Practical support in everyday care

When someone's body won't settle

Understand what may be happening

Restlessness, tension and difficulty settling can have physical, emotional, environmental or medication-related causes. Ask about discomfort and what feels difficult now; do not assume anxiety is the explanation.

Consider what can be changed

Check noise, lighting, temperature, crowding, interruptions, privacy, seating and opportunities to move. Ask whether a different space or familiar supporter would feel better. Address avoidable restrictions or confusing routines where possible. Consider whether staff proximity, repeated instructions or frustrated responses are adding pressure; seek colleague support or reflection where needed.

Offer practical support

Help the person find a comfortable place, obtain water or other necessities, or communicate a concern to the appropriate clinician. Listen and provide space without requiring an explanation. Quiet, attentive presence can be useful without adding an activity.

Explore something together

If wanted, offer a comfortable walk or accessible movement, personally chosen music, a familiar hands-on activity, or an optional relaxation exercise. Ask what has helped before. Any sensory resource should be chosen with the person, not imposed.

Choice and safety

Avoid unwanted touch, forced breathing, or using activities to secure compliance. New, severe or unusual physical symptoms, significant changes in behaviour, or possible medication-related restlessness warrant appropriate assessment; urgent symptoms require urgent care.

Possible invitation: “Would changing the space help, or would you prefer me to stay here with you?”

Evidence note: Environmental and relational de-escalation is supported by professional guidance (NICE NG10; Helsedirektoratet; NHS England). Sensory modulation has practice guidance (Te Pou), but specific informal activities have

variable and often indirect evidence. Do not claim they prevent aggression or restraint.