore important for you to assess whether you think the chair the resident is in is the most suitable one for them (often the care home has a variety of chairs); it may well be there is a more suitable one but if not do seek advice. People with dementia in private care homes are entitled to assessment of their seating needs by an NHS occupational therapist. Sorting out the funding for an appropriate chair can cause delay so below are some possible other solutions:

- Sometimes the NHS supplies a suitable chair.
- Sometimes the resident has their own funds.
- Sometimes relatives will buy a comfortable chair.
- The family and the care home can share the cost on the understanding that the care home keeps the chair when the resident dies.
- Sometimes care homes have chairs they have bought or inherited.
- There are charitable trusts that will contribute to the cost of specialist equipment for sick people.
- If the finances permit, consider including the cost of one new reclining chair in your Namaste budget.
- Consider fund raising for a chair eg coffee morning, raffle etc.

Having a suitable chair (not a wheelchair) with wheels is particularly helpful because it means the person does not become 'bedbound' and can spend the day in comfort and move around the care home. These chairs are however specialist equipment and very expensive.

What Is Namaste Care?



Honouring the spirit within

Respectful and compassionate approach to people with dementia



The presence of others

Social group so person with dementia feels included in their community



Life story

Person centred adaptations



Sensory stimulation

Stimulation of the five senses: music, colour, touch, smell, food tastes.



Enabling people to be themselves

Allowing the person to 'just be' in the Namaste space.



Meaningful activity

Personal care as meaningful activity: washing as pleasurable sensation.



Food treats and hydration

Offering food and drink throughout the session .



Family meetings

Creating a bond, enabling conversations.



Comfort and pain management

Comfortable seating and pain assessment.

Getting Your Home Ready For Namaste Care



Choose the core team

Namaste Champions: enthusiastic, committed to dementia care.



Assess impact on the home

Consider how residents and staff may respond to Namaste care.



Wider team

Let people know about the programme.



Inspire your staff

Help people to understand why you are introducing Namaste care.



Teamwork

Get everyone on board with the Namaste Care programme.



Involve families

Inform and discuss with family members of residents.



Training

Staff training and education session.



Identify residents

Consider which residents may be eligible.



Workload

Consider staffing and workload allocations.

Practical Preparations For Namaste Care



Location and view

Can you identify a space with a view outside?



The Namaste Space

Prepare a warm, calm, separate space within the home.



Equip the room

Equip the room with suitable chairs, pillows etc.



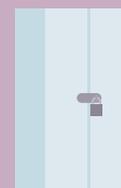
Decorate the room

Enhance the space with pictures, plants etc.



Identifying skills

Who has skills (singing, aromatherapy etc.) to bring to the room?



Storage Space

Safe, lockable space for equipment.



Music

Prepare different types of music.



Personal resident supplies

Prepare personal supplies such as brush, soap, lip balm.



Activity items

Prepare items such as twiddle blankets, lifelike dolls or animals.



Two hour session, twice daily



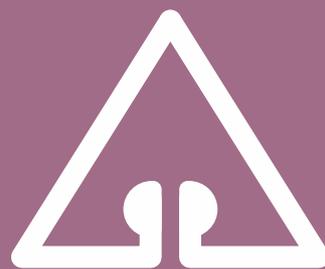
Meaningful activity and touch



Appreciative, affirmative attention



Person centred care



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Acknowledgements:

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