



4C. APPROACHING & COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS & CLIENTS

Don't assume that patients or residents will be unresponsive to a visit just because they are sitting in chairs or in bed with their eyes closed or are otherwise apparently unaware of their surroundings. You will often be pleasantly surprised by the response received from such a patient and these may be the individuals who stand to benefit most from your visit

Guidance from the establishment

- ❖ Not everyone likes dogs or cats and some may be **fearful or allergic**
 - Ask the establishment to alert you to those **patients, residents, or staff members** who would **prefer not to have contact** with the PAT dog or cat
 - Some people may enjoy just looking at your pet and may even enjoy a 'trick' or two, as long as they are able to avoid direct contact

Approaching patients or residents

- ❖ **Always knock** before entering a patient or resident's room
 - If the door is closed or the curtain is pulled around the bed, do not proceed, rather return later to see if the patient or resident is then available
 - Whilst in a room, always make sure that the door is open and a staff member is aware you are there
- ❖ **Visiting a person in bed**
 - Sit your pet in a chair next to the bed or on your lap next to the bed
 - Be aware of I.V. tubes, dressings etc. but don't let them prevent a visit. A person confined to bed often welcomes a friendly visit
- ❖ If the patient has an **amputated limb**, or is **paralysed** on one side, be aware of this and **bring your pet to the unaffected side**
- ❖ If someone wants to **give your pet a treat** ensure that it is one that you provide so that he or she does not receive anything inappropriate
 - Alternatively, offer to take the treat home. The act of saving a treat for the PAT dog will be very important to them and means a great deal.

NB: You should never attempt to move or lift a patient. Always inform a staff member immediately should the patient request assistance.