

Loss of motivation in dementia: A guide for aged care workers



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Dementia Support Australia

Funded by the Australian Government
A service led by HammondCare

1. KICKSTART AN ACTIVITY

Loss of motivation can reflect a problem with initiating or starting activities. You can help to kickstart an activity using simple prompts:

“Let’s finish this [...] together”

“Would you like to colour in?”

“Let’s go out to the garden.”

2. STIMULATE CONVERSATIONS

Well-chosen items (e.g., games, books, music) can help to reconnect with the past. Bring the object to the person and explore it together:

“Look at this ball I found.
Didn’t you play in a team?”

“I heard this music and thought of you.
Did you ever sing in a choir?”

3. CREATE A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Support the person to feel useful and fulfilled. Draw on their past roles and achievements. Remind them of their valuable skills through simple requests, and follow with genuine praise.

“I hear you’re good at [...], could you help me with this please?”

“That was a huge help,
thank you so much”

4. AN INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH

Some people enjoy a formal invitation to join an activity at a set time, but others may not respond well to schedules. Tailor your approach based on your knowledge of the person.

“Music time is starting at 3pm.
Will you join us?”

“Bring an activity to the person’s room and introduce it casually.”

5. GET THE TIMING RIGHT

Try to time activities when the person has more energy and is more likely to be receptive. For people who prefer to come out of their rooms for meals, an activity could start straight after.

“While you’re here, would you like to join us....”

“After lunch, let’s take a walk outside”

6. STAY POSITIVE

Our own demeanour and attitude can strongly influence the engagement and mood of others. Enthusiasm is contagious and a relaxed, positive attitude can go a long way.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Scan the QR code to download the full guide on loss of motivation in dementia.

