# Hygiene 1.1: Dignity in Care – Personal Hygiene

Dignity can be promoted when supporting people with personal care such as, having a bath, haircare, cleaning teeth, shaving, nail care. How we look and feel is important.

Wren Hall's a 53-bed nursing home specialising in care of people with dementia. Staff don't wear uniforms here. It’s a fun place to be, our emphasis is on promoting wellbeing, quality of life and enjoyment of life. It's just home so we act as and dress accordingly. I think personal care and hygiene's so important because it's the essential elements of care that all of us have, and it makes us feel good about ourselves. It's those things that we just tried to go that little extra mile so that people feel they matter and that they're content with how things happen.

Care should be offered in the way that the person wants.

For some people it helps them to wind down perhaps before they go to bed. For the people, it's more of a stimulation activity, so in George's case, it helps him to get ready for the day ahead it   helps him to wake up and it gives him a little bit of a stimulation before he comes down for his breakfast. George, he likes his bath to be as full as possible. He likes to smother himself with the soap bubbles. He'll sometimes pop them onto his head, onto the rest of his body or sometimes create like a beard or other things like that.  He finds it quite a humorous activity to partake in.

Appreciate why small details are important to each person. A lot of it's about staff being self-aware. A lot is about staff understanding what’s important to them so, then I can respond to people when they’re saying, 'oh just make sure that my tights   aren't pressing on my toes' or 'my skirt's the right length'. Then you start to understand how important it is and then to meet that level of importance.

Do you want to put this shirt on today, this one? Do you want to put it on and wear it? Then you can have this one as well if you like. Yeah, 'cause it matches, doesn't it? So, should we have that one on? Right, what we need to do then, sir, we'll just need to pop that   one off I think that'll be first. This one. Yeah, have you changed your mind now?  Yeah. Oh, we can have that one tomorrow then if you want. Keep it nice.

Supporting people to be the way they want to be.

We spend quite a lot of time making sure that we support residents to look as good as they can do. Nail care, making sure that fingernails are cleaned well and it's using the creative ways of getting people to accept that care.  And, often, the best way is a manicure. We might get people washing up pots just so that their hands are soaking in some hot soapy water.  Foot care, getting rid of hard skin, dry skin nails that are curling round toes that can be quite painful and then hinder people's mobility. It's important that we maintain good foot care. Equally, making sure that people are shaved and that's men and women. Men usually like to have a shave every day, and some people prefer wet shaves rather than an electric shave and it's meeting that preference.

I used to have a dry shave, but you don't feel the same. Well, I don't anyway. It's not – for a reason there, but it's not the same, I don't think.  You feel a lot fresher with a wet shave. That's better.

And it's paying that attention to detail so that people really feel that somebody's taken a pride in their appearance, in the way that the person used to. Are we having it that way?

My mum's always been a very, very smart lady. Has always gone to the hairdresser and put the makeup and perfume and likes to be very well dressed, well presented. So actually, having her hair done makes her feel good about herself and probably helps maintain good feelings about herself and where she's at.

Right, we'll put you under the hair dryer now, shall we?

And it's who she is, and we don't want to lose that.

Older people tend to have very fragile, inelastic dry skin and it's about spending time moisturising the skin because, otherwise, skin becomes very fragile, you get skin tears, and that can be very painful and quite unsightly and it's not uncommon for older people to say, 'oh look at my skin it's terrible' and to be quite worried about it. So, the more we can maintain the skin in a healthy state, then the more we’re promoting a sense of wellbeing for people.

Tom lives at home and uses a personal budget to live independently. Tom is an amazingly outgoing young man who loves people and loves making friends. He's very, very active. He loves to be on the go and he does a whole range of things from swimming and yoga – he's got an allotment – to working or volunteering in a cafe. He's just an amazingly busy person. So, it's incredibly important that Tom looks as good as he possibly can when he goes out of his front door.

For Tom, who hates looking in a mirror, and isn’t very aware of the image that he's sending out to people, it's really important that he has some guidance and support to actually look his best.

Well, I guess, it's a team approach first of all. So, the most important thing is about agreeing between family members, personal assistants and, most importantly, Tom himself. How he likes to look good and what support he likes in order to look good. Then it's about having routines like a morning routine for getting ready for the day, having a bath, washing hair, shaving. Stuff we all do, but Tom needs particular kinds of support to do that. Perhaps it's about people reflecting back and saying 'Tom you look great. Is that a new jumper you've got on today?' and sort of, you know, him feeling good about himself in that way.

Support to keep your house clean.

Can you help me? Yeah, I'll help you, Tom. I think it's about kind of agreeing what jobs need to be done in the house in order to keep the place looking as Tom wants it and as Tom wants it may not be our idea of you know how we would choose to have our home.  It's about making sure that Tom is safe in the home that in terms of cleanliness and food hygiene and all those sorts of things that are really bottom lines. It's about Tom being supported in ways that have been negotiated. Tom will always do the washing up – he loves washing up and sweeping. Not quite so keen on hoovering so, a promise of a game on a computer game on the Wii might encourage Tom to do a bit of hoovering. All done. Yeah? So again, it's about negotiating and agreeing who's going to do what.

Ensure good hygiene practice everywhere.

It's vitally important in an environment like this that we maintain good hygiene standards. Not only staff and people living here, but also with the environment. None of us would like to be in an environment that's malodorous and our ladies and gents living here are no different. They like fresh-smelling environments, a nice clean bed and it's all vitally important. So even people that are in their rooms because they're not well it's important that they know that their room is being cleaned. I'm just going to clean your bathroom and bedroom, is that okay?

I thought you said you was going to clean me.

You just stay there, and I'll just clean around here. Not being able to see, I'm afraid to talk can't do much conversing with people unless I’m introduced to them. I can't just go to anyone and start talking to them. But I find it is very friendly and you know the workers here are very kind. You're going to.

I'm working around you. Yes.  I'm just cleaning your surfaces

See when you can't see, you can’t keep up with things, you can't gather what's going on. Is it raining?

Rain today, rain tomorrow.

I'm not used to being a film star. Will they probably ask me how old I am?

Well, how old are you? How old?

19 going on 20. I was born in 1917.

Oh my gosh, were you? Are you 97?

Yes, I must be I can't believe it was so long.

I'm just going to switch the hoover on so there's going to be a bit of noise. Okay. Yeah. Cleanliness, order. I say it's one of the most important things.

They you are Kathleen. All nice and tidy and clean.

Being around animals can have a therapeutic effect for many people.

We have lots of animals at Wren Hall. Animals, like humans, carry bugs and it's about making sure that the animals are well cared for. So, Rowley, the guinea pigs and the chickens all have care plans that says this is how we're going to care for you so that they're treated appropriately.

How many, Mike? Three. Three?

You'd like to get up, wouldn't you?  Yeah. To have a dance, and you nearly did last time.

Involve family.

You nearly got up for a dance last time.

And the family and the most important people around. They know the individual really well, so they can turn us into the best support possible for their loved one by actually sharing what they know. Involving them in any aspect of their loved one’s day-to-day living is vitally important. It gives them a self-sense of worth and a sense of purpose and makes them feel that they are doing their bit.

My mum, she was always very conscious the way she looked so she spent a lot of money on clothes, and she brought a lot of it with her here now.

Every week, I go into her room, I make sure she’s okay, give her chocolate so she knows  I'm here and then I go up to her room and then I  just make sure there's thousands of the skirts and the jumpers and I think it just helps the  carers in the morning that they're not they've  got more choice as opposed to things being  tucked underneath in the bottom of the wardrobe.

It's a pleasure to actually come in and see her.  My mum looks really good, but if I say, 'you look   nice', she says 'do I?' And I suppose for those few seconds it just boosts her that little bit. But I know she's 92, she's got to look right, and she always does. She's always clean, she's fresh and she just looks content and that's – to me – when I leave here this afternoon, I won't be crying I'll be okay mum, you're fine. I'll see you tomorrow That’s all I can say, really.

See you tomorrow. Yeah. Okie dokie.