



## Validation Training Institute, Inc.

Connecting heart to heart with older adults  
a non-profit, tax exempt company

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### Tips from VTI for caregivers of people living with dementia V

#### REDUCE ANXIETY WITH YOUR BREATHING AND TOUCH

When a disoriented older adult is expressing (verbally or non-verbally) anxiety, you can help. First, adjust your breathing to match the rhythm of the other person. Second, place your (gloved) hand on the sternum of the other person. Third, name the emotion you sense in the other person like this: "You look like you are scared."

#### ISOLATION CREATES MORE WITHDRAWAL

Contact with others is a basic human need; humans are social animals. When older adults who are already disoriented are placed in isolation, you can expect that they will withdraw inward. It is critically important that you have person to person contact with this vulnerable group of people. Use touch and singing to make contact and encourage communication.

#### AND REMEMBER – CENTER YOURSELF

Putting aside your own thoughts and feelings for the 3-5 minutes that you validate is vitally important. Otherwise you might project your feelings onto the other person. So choose the way that works for you. Take 3 deep breaths and imagine a tree with strong roots and lots of leafy branches – or a beach with the warm sun and golden sand under your bare feet. Whatever works for you is great. There are three centering exercises you can try out on the [VTI YouTube channel](#) – for free.

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