



CAREGIVER CORNER VOL.2, LESSON 2

# CHOICE DIGNITY INDIVIDUALITY

---

## The 3 Principles of ADLs

SENIORLIVINGU, 2019 - [WWW.SENIORLIVINGU.COM](http://WWW.SENIORLIVINGU.COM)

# CAREGIVER CORNER

Volume 2 - Lesson 2

## GETTING PERSONAL



Think about the word "personal" - what does "personal" mean to you? To some people, it might mean private, or something you would want to keep to yourself. Maybe it means something you do for yourself - something no one else knows about or sees.

When you assist residents with personal care, keep in mind that many residents think about personal things the same way you do. They may feel embarrassed, nervous, shy, angry or upset that they need help with their personal care. Confused residents may even misinterpret your attempts to help and may react in ways you are not expecting.

Think about how you might feel if you suddenly needed help doing things you have always done for yourself - things you did alone and in private. If someone stepped in to assist you with these tasks, would you see that as an invasion of your privacy? Would you feel a personal loss over the changes in your abilities? These are all very real feelings that might be going through a resident's mind - always keep in mind how a resident might feel about the personal task at hand.

As an assisted living caregiver, encourage residents to do as much for themselves as possible. Focus on a resident's strengths - on what the resident can still do for him/herself - rather than weaknesses. This is called Function-Focused Care and by doing this, you can help residents to remain as independent as possible.

## THREE KEY PRINCIPLES

and the Assisted Living Philosophy

As a caregiver, you may already be aware that assisted living comes with a special philosophy or mindset when it comes to providing care to seniors. Although the care you provide might become routine, your caregiving routine must always be individualized to each resident's needs and preferences. Simply put, you should always be resident-centered. This means you should provide care in a manner that lets the resident play an equal part in care decisions and understand that the resident's needs come first. There are three key principles that support this assisted living philosophy, they are:

### CHOICE

What does it mean to offer choice? Offering choices enables a resident to have a degree of control over his or her life.

### DIGNITY

Dignity is a person's value or esteem; being worthy of respect. Being a caregiver demands that you show special attention to protecting a resident's dignity.

### INDIVIDUALITY

Promoting the individuality of each resident is critical in providing resident-centered care. Each resident's care routine should be tailored to meet their individual needs and likes.

Turn to the next page to explore these principles in more detail...

# CAREGIVER CORNER

## Volume 2 - Lesson 2 THREE PRINCIPLES OF ADLS CONTINUED

### CHOICE

By offering choices to residents, you involve them in decisions about their own care.

Think carefully about the choices you offer residents. A confused resident might become overwhelmed or frustrated when faced with too many choices; they may not be able to express their preferences easily. You should determine the degree of choice you offer a resident based on their individual ability to choose.

How you offer a choice is just as important as the number of choices you offer. You may get very different responses about the same choice, simply based on the wording and body language you use.

Set yourself up for success and always consider your goal. For example, let's imagine your goal is to assist a resident with bathing. How can you offer choices without compromising on your goal? Let's look at several scenarios:

#### First Scenario

Abby needs to help Mrs. Sawyer to get a shower. She says to Mrs. Sawyer "Mrs. Sawyer, would you like to take a shower?" and Mrs. Sawyer responds with a firm "no." Abby spends the next 20 minutes pleading with Mrs. Sawyer to take a shower, but ends up walking away to try again later that day.

#### Second Scenario

Tim needs to help Mr. Rayford to take a shower. Tim remembers that Mr. Rayford is not a morning person, so after breakfast he says to Mr. Rayford "Mr. Rayford, would you like to take your shower before or after you read the paper this morning?" Mr. Rayford says "after" and Tim follows up with him later that day to help with his shower.

Both caregivers tried to help a resident with their shower and both of them provided a choice to the resident. The difference between these two scenarios is the language they used. Abby didn't set herself up for success by asking a "yes or no" question; Mrs. Sawyer had an easy way to opt out and she took it. On the other hand, Tim offered choice by giving Mr. Rayford two options regarding **when** to take a shower. Tim set himself up for success by focusing on when Mr. Rayford would like to shower versus if he'd like to shower at all; Mr. Rayford was a lot less likely to say no to Tim's question.

Getting to know the residents you work with will also play a huge part in your success and knowing what degree of choice to offer. Notice in the second scenario, Tim waited to talk to Mr. Rayford about his shower until after breakfast, because he already knew that Mr. Rayford was not a morning person.

### DIGNITY

Assisted living residents need help in some very personal and private ways. Caregivers must always honor a resident's dignity and respect their right to privacy when helping with an ADL.

Do you know how a caregiver can affect a resident's dignity? Oftentimes, we generalize when it comes to the level of help a resident needs. The tendency to generalize, along with the tendency to stereotype or assume that a resident cannot do something on their own, are all ways that you might diminish a resident's dignity. Let's look at one example:

Sharelle is a caregiver and she is assisting Mr. Jones in the dining room. As Mr. Jones eats, he is dropping food on the floor and food is also getting caught in his mustache. Sharelle does not embarrass Mr. Jones by telling him he is being messy and she avoids wiping his mouth for him. Instead, she makes sure he has a large napkin on his lap to catch any food particles that might fall on his clothes. She also provides visual cues to Mr. Jones, throughout the meal, by dabbing at her own mouth with a napkin. In this way, Mr. Jones maintains his dignity as he eats independently.

# CAREGIVER CORNER

## Volume 2 - Lesson 2 THREE PRINCIPLES OF ADLS CONTINUED

### INDIVIDUALITY

What does it mean to "promote the individuality of each person" in an assisted living home?

It means finding ways to celebrate how each resident is special. While residents may have similar needs, each resident has their own likes and dislikes, routines and lifestyles. When seniors live in an assisted living home, they are still individuals with a sense of independence, feelings, and emotions - just like you.

As a caregiver, it's easy to find repetition in the care tasks you perform. With that said, it's important to keep your care routine from becoming automatic; don't assume everything will always be the same. Oftentimes, if you begin to act automatically, you begin getting poor results. Let's look at an example...

Samantha has been caring for Mrs. Fletcher for the last few months. Samantha knows that Mrs. Fletcher likes to dress herself before breakfast. Everyday is the same routine for Mrs. Fletcher; she washes her face, puts on a dress and sweater, and walks to the dining room. Today, Mrs. Fletcher entered the dining room with her dress inside out and her hair uncombed. Samantha quickly escorted her back to her room and assisted her in getting dressed properly. As Samantha talked with Mrs. Fletcher, she learned that Mrs. Fletcher's daughter was in a car accident last night. Mrs. Fletcher is very upset and unable to care for herself as she usually does.

This is a good example of why routine care should never become assumed and automatic. In this example, Samantha did not stop by to check on Mrs. Fletcher first thing in the morning. If she had, she would have been able to provide more support to Mrs. Fletcher while she was upset.

You can help promote each resident's individuality. By helping each resident enjoy the things and events that are special to them, a caregiver promotes the resident's individuality. Let's look at some other examples...

Mr. Carlson likes to wear his blue sweater with the white stripe on it. He wore that sweater for his 75th wedding anniversary. When Mr. Carlson selects that sweater to wear, Jose (the caregiver assisting Mr. Carlson) asks him about their anniversary. Mr. Carlson always smiles and talks excitedly about that day and his wife.

Jessica, a caregiver, knows that Mrs. Telier enjoys a late night snack before going to sleep. She makes sure to have her favorite cookies and milk available in the evening. As Mrs. Telier enjoys her snack, Jessica talks with her about her family and friends from France. This relaxes Mrs. Telier and helps her fall asleep.

Treating residents as individuals means learning to anticipate what each resident needs and wants. When assisted living staff members provide care, they should do it with the resident, not for the resident. For instance, a caregiver should offer to help with an ADL but should not insist that he/she needs to do it for the resident.

# CAREGIVER CORNER

Volume 2 - Lesson 2  
THREE PRINCIPLES OF ADLS CONTINUED

## TIPS TO ACT ON: THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF ADLS

Use these tips to foster independence, choice and dignity with your residents.



### PRACTICE PATIENCE

In elderly care, patience truly is a virtue. When working with a resident, it's critical that you work at their pace to promote their individuality. Rushing a resident to work at your pace can lead to feelings of frustration from both parties and will ultimately lead to an unsuccessful routine; not to mention that you may make the resident feel incapable or less independent.



### THIRD TIME IS THE CHARM

Wait, say that again? You may find yourself repeating your questions or repeating your explanations to residents as you work with them - in particular with Alzheimer's or Dementia care. **Never hesitate to repeat what you're about to do or repeat your question to a resident who is able to understand and process what you're saying.** Take extra time to speak and allow extra time to process when working with a resident who is confused or afraid.



### ROUTINE CHECK-IN

Remember not to let your entire care routine become automatic. One thing that should be automatic is a **daily check-in** with the resident you are working with. As we explored in an earlier scenario, without taking a moment to check with your residents each morning, you may miss out on important details that may signal a change in care needs. Maybe a resident is upset and unable to perform their normal care, maybe they had a fall and they need more assistance for the week, or maybe they just need a little extra attention and warm conversation to brighten their morning. All of this can be determined with a regular morning check-in.



### BE A CHEERLEADER

Helping residents to maintain their independence means that you need to be a good listener, be patient, get to know their interests, check in with them often and provide **lots of encouragement to stay active.** The more activity they participate in, the more likely they will be able to play an active part in their care. Motivating residents to stay active can be tough, but talking to them about the benefits of regular activity can help. Sometimes all they need is a little support and someone to cheer them on! Whenever you can, take time to walk with them, encourage them to attend fitness classes or tell them to talk to an on-site wellness director about activities on campus that will keep them moving.

# THE ADL TRIFECTA

## CHOICE

What does it mean to offer choice? Offering choices enables a resident to have a degree of control over his or her life.

Example:  
Ask the resident you're working with if they prefer to shower before or after breakfast.

## INDIVIDUALITY

Promoting the individuality of each resident is critical in providing resident-centered care. Each resident's care routine should be tailored to meet their individual needs and likes.

Example:  
Talk to residents about their favorite personal memories or have their favorite evening snack ready for them at bedtime.

## DIGNITY

Dignity is a person's value or esteem; being worthy of respect. Being a caregiver demands that you show special attention to protecting a resident's dignity.

Example:  
Don't point out that a resident is wet or needs to go to the restroom in front of a large group.

# CAREGIVER CORNER

Volume 2 - Lesson 2

THREE PRINCIPLES OF ADLS REVIEW

## CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these true or false questions based on what you learned in this in-service (circle one):

1. You should assume all residents in assisted living need help with bathing and do most of the washing for them.

TRUE

FALSE

2. The three principles of ADLs are choice, dignity and understanding.

TRUE

FALSE

3. When working with a resident who is confused or scared, you may have to repeat your questions or explanations more than once.

TRUE

FALSE

4. Once you've formed a regular care routine with a resident, you can stop checking-in with them every morning.

TRUE

FALSE

5. When offering choices to a resident, you should prepare yourself for success by choosing your language and options carefully, you may want to avoid "yes or no" questions.

TRUE

FALSE

6. Encouraging and motivating residents to stay active will help them to stay independent and play an active part in their own care.

TRUE

FALSE



Want to know more about ADLs and care tasks?

Check out our Activities of Daily Living DVD and manual set at our website [www.SeniorLivingU.com](http://www.SeniorLivingU.com)

1. False, 2. False, 3. True, 4. False, 5. True, 6. True