**DRESSING AND GROOMING (FOR DEMENTIA)**

*By Family Caregiver Alliance*

* Simplify clothing choices by putting out an outfit for the care receiver to wear, or give an option of two outfits. Do not ask open-ended questions like, "What do you want to wear?"—this kind of question can overwhelm someone with dementia.
* Buy clothes that are simple to put on/take off and are soft and stretchable, i.e. pants with elastic waistbands, shoes that close with Velcro or slip on shoes, or a camisole instead of a bra. A skirt or loose fitting dress can be easier for a woman to put on and pull up when using the bathroom. Clothing that fastens in the front is easier to put on than clothing that goes over the head.
* Put clothes out on the bed in the order in which they should be put on. Thus, underwear would be on top, and pants/shirts would be on the bottom. If necessary, cue the person by telling him/her what piece of clothing to put on next.
* Empty the closet of clothes that are no longer appropriate or too frustrating to put on and take off. This will make it easier to choose an outfit without being distracted by too many choices.
* A person with dementia will often wear the same outfit for many days. Buying duplicate outfits can help the care receiver change clothes without a fight. When taking clothes off at night, put the dirty clothes in the laundry, so they are not seen in the morning when the person is dressing.
* People with dementia do not self-regulate their body temperature often, so you might need to monitor if their clothing is appropriate for the weather.
* Allow the person to do as much as possible by himself/herself, but intervene if he/she is getting frustrated. Have a routine for dressing, including doing so at the same time each day, as well as putting clothes on in the same order each day.
* Combing hair, shaving, cleaning fingernails, using hand cream, and washing the face may all become problematic. Have a routine for doing these things. They don't necessarily have to be done every day.
* An electric razor will make shaving easier. Shaving does not necessarily need to be done in the bathroom. Choosing a time during the day when the care receiver is sitting in a comfortable chair can make this task easier.
* Some people prefer a comb, others may prefer a hairbrush. Use whichever is easiest for the care receiver as well as for you. Sometimes a person will be able to do this independently by watching what you are doing on yourself or by having your hand on top of his/hers while making the brushing movement.
* Regular visits to the hairdresser or barber will reduce the need to wash hair at home. Manicures and pedicures can be calming and can often be done at the same time.

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