

## “THE FIRST MEETING – SAYING HELLO”

Your initial contact as a volunteer with your care receiver helps to set the tone for future visits. Here are some ideas to help you prepare for that first meeting so it is as comfortable as possible for all concerned.

1. Learn from your Volunteer Coordinator as much as you can about the person’s background, interests and situation prior to the first visit. This is part of the matching process.
2. It is OK to feel nervous. This feeling will probably be mutual if you are complete strangers.
3. Initially, greet your friend formally using Mr., Mrs. or Miss. Ask for his or her preference as to how they wish to be addressed for the future.
4. Introduce yourself and share a little bit about your background so that the person can get to know you better.
5. If you encounter a situation where you are not sure how to help, ask whether your assistance might be needed in some way.
6. Keep the initial visit brief (depending on the circumstance). Be sensitive to their physical condition (fatigue, irritability etc.) and shorten your visit for that day. If you must wait for a family member or worker to return before you can leave, suggest that the care receiver rest or share some passive activity (watch TV, listen to music). Remember, talking can be very exhausting
7. At the end of the visit, make arrangements for the next meeting (if this is an ongoing match). Write down your name and the details of your next visit and leave it with the individual. Leave the phone number of your Volunteer Coordinator so that a message may be left for you if necessary. *Do not leave your home number.*
8. Please be patient with yourself and others as you are involved in a process of developing safety, trust and rapport...initial aspects of any relationship. Don’t give up after one initial visit; make several visits before deciding whether this situation is workable for you or not. In addition, please remember, The CareGivers, Inc. program is here to support you. Don’t hesitate to ask for assistance.