

Housekeeping Tip Sheet

Caring for Residents with Cognitive Impairment in Long-term Care

June 16, 2020



Build Trust

- Remember this is the resident's home.
- Knock on the door and introduce yourself.
- Show your id badge.
- Explain what you are going to do and ask for permission to begin cleaning.

Understand the person

- Many residents have dementia: this means they may have memory loss and may not remember you and your role.
- Others may have mental health issues or life experiences that may make them collect, e.g. loss of family and possessions during war when they were younger.



Build Relationships

- Smile!
- Use a friendly, courteous approach.
- Ask them about pictures in their room, their family, or pets. e.g. "That is a beautiful picture! Is that your family?"
- Talk about the weather. Tell them about your day.

Communicate clearly when doing a terminal clean

- Ask the nurse to involve the family by phone to help explain.
- Explain there is a bug going around and you have to clean to make sure everyone is safe.
- If moving resident to another room, explain for how long and reassure them that their things will be safe.
- Use recommended strategies with residents who collect things to remove excess items before the terminal clean is done.
- Use precaution signage (e.g. COVID-19, 'flu, etc.) to help remind them.



Ensure Safety

- Remove items of risk, e.g. plastic knives and forks.
- Use signage for wet floors – this will also help them understand your role.
- Ask if they'd like to wait outside while you mop.
- If the resident is at high risk of falls, mop their floor while they are out for an activity or a meal.

Strategies for residents who gather items excessively

- Provide a basket for items they collect and explain it is for them to keep their things. Provide safe things to collect (e.g. empty paper cartons with bright packaging).
- Clean the room when they are out for a meal or an activity.
- Leave a few items behind rather than cleaning everything out.
- Encourage them to donate to a charity. Even if you think the items have no worth, for the person they have meaning and it will make them feel like they are helping.



Explain your role

- Explain you are the “cleaning person”.
- Invite them to stay and tell you where everything goes and how they like their room cleaned.
- Keep your hands visible so they can see you are not hiding anything.

