

Pikes Peak Respite Services
719-659-6344
cmbev@hotmail.com
www.pikespeakrespiteservices.com

Dressing Training

Helping a person with their dressing and maintaining his or her appearance can promote positive self-esteem. While these tasks may become frustrating for an individual who is unable to complete dressing on their own, these tips can help simplify the process.

Tips to keep in mind while assisting with dressing:

- **Communicate.** Let the person know exactly what you are doing before you are doing it. Many individuals need time to transition from one activity to another. Giving them forewarning before and during the dressing process can help ease them into the transition.
- **Give choices but keep it simple.** Let the person choose what to wear. Keep choices to a minimum. A person may get distracted or panic if clothing choices become overwhelming. If appropriate, give the individual an opportunity to select favorite outfits or colors, but try offering just two choices. Allow enough time for the person to do as much as they can for themselves. If the person can put clothing on but only needs help for buttons or shoes, give them time to do it.
- **Organize the process.** Lay out clothing in the order that each item should be put on. Hand the person one item at a time while giving simple, direct instructions such as "Put your arms in the sleeves," rather than "Get dressed." Some individuals may need simpler directions, for example, "Put arm in", while holding the sleeve as a visual prompt.
- **Pick comfortable and simple clothing.** Shirts that button in front may be easier for some to work than pullover tops, while others may find buttons, snaps or zip-pers too difficult to handle. Make sure that clothing is not too tight which may make it more difficult to put on.

- **Choose comfortable shoes.** Make sure the person has comfortable, non-slip shoes. Offer support to individuals with limited fine motor skills that may be unable to put on or tie their shoes.
- **Be flexible.** If the individual wants to wear the same outfit repeatedly, have similar options available. Even if the person's outfit is mismatched, try to focus on the fact that he or she was able to get dressed. Keep in mind that it is important for the individual to maintain good personal hygiene, including wearing clean undergarments, as poor hygiene may lead to urinary tract or other infections that further complicate care. It's all right if the person wants to wear several layers of clothing, just make sure he or she doesn't get overheated. When outdoors, make sure the person is dressed appropriately for the weather.

Steps to safely assist with dressing:

1. Assist the person in removing clothes as needed. You will want to let the individual complete as much of the task as possible without your assistance. Set the dirty clothes aside and move the clean clothes within easy reach of the person.
2. Whether the person needs a little help or full assistance with dressing, be gentle in your movements and pull the clothes not the person. If the individual has limited mobility, the limb with the most mobility should be dressed first and undressed last. For example, when taking off a shirt, remove sleeve from the unaffected arm first as the person can bend their hand or arm. Put on a clean shirt but slipping on the sleeve from the side with limited mobility first.
3. Throughout the process, you will need to monitor the individual to ensure they do not become fatigued or lose balance. Be ready to help the patient sit or lie down if needed.
4. Place the dirty clothes in a clothes hamper and wash your hands.