

## 10 TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS TO MANAGE THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season can bring festive activities and emotions for many families. For those caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's or dementia, it can be a time of uncertainty and additional stress. Extra events, atypical schedules and new visitors can increase confusion or agitation in these homes. Here are 10 tips from our Grace Place Alzheimer's Activity Centers program staff to help caregivers better manage the holidays in a merry way.

- 1) Quiet places during a gathering are so important. Make sure to have a quiet space at any gathering where people can come to greet and visit the senior.
- 2) Incorporate favorites! Whether it's bringing along or having on hand favorite snacks, a cozy sweater, or even a comfortable blanket or chair.
- 3) Celebrate the holidays with traditional foods, activities and music. Keeping choices simple and not too overwhelming is best.
- 4) Include exercise as part of the day. Enjoyable and fun activities such as chair volleyball, active sing-along with clapping, and Sittercise all count!
- 5) Provide plenty of opportunities for rest between events or gatherings.
- 6) Help children adapt to seniors. Children are a wonderful part of family gatherings but may have high energy. Talk with children before visits to overcome fears and encourage positive interactions. Care should be taken to not overwhelm seniors with too much noise or activity.
- 7) Visits and outings during the holidays should be kept brief and simple. Staying closer to home is ideal whenever possible.
- 8) If possible, host the holiday gathering at home and keep it small, quieter and relaxed.
- 9) Remember that smiles and laughter are contagious! Laughter is good for everyone, both the caregivers as well as the senior.
- 10) Just ask! Don't forget to ask your loved one what would make *them* feel most comfortable or comforted during times of lots of activity.