



Teepa Snow's *Snow Approach*: **GEMS State Model**

Teepa Snow's
Positive Approach to Care®
www.TeepaSnow.com

Teepa Snow's GEMS® State Model allows us to recognize how every brain can change based on internal and external factors. While dementia will cause chemical and physical changes to one's brain, other factors, such as discomfort, stress, or hunger, can affect all of our abilities in the moment. Observing these changes and recognizing what abilities are available in this moment are key to connecting and offering the *just right* support.



Sapphire

True blue
Healthy brain
Normal aging
Flexible
Adaptable
Optimal cognition
Can vary pace
Sometimes misses a word
Can provide support for other GEMS
States with proper self-care and support
Less peripheral awareness with age



Diamond

Clear – Sharp
Many facets
Lives by habit and routine
Likes familiar, dislikes change
Blames or dismisses errors
Short delays possible
Word-finding changes
Can cut and shine
Scuba vision



Emerald

Green
On the go with purpose
Flawed
Seeks independence or connections
Repeats
Misses details
One thing at a time
Misses or skips words
Travels in time and place
Binocular vision



Amber

Changing yellow
Caught in a moment of time
More curious than cautious
Focused on sensory needs
Lives in the moment
Copies actions, not tasks
Highly varied response speed
Language challenged
Resists dislikes, seeks likes
Can confuse objects



Ruby

Strong red
Retains strength, not skills
Big/strong actions
Has rhythm
Notices tone of voice
In motion or still
Typically very slowed
Chatty or silent
Imitates actions
Monocular vision



Pearl

Hidden in a shell
Ruled by reflexes
Short moments of connection
Mostly immobile
Expresses unmet needs with distress
Reacts to touch
Extended delays are common
Single sounds or words
Can recognize familiar and liked
Limited visual regard



What can I show/say/do to support a person in a particular GEMS State?

Based on what you **observe**, choose **your response** from the skills below to offer support.

My Skills	Sapphire 	Diamond 	Emerald 	Amber 	Ruby 	Pearl 
Responding to Their Vision	Greet, stay in visual field when interacting, use supportive stance (body to the side, face toward person)	Get visual attention, respect space/distance preferences, use directional signs and labels	Offer familiar gestures, use supportive stance, limit complex cues, present items for use in their center field of vision only	Show items, then gesture use. Point to direct attention. Eliminate items that could cause harm, but offer substitutions	Offer greeting matching speed, allow time to visually explore objects and you. One item/cue at a time. Exaggerate	Seek gaze by placing face in central field. Place objects within arm's length, first use gestures to show actions
Responding to Their Language	Ask permission to reduce background noise or change locations. Summarize or ask questions to confirm	Connect before sharing info. Acknowledge preferences and emotions. Empathize – Confirm their emotional state and then say <i>I'm Sorry</i>	Use preferred name, reflect key message they gave. Keep answers short/concrete. Pair words with gesture or object. Slow down, use pauses, instruct one step at a time	Use familiar greeting or name, smile or reflect their expression to acknowledge. Use only 2 or 3 words at a time. Pair words with gesture or object. Reinforce efforts (Good!; Keep going)	Use facial expression with greeting. Pair single word with gesture or object. Use song, counting, or rhythm to initiate or transition. Use vocal rhythm to change pace	Deepen your voice, slow your speech, use sounds (Ooh! Ummm) or single words (Good. Drink?), then combine motions with your words
Touching a Person	Shake hands, respect personal space preferences, get permission to touch	Shake hands, respect personal space preferences, get permission to touch. If showing distress – comforting hug or touch, only with permission	Use handshake greeting to note touch tolerance, use Hand-under-Hand (HuH) clasp when helping in intimate space, offer objects held the direction the person would hold/use them	Get visual and verbal permission, then touch at the hand first. To get started, use HuH to guide and direct. Offer substitutions – do not just take something away	Offer hand, wait for regard, move into HuH when greeting, place other hand on shoulder or joint when assisting. Use HuH for support, tasks, guiding	To reduce distress, move one hand at a time; other hand connect with shoulder or joint. For all care; slow, flat, solid touch. Extending limbs may cause harm
Getting a Person to Move/Do Something	Seek partnership. Ask for their support/help. Acknowledge pain or discomfort before acting	Appreciate their skill or background. Ask for their help, allow time, and offer options to watch, supervise, or do	Consider staying at edge of public space and gesturing with energy your desire for them to get up and join you, bring a prop to see	Demo what to do at arm's length in central visual field, then offer the object or use HuH to begin. Use gestures to signal getting up, after rising yourself	Say their name, do what you want them to do, then use single words only. Guide movement to help them begin, re-cue if needed	Greet, pause. Use counting or emphasis to help the person to know what is going to happen. Go SLOW, pause, watch for discomfort

*Hand-under-Hand Techniques



Hand  under Hand[®] Positive  physical Approach[™]

Learn more about Hand-under-Hand and other supporting techniques with videos and resources at www.TeepaSnow.com.

Copyright © 2006 - 2023 Positive Approach, LLC and Teepa Snow.
May not be duplicated or re-used without prior permission. V112023