



## Client Dignity, Independence & Rights

### After completing this module you will:

Understand clients' rights and how to maintain client's independence and dignity.

### Instructions:

1. This is a self-study lesson that you can complete at your own pace. Take your time and think about the information.
2. Feel free to make notes.
3. Once you have completed all (4) required modules, you will take an online test about the information covered in each lesson.
4. After completing the (4) required lessons, and passing the test, you will receive two (10) education credits.

## What is...

### Dignity?

Dignity is self-respect or appreciation of the formality of an occasion or situation. It is the feeling of being worthy or honored.

### Independence?

The quality or state of being independent (able to perform tasks by oneself)



## Rights?

The power or privilege to which one is justly entitled.

### Client Dignity

The challenge of delivering care today is to truly get beyond a task oriented model of care. Clients need meaningful relationships and engaging activities as an important part of their daily lives. They need to be treated as individuals who have emotions, desires, preferences and needs. They want to still live their lives to the fullest possible extent with dignity, comfort and security.

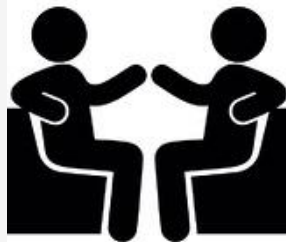
Each of us is unique. Even if we are different from the client we are caring for, we must try to understand how their unique characteristics are an important part of who they are.

What do clients want?

- They want to spend time with their caregivers and this time is a central part of their day.
- They want to like and trust the person taking care of them.
- They want their caregiver to know them and like them.

What clients want are relationships! Relationships are at the heart of care. Knowing the client as a person has much to do with how we deliver care.

If you interact with each client with the client's dignity in mind, it sets the standard of care. The key is to always see your client as the person you are going to assist, not just as one more task that needs to get done.





A powerful value is that “*the client comes first.*” Listening and responding to a client’s special needs sends strong signals. These actions demonstrate that we have values of respect and concern for all people. Being frail does not diminish one’s status as a person.

It is easy to say that the client comes first, but your day is full of many tasks to be completed and schedules to be met. Focusing on the tasks makes the care impersonal and cold. The day is just rooms to straighten, baths to be given and meals to prepare. Wouldn’t you hate to be cared for by someone who feels this way?

When a client calls out to go to the bathroom for the third time in ten minutes and you just ignore her, it makes a statement about your values. You may think to yourself, “Helen is just fine. She went to the bathroom two minutes ago. She just wants attention.”

We need to understand that a call for attention is important and expresses a need. Perhaps your client is frightened, feels lost or uncomfortable, or just needs to connect with someone around her and feel safe. Calls for attention may be your client’s means of communications.

When we stop, respond and connect with the client as a person, we are doing her a great kindness. We are telling her that we still see her as a person. When we respond to her in this way, we demonstrate our value of her individualized care.

## **Independence**

It is not enough to say “We treat each client with dignity and respect...” Words are nice, but without clear actions, the words have no meaning. Clients have the right to make choices and have control over their lives.

Each time we interact with our clients and give them choices and control, we show our respect for their independence. We are valuing them as an important person. A value is a “deeply held belief within a person and is demonstrated through day-to-day actions.” When we see each client as a unique individual, that value determines how we interact and care for that person. It is important to think about all the ways you support the personhood, individuality and the independence of all clients you work with.

Do your clients feel they play an important role in the success of their day?

Promote and encourage independence when providing care and listen to your client. Interact with your clients as individuals with respect for their choices and needs. Engage clients throughout the day. Include them in your daily work such as dusting, folding



laundry, peeling potatoes or walking to the mailbox to pick up the mail. Encourage your client to do as much for themselves as possible. Clients may want to join you on errands, for example, even if it's safe to leave them alone.

## Client Rights

Many of our clients are advanced in age and may have multiple chronic conditions that can cause fragility and weakening. Some are mentally alert, while others may have some confusion. Every client is unique and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. The following gives you some clear guidance in how best to do that. ALWAYS be respectful of your clients.

Your client has the right to:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Receive respect for privacy and confidentiality. (What you learn about your client can not be shared with your family or friends.)
- Participate and direct the development of the plan of care.
- Be given complete, thorough, reliable and timely information.
- Be given appropriate services without discrimination against race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual preference or handicap.

