Overhead/Handout 5.2. Guidelines for ADL Care

1. Select one person at a time.

2. Select someone whose care is reasonably easy but with whom you have some problems. Do not select someone who is very difficult to care for. If you care for a person who is functioning well, select an IADL, such as preparing a simple lunch. If you select a person who has difficulty with simple tasks, select one small part of an ADL.

3. Identify one issue or one part of one ADL. Do not select a large project. For example, select brushing teeth rather than all of morning grooming; select changing a person who is wet rather than the complete dressing activity; select eating lunch rather than all the tasks involved in eating a meal.

4. For this person, identify the areas of impaired function that cause problems in this task.

5. For this person, identify areas of spared function that you might be able to take advantage of in carrying out the task.

6. Identify any excess disability that will complicate the task and any way you can help the person (for example, if the person does not see well, you will give more verbal cues).

7. Identify sources of stress that complicate the task and ways to counteract this (for example, you might plan to work more slowly with a confused person).

8. Plan an intervention, using task breakdown if appropriate.


10. The intervention must be realistic and possible in your setting. Consider whether you could obtain permission to carry out the activity, whether another staff member might cover for you while you try it to see if it will work, whether you could videotape the task once to see how much time it takes. Are there other ways in which you can reasonably modify your setting to try the task a few times?

11. Describe how you will know whether the plan, if you carried it out, would help the person (for example, the person would be able to sit still during her meal or get her teeth brushed without becoming angry).

12. Present your plan to the rest of the group.

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