Strategies in Managing Personal Care Safely and with Dignity

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‘Aging in Place’

"the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.”(CDC, 2013)
Objectives

- To provide a brief description of what Occupational Therapy is and the role of an occupational therapist.

- Review relevant terminology including terms such as occupation, self-care and personal care.

- Identify symptoms of dementia that impact function and thus an individual’s ability to complete personal care.
Objectives

- Provide you with tips to both optimize independence with personal care as well as assist with personal care

- Review practical safety tips for when providing personal care

- Provide you with an introduction to available equipment and adaptive aides
What is Occupational Therapy

“Occupational therapy builds the skills for the job of living and solves problems that interfere with people’s ability to do activities or occupations that are important to them. These problems may be a result of injury, disease, social disadvantage, or the environment” (caot.ca, 2003-2014)
Occupations

Occupations can include:

• *Self-care* (i.e. personal care, mobility, community management)

• Leisure (i.e. social activities, sports)

• Productivity (i.e. play, school, employment, homemaking).

(caot.ca, 2003-2014)
The Challenge......

To provide a safe environment for an individual with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia while at the same time enabling the person to maintain their independence and quality of life.
The Goal......

To find a balance between protecting the individual from risk while enabling independence and maintaining as normal a life as possible.
Impact of Dementia on Ability

Changes to:

• Memory
• Attention and concentration
• Ability to learn new tasks and follow directions
• Fine and gross motor function
• Sensory Systems (i.e. vision, hearing, smell/taste, touch)
Tips for Assisting with Personal Care
General Tips

• Breakdown tasks into manageable pieces and provide simple directions
• Establish and follow a regular routine and post a copy of the routine somewhere visible i.e. today we are going to brush our teeth, this is when we will have a bath
• Be aware that an individual’s ability/willingness to participate in the task may change from day to day
General Tips

• Give the individual choice and a sense of control i.e. would you like to bathe or shower?
• Be flexible
• Be ready to try various approaches i.e. use verbal cueing initially and move towards more hands on assist
• Ensure the environment is set up to meet the needs of the individual i.e. adequate lighting
Changes to the Environment

To compensate for changes to vision:

- Mark the edges of steps and doorways with brightly colored strips
- Place brightly colored signs or simple pictures on important rooms i.e. bathroom
- Create color contrast between floors and walls to help a person see depth
Changes to the Environment

To compensate for changes to touch:

- Adjust water heaters to 120 degrees

- Place signs on appliances that produce heat: “STOP VERY HOT”

- Use a thermometer to check water temperature, for example water for bathing
Changes to the Environment

To compensate for changes to smell/taste:

- Install good quality smoke detectors and check them frequently to ensure batteries are working
- Keep only small quantities of food in the fridge and check the fridge regularly for spoiled foods
Changes to the Environment

To compensate for changes to smell/taste:

● Keep spices and condiments such as salt and sugar away from easy access
● Remove or lock up medications
● Consider childproof latches on the refrigerator and cupboards
● Keep dangerous substances locked away
Changes to the Environment

To compensate for changes to hearing:

- Avoid excessive noise in the home such as having the radio and TV on at the same time
- Avoid large gatherings of people in the home
- Check hearing aid batteries
Daily Hygiene & Grooming
Daily Hygiene & Grooming

• Organize the Environment
  i. Label taps as hot/cold
  ii. Use bright colored items to attract attention and make items easier to find such as a brightly colored toothbrush
  iii. Keep frequently used items on the counter i.e. facecloths, soap
  iv. Use familiar and favorite products
Daily Hygiene & Grooming

• Organize the Process
  i. Provide written or visual ‘how to’ charts
  ii. Provide simple instructions i.e. put the toothpaste on, put the toothbrush in your mouth
  iii. Keep a chart on the wall so that you can mark when a task has been completed as a reminder for the day
Brushing your Teeth

1. Turn on the water, put your toothbrush under the water, turn off the water.
2. Take the cap off the toothpaste. Put toothpaste on toothbrush. Close cap.
3. Brush your teeth. Top teeth and bottom teeth.
4. Spit the toothpaste into the sink, turn on the water and rinse out your mouth.
5. Turn off the water and dry your hands and face.
6. Put your toothbrush and toothpaste away.
iv. Demonstrate the activity such as brushing your own hair
v. Use hand over hand direction
vi. Use electric devices such as an electric shavers and toothbrush
vii. Maintain lifelong routines i.e. going to hairdresser or barber
Dressing
Dressing

- Organize the Environment:
  i. Sort out closets and dresser drawers to make it easy to choose what to wear.
  ii. Arrange complete outfits on a hanger
  iii. Remind the person of each step using a written or visual diagram
  iv. Put away items not appropriate for the season
  v. Label drawers and items in the bedroom and bathroom to make items easier to find (use either words or pictures)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Column</th>
<th>Right Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get underwear, pants, shirt, and two socks.</td>
<td>Get underwear, pajama pants and pajama shirt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull on your underwear.</td>
<td>Pull on your underwear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull up the pants, pull up the zipper, and close the button.</td>
<td>Pull up the pants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put on the shirt.</td>
<td>Put on the shirt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put a sock on your foot. Put a sock on your other foot.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dressing

• Organize the process
  i. Break the task down into smaller steps
  ii. Give a choice of only two options
  iii. Layout items in the order that they are to go on i.e. undergarments
  iv. Hand the clothes one at a time and provide simple instructions, i.e. put on your shirt
  v. Start with verbal cues and progress to more hands on assist as needed
Dressing

vi. Modify or choose alternative types of clothing such as replacing zippers with velcro or pants with elastic waist band.

vii. Use adaptive aides such as a long handled reacher
Toileting
Toileting

• Organize the Environment
  i. Put a sign on the door with words, symbols or a picture indicating where the toilet is
  ii. Leave a night light on in the washroom and in the hallway leading to the bathroom
  iii. Put up a sign reminding the person of the steps i.e. remove clothing, to use toilet paper, flush the toilet and wash their hands
  iv. Install equipment such as grab bars and a raised toilet seat
Pants down
Sit on toilet
Use toilet paper to wipe
Pants up
Wash hands
Toileting

• Organize the Environment

v. Use a colored toilet seat for contrast making the toilet easier to find

vi. Commode for use in the bedroom at night time

vii. Put tape across the bathroom door latch, to prevent the person from locking him/herself in

viii. Remove sink stoppers to prevent a flood should the water be left on
Toileting

• Organize the Process:
  i. Provide easy to remove clothing for easier access
  ii. If assisting provide simple instructions
  iii. Establish a toilet routine to reduce accidents
  iv. Use of incontinent products if risk for accidents
Bathing
• Organize the Environment

i. Ensure that the necessary equipment is in place for safe bathing i.e. bath seat, grab bars, non slip mat, hand held shower

ii. Label taps as hot/cold

iii. Be set-up prior to starting to bathe – have soap and towels prepared and within reach

iv. Make sure the room is comfortable i.e. pad bath seat with towels, temperature
Bathing

• Organize the process

  i. Establish a familiar routine for bathing and do your best to follow it i.e. bathing at a similar time each day
  ii. Make sure the individual has a role i.e. holding the wash cloth
  iii. Simplify – for example use one soap that can be used for both body and hair, two in one shampoo/conditioner
  iv. Provide verbal cueing i.e. put the soap on the cloth, now wash your face and assist as needed
Bathing

v. Be gentle and use a patting motion over a scrubbing motion as they may be hypersensitive to touch

vi. Have an activity ready if the individual becomes agitated i.e. play soothing music, singing

vii. Be prepared that if the individual becomes increasingly agitated you may have to stop and try again later

viii. Sponge bathing is an alternative as well as dry shampoo
Feeding & Meal Preparation
Feeding

• Organize the Environment
  i. Provide visual cues for eating
  ii. Specialized cutlery, non-spill cups, a dish with a lip on the edge
  iii. Limit distractions i.e. t.v.
  iv. Keep table setting simple i.e. remove unnecessary items such as center pieces
  v. Use contrasting plates and place mats that make it easy to identify the food on the plate
Feeding

• Organize the Process
  i. Eat with the person or arrange for someone else to attend at meal times
  ii. Serve only a few food items at a time
  iii. Check the food temperature
  iv. Allow a long period for eating
• Use finger food and high nutrition drinks
Meal Preparation

• Organize the Environment
  i. Label cupboards with words or pictures that describe what is inside, for example, dishes, knives and forks.
  ii. Install a smoke detector and check the batteries regularly.
  iii. Leave written reminders like "turn off the stove" or "unplug the iron." Place them where they are visible.
  iv. Place regularly used items on the counter if using the cupboards is challenging.
  v. Paint red and green lines on stove knob to indicate on and off.
Meal Preparation

• Organize the process
  i) Use electrical appliances that shut off on their own.
  ii) Write out directions for even basic items i.e. these are the steps to – use the toaster, make coffee, boil an egg
  iii) Write out your favorite recipes – step by step
  iv) Consider meal delivery options
Meal Preparation

When Safety becomes a concern:

- Remove knob covers from the stove
- Automatic shut off features i.e. Stove Guard
- Disconnect the stove if safety is a concern
- Place a sign on the microwave reminding the person to not put metal items etc. in the microwave
- Remove the microwave if it is not safe
Medications
Medications

• Arrange medications in a weekly dosette or pill container
• Have only a small amount of medications in the home at one time
• Bubble or blister pack medications
• Automated medication dispenser
Community Management
Memory Aids

• Reminder notes
• A calendar identifying important dates and appointments
• A notebook or diary
• Written daily schedule outlining the activities for the day
• A designated basket for important items
Memory Aids

- Use photographs to reinforce the individual's sense of identify and to remember family members
- Use photographs to label items if the person is unable to read
- A visitor log book
Community Mobility

• Leave a note by the front door reminding to take important items such as keys and wallet and to lock the door.
• Write your address down and post by the phone.
• Keep a map with you that shows where your home is.
Household Management

• Leave a set of house keys with a trusted neighbor
• Write telephone numbers in large print and post by the phone. Include people to contact in an emergency.
• Keep a list of emergency contact and number information somewhere at all times
• Inform neighbors so that they can watch for unusual happenings
Communication

• Post important phone numbers by the phone
• A press button phone with large numbers
• Program important phone numbers into the phone so the person just has to press a single button
• Note pads and a pen by each phone to record messages
Management of Finances

• Talk to your bank manager about in home banking
• Arrange direct deposit and automatic withdrawal for bill payments
• In preparation for the future assign a POA
Community Resources

- Victoria Lifeline
- Alzheimer Society of Manitoba
- Age and Opportunity
- Geriatric Program Assessment Team and Geriatric Mental Health Team
- Home Care
- Community Therapy Services
- Day Hospital
- Adult Day Program
References


Contact Information

Geriatric Program Assessment Team and Geriatric Mental Health Team
Central Intake Line: 982-0140

Age and Opportunity 956-6440

WRHA Home Care
Intake Line: 788-8330