

Getting the Most from the Resident Preferences Tool

Asking about Preferences

- Depending on the stage of dementia, a resident living with dementia may be more comfortable with yes or no questions or simple choices. **Use short sentences and simple words.**
- If you need more information than the resident provides, **talk with the resident's loved ones and care providers who know them well.**
- Record the resident's preferred bedtime routine with other care information. Work with your supervisor to make a plan and add it to the appropriate system. **Update the care plan and communicate with staff when the resident's needs or preferences change.**
- **Follow relevant policies and procedures for protected health information.**



Conversation Tips and Reminders

- **Focus your full attention on the resident.** Make eye contact, unless it makes the resident uncomfortable. Hold the conversation in a quiet, private space where the resident is comfortable, such as the resident's room.
- **Allow the resident to finish their thoughts,** even if it takes some time. Repeat back what you heard, in your own words, to check that you understood correctly.
- When talking or working with the resident, use what you know about **their past and present life,** such as what job they had, to **better understand their preferences and needs.**
- You may learn about their past, including things that may trigger strong emotions for them. Do not pressure the resident to answer any questions they do not want to answer. **If the resident seems uncomfortable** or tired, stop. Try again on a different day or have a different staff member talk to the resident.

Pay Attention to How the Resident Living with Dementia Communicates

- Residents may explain their preferences with words. Other times, you may **learn about preferences by how a resident naturally reacts or behaves.** Pay attention to the resident's body language and facial expressions when they are getting ready for bed.
- Sometimes the resident will tell you exactly what they want for their bedtime routine. Other times you might have to **guess based on what you know about them and their preferences.** As needed, try different approaches in this tool, the **DREAM Toolkit Pocket Guide,** or other ideas from your team.
- Keep looking for what does and does not work for the resident. Sometimes a resident will want to change their routine for one day. **It is important to remain flexible.**



If the resident still has trouble sleeping, it could be a sign of an underlying issue, such as sleep apnea or medication side effects. Residents with a history of trauma may also have more difficulty sleeping. Work with your team to identify and address underlying issues.

Resident:

Date:

	Preference Questions	Staff Observations and Notes
Workflow	What time do you like to go to sleep? What time do you like to wake up? How do you like to wake up? ☐ Open window curtains ☐ Natural wake up ☐ Other: How did you get ready for bed in the past? Does it differ now? If so, how? What would you like to change? For example: snacks, plan tomorrow's clothes, or listen to music.	
Environment	What helps you get comfortable before bedtime? ☐ Extra pillows Temperature: ☐ Extra blankets ☐ Colder ☐ Other: ☐ No change Door: open or closed (circle) ☐ Warmer Do you like the head of the bed elevated? How much? What helps you when you're having trouble sleeping?	
Personal	What do you want on your bedside table at night? ☐ Glasses ☐ Tissues ☐ Clock ☐ Phone ☐ Other: Do you like to bathe in the morning or evening? How many times a week? Are there any specific products you use? What do you like to wear to sleep? Do you use the bathroom before bed? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Light	What kind of light do you want when you go to sleep? ☐ Blinds closed ☐ Bedside lamp ☐ Television ☐ Nightlight ☐ Other: Do you wake up easily to light? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Noise	What kind of noise helps you sleep? ☐ Television ☐ Soft music ☐ White noise ☐ Other: Do you wake up easily to noise? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Activity	What activities are important to you? When? ☐ Go outside ☐ Exercise ☐ Listen to music ☐ Read ☐ Other:	



Consider updating the Resident's Preferences during the regular care plan review process, as the resident's dementia progresses, and following other status changes.