

GEMS™ Levels

Understanding What Each State Means

Celebrating the Holidays ... For Each of the GEMS™ States

| Gem Level | Basic Meaning | To Celebrate the Holidays.... They would probably... |
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| Sapphire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower to learn • Slower to change • Slowed reactions and processing | Normal Aging Changes – NO Dementia Slowing Down | Sapphires may want to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a little more selective in what they'll do, when they'll do it, who they'll be with, and how they'll do it • Want more time to plan things out or make plans • Take longer to consider options, make decisions • Want to break shopping into smaller segments or trips • Worry more about trips/travel • Want to share the value and meaning of some of the celebrations and traditions with another generation • Give up some entertaining or gift giving responsibilities due to being ready to hand some rituals off • Feel sad over those who are no longer present, or may want to share their stories to make them part of the holiday |
| Diamond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still sharp • Still clear • RIGID • Expects respect • Seeks authority figures • Faking it | Early Dementia Or Mild Depression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild Cognitive Impairment • Using old habits & routines to get by • Covers up mistakes • Gets angry at others • Fears getting caught • Likes being valued as smart, pretty, thrifty, clever, experienced.... • Wants to tell their old stories • Wants to let you know who they have been • Wants to give something to others | Diamonds are happiest when they... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can enjoy and complete old, familiar celebrations and rituals. This works best if everyone is following well-known routines and patterns, during the usual times, with the regular people in the situations. Happiness can be found as long as there are no problems with anything else in the environment, social setting, time flow, or participation, If there are surprises or unexpected changes they may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get lost • Get upset or angry • Get scared or panic • Make mistakes that are dangerous • Accuse others of misbehaving, breaking traditions, or not caring • Make things up to explain what happened • Demand to do it <i>their way</i> • Refuse to let someone step in and tell them what to do • Get so involved with talking to someone they forget the bigger situation or activity |
| Emerald <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change is clear to others • Flaws are not so noticeable to the person • Still can pull it together at times • Has some social graces, but makes mistakes • Uses what is | Moderate Dementia Or Significant Depression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats some steps Skips some steps • Thinks it's OK • Fears being disrespected • Gets lost in time & place • Goes back in time • Misremembers & makes stuff up to fill the gaps | Emeralds may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to do many of the rituals and traditions BUT not hook it all together to celebrate independently or safely without support • Do pieces and parts of traditional activities, but may have difficulty with getting started, sequencing, completing an activity, and then moving on to something else • Know how to do tasks if they are clearly set up and demonstrated alongside, but may get frustrated or make mistakes if doing something alone • Start thinking of past holidays and start looking for people and situations from those times • Become upset when they can't find a person, place, activity |

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| <p>seen to try to figure out what to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going into the past | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to be <i>normal</i> • Wants to be in the <i>action</i> • Wants to be helpful and involved OR left alone to do what they want to do • Do things or supervise others doing things | <p>that they experienced as a child, teenager, or young parent – and may mistake one generation for another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more distressed around anniversaries or holidays, feeling like there is something special to be done, but not being able to put it all together • Enjoy specific activities, rituals, songs, or experiences and then forget they have been done and seek to do them all over again OR demand that decorations and celebrations be done, even though the “real” celebration or holiday is still happening • Have difficulty tolerating “waiting turns” or “waiting in line” or not being able to do it immediately when they want it or see it (have a back-up plan in mind & acknowledge the problem) |
| <p>Amber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the moment • All about sensation • All about exploration • No safety awareness • No ability to understand another person’s point of view • Do what is liked – avoid what is disliked | <p>Mid Dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into touching, fiddling, getting into stuff • Not aware of the bigger picture • Not aware of how their actions affect other things • Not aware of danger or risk • Likes what they like – doesn’t know when to stop • Wears you out if you don’t take breaks | <p>Ambers may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to “mess with” the visual and touch elements or indicators, such as bulbs, lights, or candles, of the holiday celebrations – (keep it safe) • Get into the containers and take things apart – safety switch is off (provide options that are OK and inviting) • Suddenly shift gears or even leave an activity or event if in sensory overload, with little or no warning (be prepared) • Start off wanting to do something, but then may just let go of that activity and go to something else (be flexible) • Push or pull at items that are upsetting or interesting, and then want to take them along (bring <i>companion cards</i> to share) • Say “Let’s go!” but won’t get in the car – (circle around) • Not get in the car for over 2 hours, but then suddenly gets into the car and says, “Come on, let’s go!” (<i>breathe!</i>) |
| <p>Ruby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No fine motor skills only big movements – over and over • Limited words, repetitive actions or motions • Moves forward, not backing up • Loses all depth perception • Startles easily | <p>Severe Dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interested in big movement than little – getting in/out of the car • May still like the radio, but volume and station are important • You will need to think about what they might be trying to tell you/need since they will not know or be able to show you | <p>Rubies may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy you for simple actions – hands on the railing, waving to others, swaying, moving things, or placing things • Sing along with favorite songs; may clap or hum along • Fall asleep on long trips or during busy visits • Want to get out as soon as they get in • Ask “Are we there yet...are we there yet?... Are we there yet?...” over and over – not waiting for an answer • Be able to participate in an activity for a while, but they can’t shift gears easily. • Be unable to do a movement or action repeatedly or consistently, unless you guide them each time • Repeat something they see or hear, over and over – “The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round”.... • Leave an activity as soon as it starts or may come into an activity after it is already in progress |
| <p>Pearl</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to actively move • Limited awareness of the world around them | <p>Profound Dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited movements and responses • Reactions can seem extreme • Less alert most of the time but there are | <p>Pearls may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be unable to sit up in chairs without support, tends to lean • Be generally unaware they are even at a specific celebration, but once in a great while will look out and say something like “Isn’t that beautiful”, or “Pretty, pretty, pretty” • Like the feel of riding in the car, especially on a long highway trip – the hum of the engine, the rhythm of the tires, drumming |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moments of alertness • Aware of sensations at times • Slow to respond • Ruled by reflexes • Can over-react | <p>moments of clarity and connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still needs some stimulation, but careful monitoring is needed | <p>of rain on the roof</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like to feel the wind and sun on their face as you slowly cruise • Like to sit and cuddle in the back row, with a blanket over them, like you used to do when you were young • Hum along to old tunes • Yell out with bumps or direction changes • Suck down some of a milkshake or special drink you get • Sniff and get alert when smelling something from the old rituals and celebrations • Become alert and aware with a certain voice, sound, smell, taste, vision, experience. <p>Moments of joy are still possible!</p> |
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