

## Change Ideas for Creating Pleasant Bathing

### Typical issues & evidence of discordance:

- Resident displays anxiety, anguish, and combative behavior
- Injuries to both staff and resident

### Barriers:

- Bathing is considered a private experience – why is this a barrier?
- The bathing experience is physically and emotionally cold
- Sterile, institutional, and functional environment

### Goals:

- A positive, pleasant, individualized bathing experience, shifting from facility-directed to person-directed bathing and assistance with hygiene.
- To reduce injuries to residents and staff caused by the current facility-centered bathing routine

### Infrastructure helpful to support the change:

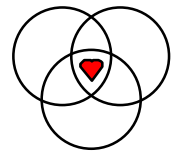
- A team empowered to change practices. Team members include staff members who are directly affected by current bathing practices, with participation from residents and families.
- Adequate supplies for bed baths, showers (particularly enough linen)
- Adequate supplies and accessories for making bathing rooms more private, warm and comfortable
- Routines built around individualized bathing
- Adequate and consistent supply for warm water

### Measurement possibilities:

- Number of residents screaming, calling out, vocally or nonverbally registering their disapproval
- Number of incident reports related to bathing, including possible injuries to residents and staff
- Number of bathing refusals
- Number of early identification of skin problems
- Number of residents who have individualized methods and schedules for bathing or assisting with hygiene.

### Questions to consider:

- Would you take a bath here?
- How close is our bathing process to the process that you yourself use in your home?
- Is it functional or personal?
- What would be the benefits of changing the process?
- What would you change?



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### PDSA Cycle:

**PLAN:** Engage a team of interested and committed people including residents, staff and family members to make bathing a pleasant, less stressful and less traumatic event for all.

**DO:** A bathroom beautification/deinstitutionalization initiative based on data collected that tracked resident discomfort during bathing.

Check with direct care worker to see if there is enough linen available to keep people warm during bathing

Have maintenance fix fluctuations in water temperature and pressure in the showers

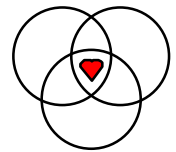
Provide ways to pad seats and support feet during showers

**STUDY:** The number of agitated residents and/or the number of incident reports related to bathing

**ACT:** Continue to evaluate and explore other potentially comforting change ideas.

### Change Ideas:

- Ascertain that all residents receive interventions to help them feel warm and covered regardless of what method of bathing is utilized.
- Ascertain that direct caregivers and supervisors recognize that forced bathing is no longer acceptable and that resistance always triggers an assessment and intervention.
- Ascertain the residents former preferred behaviors, needs and schedule related to bathing.
- Ask the residents a series of questions about routines before moving to the nursing home or talking to family/friends of the resident.
- Does the resident need assistance with bathing? If not, resident can bathe on his/her own.
- Establish previous preference for bath or shower, time of day, leisurely activity (cup of coffee, relaxing music) vs. functional routine.
- Residents should be bathed in accordance with their response. A resident may enjoy bathing while enjoying drinking a cup of coffee or listening to their favorite type of music The bathing experience should be duplicated as closely as possible.
- Create an environment that contains distractions that are pleasant. Ask the residents what they would like to see in the bathroom. Resident responses may include plants, music and other pleasantries.
- Take strides to create a more familiar and friendly environment by asking the residents what their bathrooms were like at their own



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- homes before moving into the nursing home.
- Consider personal items that can be used in the tub with residents to make the process more pleasant. Examples include bubble bath, bath salts and bath pillow.
- Consider warming lights to avoid residents being chilly when getting out of the tub or shower
- Consider what items could make the experience more comfortable, for example warm/soft/fluffy towel and caring conversation on favorite topics from a trusted, consistent caregiver.
- Provide as private an experience as possible by eliminating supplies and equipment storage in the shower area that will be needed by other staff.
- Provide a buffer curtain that will protect privacy.
- If at all possible, have only one person in the bathing area at a time
- Have consistent caregivers assist with bathing, minimizing the number of caregivers involved, to establish trust and knowledge about what works best.

### Associated principles:

- **Primary:** Create systems within which individual preference is honored and defended
- **Secondary:** Commit to de-institutionalize, wherever possible, the current setting providing personal living accommodations, a sense of peace, safety and community

### Resources:

1. Barrick, AL, Rader J, Hoeffler B, Sloane PD. Bathing Without a Battle: Personal Care of Individuals with Dementia. New York, New York: Springer Publishing Company. 2001.
2. Sloane, P. D., Hoeffler, B., Mitchell, C. M., McKenzie, D. A., Barrick, A. L., Rader, J., Stewart, B. J., Talerico, K. A., Rasin, J., Zink, R. C., Koch, G. G. (2004). Effect of person-centered showering and the towel bath on bathing-associated aggression, agitation and discomfort in nursing home residents with dementia: A randomized, controlled trial. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 52:1795-1804.

### Contributors

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