

# Chapter 12

## Personal Care

### **Personal Care Ethics**

Observe the following professional ethics every time you assist and support an individual with personal care skills:

#### **Respect**

Respect the individuals you support and help others recognize their value. Personal care should be provided with dignity and respect for the individual.

#### **Physical and Emotional Well-Being**

Support individuals while being attentive to reducing their risk of harm. Personal care should be provided safely and in a way that promotes the physical and emotional well-being of the individual.

#### **Confidentiality**

Protect and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the individuals you support. An individual has the legal right to have his or her support needs kept confidential and to have privacy during personal care activities. It is imperative that you provide maximum privacy for these very personal hygiene tasks.

#### **Responsibility**

Be a partner to the individuals you support in order to facilitate good personal care and promote health.

#### **Self-Determination**

Assist individuals in living the kind of life they choose. Individuals have the right to direct how personal care is provided. Assist the person you support in directing their personal care. Part of your job as a DSP is to support individuals so they can be as independent as possible. Some individuals may be able to bathe, shave, dress, and otherwise take care of themselves with no support. Others may need assistance or support to complete all or portions of their personal care activities. Depending on the abilities of each individual, you will need to provide more or less support. Having opportunities to make choices is a key to leading a healthy, happy life. Just as individuals have the opportunity to make choices about what clothes to wear and what to eat, the individual needs to have the choice as to how and when they complete their personal care activities. For example: one individual might like to bathe at night, while another likes to shower in the morning. Be aware of these individual preferences and support them.

#### **Right of Refusal**

# Fundamentals

The individuals you support have the right to refuse. Typically, if this is a periodic event, you would just document the refusal in the person's file. If it is an ongoing issue, or a matter of health and safety, support strategies will be documented in the person's plan. Be certain to provide a great deal of power and choice in all areas of an individual's daily life. Doing so will lessen the likelihood that they will make unhealthy and unhelpful hygiene choices to assert their power and choice.

## Mobility, Lifting and Transferring

Sometimes, we have to support individuals in walking, going upstairs, or transferring from a bed to a wheelchair. Keep these things in mind when assisting in any of these tasks.

### Walking

- Clarify where the individual would like to walk to
- Encourage the individual to wear non-skid footwear
- Avoid clothing that can get in the way
- Be certain the area is free from clutter
- Be patient and slow

### Assisting from sitting to standing

- Encourage the individual to lean forward;
- Help them to use a rocking motion as momentum (if able); if on a bed, help them move his/her legs off the bed;
- Have them push forward with his/her arms from the bed (if able).
- Keep the individual's body as straight as possible while attempting to stand
- If an individual has a weak leg, brace your knee against it as the individual stands.
- A gait belt can be used for stability
- Stand a few moments and stabilize his/her balance before walking

### Assisting on stairs

- The individual should step up with his/her stronger leg first
- Stand behind the individual when he/she is going up stairs
- The individual should step down with the weaker leg
- Stand in front or at the side of the individual when he/she is going down stairs
- For safety, the individual should always use a handrail

### Safe Lifting Practices

Safe lifting and transferring techniques are important to preventing injury to the individual and yourself. Assisting another person to move can put a great deal of strain on your body unless you practice the proper strategies and body mechanics.

No matter how light an item is, observing following guidelines for lifting or moving objects can help protect your back when you have to lift, push, or reach for something:

- Use wheeled devices to move an object whenever possible.
- Push (don't pull) items such as a garbage container or a cart.
- Move to the item, rather than reaching for it.
- Squat, rather than bend over, to reach down for something.
- Turn, rather than twist, to go in a different direction. Twisting motions, especially with a heavy load, place considerable stress on the spine. Keep the natural curve of the spine intact.
- Lift items at about waist height

# Fundamentals

- Keep items close to your body and not away from your body
- Use a gait belt whenever possible

## **Transferring from Bed to Chair or Wheelchair**

1. Wash hands.
2. Position chair/wheelchair close to bed with arm of the wheelchair almost touching the bed.
3. Fold up or remove footrests.
4. Lock wheels on wheelchair.
5. Assist person to roll toward side of bed.
6. Supporting the person's back and hips, assist person to a sitting position with feet flat on the floor.
7. Put on transfer belt, if necessary.
8. Assist person to scoot toward edge of bed.
  - With transfer (gait) belt:
    1. Stand in front of person.
    2. Grasp belt.
  - Without transfer belt:
    1. Stand in front of person.
    2. Place arms around person's torso under person's arms.
9. Brace person's lower extremities with your knees to prevent slipping.
10. Alert person you will begin transfer on the count of 3.
11. On signal, assist person to stand.
12. Assist person to pivot to front of wheelchair with back of person's legs against wheelchair.
13. Flex your knees and hips and lower the person into the chair/wheelchair.
14. Have person hold onto armrests for support.
15. Reposition person with hips touching the back of the wheelchair and good body alignment.
16. Remove transfer belt, if used.
17. Position person's feet on footrests.
18. Wash hands as final step.

## **Shaving**

Shaving one's legs, underarms, or face is a very personal matter. Cultural differences may be a key to whether an individual chooses to shave. In some cultures, women do not shave their legs or underarms; in some cultures, men do not shave their facial hair. It is important to assist and support the individual to shave safely and to avoid nicks and cuts that can lead to infection. Some individuals may learn to use an electric razor. Other individuals may be assisted and supported in using a blade razor. It is important to ensure that each person have his/her own razor that is not shared.

### **Face Shaving Tips:**

1. Always wear gloves.
2. Ask individual if he wears dentures. If so, make sure they are in his mouth.
3. Wash face with warm, wet washcloth to open pores and soften skin.

# Fundamentals

4. Hold skin taut with free hand and shave with smooth even movements in the direction of hair.
5. Rinse safety razor in warm water between strokes to keep the razor clean and wet.
6. Shave sides first, then nose and mouth.