Parent Tip #22

- **Another visual transition strategy to use is a visual countdown system. Like the visual timer, a visual countdown allows an individual to "see" how much time is remaining in an activity. The countdown differs, however, because there is no specific time increment used. This tool is beneficial if the timing of the transition needs to be flexible (e.g. caregiver would like the child to stay engaged on the device during a work call but doesn't know when it will end).**

- **A countdown system can be made with numbered or colored squares or sticky notes, or any shape or style that is meaningful to the individual. As the transition nears, the caregiver can pull off or cross off the top item (e.g. the number 5) so the individual is able to see that only 4 items remain. The caregiver decides how quickly or slowly to remove the remaining items depending on when the transition will occur. Two minutes may elapse between the removal of number 3 and number 2, while a longer amount of time may elapse before the final number is removed. Once the final item is removed, the individual is taught that it is time to transition. Several examples are provided, and these can be used to support any transition.**

- **Offer choices. In a time of crisis, when most people feel like so much is out of their control, providing choices can increase a sense of autonomy and motivation. Creating regular opportunities across the day where family members have a voice about what happens and when it happens can serve as an effective anxiety reducing strategy and a communication tool. These choices might include the route for the nightly walk, meal options, order of activities for the day, and/or preferences for activities. Several examples are provided for use across the day and age range.**

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