



# The GEMS State Model



The Positive Approach to Care GEMS® State Model was created to help us see the retained abilities of a person living with dementia (PLwD). An individual's GEMS state indicates retained skill in combination with missing function, so that support and cueing will foster engagement and participation rather than isolation and dysfunction. In dementia, there are not static stages or levels of lost abilities. A PLwD will experience a variety of GEMS states throughout each day and over time. Recognizing the GEMS state allows us to engage in an appropriate manner and helps the PLwD shine, just as they are in that moment.

Sapphire	Diamond	Emerald	Amber	Ruby	Pearl
<p>True blue</p> <p>Healthy brain</p> <p>Normal aging</p> <p>Flexible</p> <p>Adaptable</p> <p>Optimal cognition</p> <p>Can provide support for other GEMS states with proper self-care and support</p> <p>Less peripheral awareness with age</p>	<p>Clear – Sharp</p> <p>Many facets</p> <p>Lives by habit and routine</p> <p>Likes familiar, dislikes change</p> <p>Blames or dismisses errors</p> <p>Can cut and shine</p> <p>Scuba vision</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>On the go with purpose</p> <p>Flawed</p> <p>Seeks independence or connections</p> <p>Repeats</p> <p>Misses details</p> <p>Travels in time and place</p> <p>Binocular vision</p>	<p>Orange</p> <p>Caught in a moment of time</p> <p>More curious than cautious</p> <p>Focused on sensory needs</p> <p>Lives in the moment</p> <p>Copies actions, not tasks</p> <p>Resists dislikes, seeks likes</p> <p>Can confuse objects</p>	<p>Strong red</p> <p>Retains strength, not skills</p> <p>Big/strong actions</p> <p>Has rhythm</p> <p>Notices tone of voice</p> <p>In motion or still</p> <p>Imitates actions</p> <p>Monocular vision</p>	<p>Hidden in a shell</p> <p>Ruled by reflexes</p> <p>Short moments of connection</p> <p>Mostly immobile</p> <p>Expresses unmet needs with distress</p> <p>Reacts to touch</p> <p>Can recognize familiar and liked</p> <p>Limited visual regard</p>



## What can I do to support this person living with dementia (PLwD) in their GEMS state?

Based on what you **observe** of their GEMS state, choose *your response* from the skills below to support.

My Skills	Sapphire	Diamond	Emerald	Amber	Ruby	Pearl
<b>Responding to Their Vision</b>	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
<b>Responding to Their Language</b>	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'm Sorry"	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
<b>Touching a Person</b>	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 PLwD 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 will cause harm
<b>Getting a Person to Move/Do Something</b>	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 arising 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



Learn more about Hand-under-Hand and other supporting techniques with videos and resources at [www.TeepaSnow.com](http://www.TeepaSnow.com).

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