



# 10 Tips

## for bathing people with dementia

### Imagine being in their position:

**1** Just because a person is older or has dementia doesn't mean that they will be comfortable being nude and accepting help. This is not easy.

### Ask what they like:

**2** The more you know about their normal routines, the more comfortable the experience can be. Consider time of day, products they use, the order they do things etc.

### Be prepared

**3** Get things ready before you start. Keep things in reach. Have wash cloths, towels and clothes ready for after the bath too.

### Communicate before you do

**4** Explain what you are going to do before you do it. Use visual clues like showing on yourself as you explain. Let them feel the water before spraying them. Tell them what area you are washing.

### Stay connected

**5** Place one hand on their shoulder and leave it there while you wash them with the other hand. This helps people feel more secure and comfortable. Try it! If you have someone pretend to wash you with and without the anchoring hand on the shoulder, you will feel the difference.

### Respect privacy

**6** As much as possible give them privacy – if they feel better partially covered up, that's ok. Expose what is necessary and work underneath towels if that's more comfortable. Make sure other people are not in and out of the room.

### Wash their head last

**7** Wash hair last to keep them from getting too cold. You can wet their hair with a wet cloth if pouring water over is uncomfortable.

### Connect with the person

**8** Talk to them and connect personally before telling them it's time for a bath, and reassure them or apologize if they are uncomfortable or upset.

### Give choice and control

**9** Let them have choice and control – water temperature, what to wash first etc.

### Be flexible

**10** Remember the goal is to get washed up – if a sponge bath is going to be better tolerated, consider this option