



ALLEGHENY VALLEY SCHOOL

Dignity & Sensitivity



INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Each resident at Allegheny Valley School has an inherent right to be treated with dignity and sensitivity.
- ❑ The absolute protection of that right is a responsibility shared by every person employed.
- ❑ Sometimes people forget, for any number of reasons, what it must feel like to be an individual with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION (CONT.)

- ❑ This sensitivity in-service is intended to raise the level of consciousness of each staff member so we don't "forget".
- ❑ A psychologist, has told the following story describing how easy it is to forget the simple things every human being requires:
- ❑ He was lecturing to a group of parents whose children have special needs. He was to speak on dealing with difficult behaviors. Only fifteen minutes into his lecture, a parent raised her hand and stated, "My child does not have special needs!" The doctor was a bit confused because he knew that this woman's daughter had mental retardation, Cerebral Palsy, limited vision and was fed through a feeding tube.

INTRODUCTION (CONT.)

- ❑ The parent then went on to say, “My five year old daughter has the same needs as every five year old child. She needs love, companionship of other children, toys, smiles, hugs, discipline, her own room, etc.”
- ❑ What a simple, but startling message that all professionals should keep in mind as they work with individuals, regardless of their physical or cognitive challenges.

ENVIRONMENT

- Allegheny Valley School aims to provide residents with as “normal” a home-like environment as possible.
- Remember that this is their home and all of the residents living here belong here.



NORMALIZATION

- Each person is an individual and has their own unique strengths and weaknesses.
- Based upon and individual's functioning level, they will display certain capabilities.
- In order to promote an individual's independence, we should provide choices whenever appropriate, i.e., choice of clothing to wear each day, where they would like to sit in the dining room, etc.

NORMALIZATION (CONT.)

- ◉ Most residents at Allegheny Valley School are adults, and deserve the same respect and dignity as any other adult.
- ◉ Use the same polite conversation that you would with other adults.
- ◉ Use the words “please” and “thank you” when making requests of the residents.

Please

Thanks

PRIVACY

- ◉ During our treatment and care of the residents, privacy and confidentiality should always be maintained.



FEELINGS

- ❑ Although a resident may not be capable of explaining to us how they feel, that does not mean that they do not feel.
- ❑ Residents feel pain, embarrassment, etc.
- ❑ Consider how similar we are to the residents. We often say things such as, “He’s doing it for attention, he’s just having a tantrum.”
- ❑ Think of the times when you behaved in the same fashion. You may be a little more discreet in your behavior, but your objectives are the same as the residents.

CLIENT SENSITIVITY

- Most of the residents at AVS rely on staff to meet their daily care needs. The things that we do for ourselves, without even thinking about it, we must complete for our residents. Consider the little things that we must do:
- When we sit, we can shift our weight, however, most of our residents cannot. Be aware of transfers/readiness, appropriate positioning, weight shifts and time out of wheelchairs.



SENSITIVITY (CONT.)

- Feeding - Be aware of prompting and choice making. Engage in conversation. Be aware of pace/rate and give ample time to swallow in between swallows. If mixing food, it should be pleasing and something you would consider eating.
- Dressing - Check to be sure that clothing matches, there are no tears or frays, it fits properly, is appropriate for the weather, and zippers or snaps are fastened and positioned properly.



SENSITIVITY (CONT.)

- ❖ Make sure shoes are on the correct foot.
- ❖ Numerous different types of adaptive footwear and braces are used here.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with each residents adapted equipment, and make sure equipment is applied appropriately.
- ❖ Be aware of individuals with Osteoporosis - tight clothing increases risk of spiral fractures when staff struggle to pull the individual's limbs through a tight pant leg or sleeve.

SENSITIVITY (CONT.)

- Be careful and avoid clothing that is too tight
- During transportation- make sure that the individuals extremities are not hanging out of the wheelchair.
- We are all on a tight, demanding time schedule, but appropriate speed in transporting and placement in rooms are ALL IMPORTANT SAFETY ISSUES.
- Encourage individuals to propel wheelchairs, use walkers or ambulate as independently as possible.



PRIVACY

❑ Changing/toileting:

- ✓ Provide privacy and consider the sex and relationship of the person tending to this need.
- ✓ Utilize screens and mats in rooms.
- ✓ Use proper hand washing techniques.

❑ Bathing:

- ✓ Provide privacy and consider the sex and relationship of the person tending to this need.
- ✓ Check water temperature.
- ✓ Position on shower chairs safely.



MEAL TIME

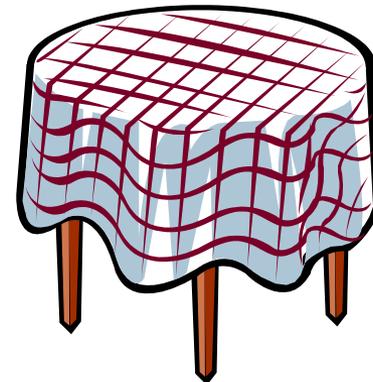
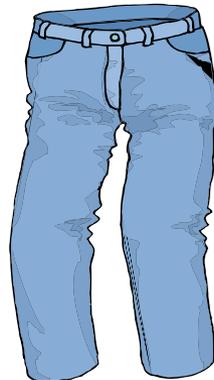
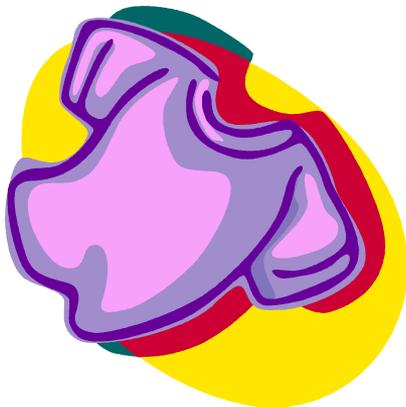
- ✓ Maintenance work or unrelated work should not be done during meals
- ✓ Minimize or eliminate confusion during the meal
- ✓ Strive to make mealtime as pleasant as possible
- ✓ The meal is flavorful/tasty
- ✓ Have substitutes available



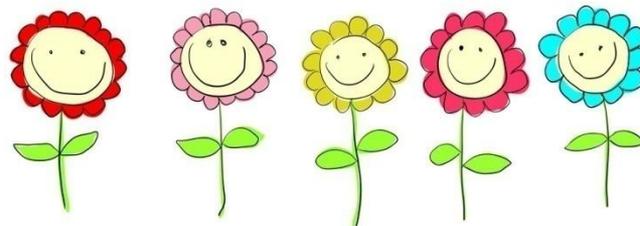
MISC. NEEDS

□ Clothing/Household laundry:

- ✓ Be sure that clothing fits appropriately
- ✓ Clothing and household items are not stained or faded
- ✓ Replace clothes and other items as needed

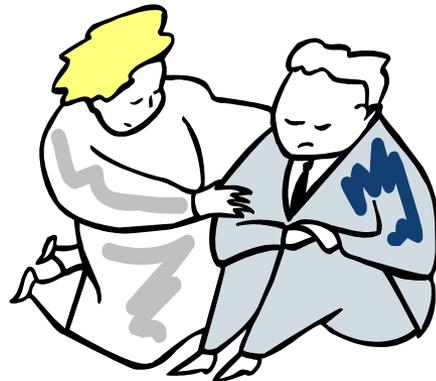


- ◉ The most important point to keep in mind is to treat all of the residents as you would want to be treated.
- ◉ Create and maintain an environment you would want to live in 365 days a year.
- ◉ Encourage a pleasant and stimulating environment.



INTERACTION WITH RESIDENTS

- ◉ The vast majority of our staff genuinely care for our residents and keep their best interests in mind.
- ◉ This is a large reason why we provide such quality care at AVS.



INTERACTION WITH RESIDENTS

- ◉ We are working primarily with adults, as most of our residents are over 21 years old. They may need us to provide for their personal care and well-being, but as an adult, and as a resident in a facility, there are firm limits on how to or how not to interact:
 - ◻ We cannot:
 - ✓ Hit
 - ✓ Strike out
 - ✓ Push
 - ✓ Slap
 - ✓ Verbally tease
 - ✓ Verbal abuse
 - ✓ Yell
 - ✓ Restrain, unless an approved plan or in danger of self or others
 - ✓ Set consequences
 - ✓ Threaten individuals
 - ✓ Deny and human/civil rights

INTERACTION WITH RESIDENTS

- We can and should always:
 - ✓ Talk and explain
 - ✓ Praise, but not belittle
 - ✓ Be consistent, especially in the implementation of BMP's
 - ✓ Give individualized attention and care even to daily, routine issues.
 - ✓ This is where most residents receive their 1:1 attention

HIGHER FUNCTIONING INDIVIDUALS

- ◉ We should expect personal resistance, and not take it personally.
- ◉ Our residents have a motivation for resistance. Consider the amount of control we have over their lives.
- ◉ Saying “no” gives them some control, and this may be their only chance for control.

HIGHER FUNCTIONING INDIVIDUALS (CONT.)

- We must ask residents to assist in meeting their needs, not tell them.
- The timing and structure of a request will affect its success.
- Just as you often wait a few seconds or minutes before responding to a request because you are involved in another activity, a resident may be pre-occupied and not want to respond immediately.
- Greet the resident and tell them its time, but ask if they are ready. Don't rush them, give them time to comply.

CONCLUSION

- ❖ This in-service has highlighted key issues regarding resident sensitivity. Keep in mind that all of our residents at AVS deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- ❖ Our jobs are not easy, but we must not compromise and look to take the easy way out.
- ❖ Remember we are here to provide a service and meet each and every one of our resident's individual and unique needs.
- ❖ Focus on similarities, not differences; strengths not weaknesses. Give choices and promote independence.

**Devised 10/08 DB*

Approved 10/08 CE