

## Change Ideas for Bathing

### **Typical issues and evidence of discordance:**

- Resident displays anxiety, anguish, and combative behavior.
- Injuries to both staff and resident.

### **Barriers:**

- Bathing is considered a private experience.
- The bathing experience is physically and emotionally cold.
- Sterile, institutional, and functional environment.

### **Goals:**

- A positive individualized bathing experience, shifting from facility-directed to person-directed bathing.
- To reduce injuries to residents and staff caused by the current facility-centered bathing routine.

### **Infrastructure helpful to support the change:**

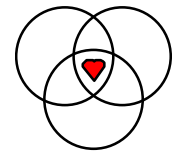
- A team empowered to change practices. Team members include staff members who are directly affected by current bathing practices, with participation from residents and families.
- Adequate supplies for bed baths.
- Adequate supplies and accessories for making bathing rooms more private, warm, and comfortable.
- Routines built around individualized bathing.

### **Measurement possibilities:**

- Number of residents screaming, calling out, or nonverbally registering their disapproval.
- Number of incident reports related to bathing, including possible injuries to residents and staff.

### **Questions to consider:**

- Would you take a bath here?
- How close is our bathing process to the process that you yourself use in your home?
- Is it functional or personal?
- What would be the benefits of changing the process?
- What would you change?



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**PDSA Cycle:**

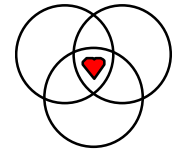
**PLAN:** Engage a team of interested and committed people, including residents, staff, and family members, to make bathing a less stressful and less traumatic event for all.

**DO:** A bathroom beautification/deinstitutionalization initiative based on data collected that tracks resident discomfort during bathing.

**STUDY:** The number of agitated residents and/or the number of incident reports related to bathing.

**ACT:** Continue to evaluate and explore other change ideas.

- Change Ideas:**
- Ascertain the residents' former preferred behaviors, needs, and schedule related to bathing.
  - Ask the residents a series of questions about pre-nursing home routines, or talk to family/friends of the resident.
  - Does the resident need assistance with bathing? If not, the resident can bathe on his/her own.
  - Establish preference for bath or shower, time of day, leisurely activity (book, glass of wine, 45 minute minimum) vs. functional routine.
  - Residents should be bathed in accordance with their response. A resident may enjoy bathing while enjoying a book and a glass of wine. The bathing experience should be duplicated as closely as possible.
  - Create an environment that contains distractions that are pleasant. Ask the residents what they would like to see or have in the bathroom. Resident responses may include plants, music, and other pleasantries.
  - Take strides to create a more home-like environment by asking the residents what their bathrooms were like at their own homes before moving into the nursing home.
  - Consider personal items that can be used in the tub with residents to make the process more pleasant. Examples include bubble bath, bath salts, and bath pillow.
  - Consider warming lights to avoid residents being chilly when getting out of the tub or shower.
  - Consider what items could make the experience more comfortable; for example, a warm/soft/fluffy towel and caring conversation from a trusted caregiver.
  - Provide as private an experience as possible by eliminating supplies and equipment storage in the shower area that will be needed by other staff.
  - Provide a buffer curtain that will protect privacy.
  - Utilize shower caps.



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**Associated principles:**

- **Primary:** Create systems within which individual preference is honored and defended.
- **Secondary:** Commit to de-institutionalize, wherever possible, the current personal living accommodations, providing a sense of peace, safety, and community.

**Resources:**

1. Barrick, AL, Rader J, Hoeffler B, Sloane PD. Bathing Without a Battle: Personal Care of Individuals with Dementia. Springer Series on Geriatric Nursing. New York: Springer Publishing Co., 2001.

**Notes:**