

Advice, tips and assistance for home care workers and professionals

For quality support to psychologically dependent persons

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Preamble

These information sheets are the result of work carried out by a group of families and home care workers who are familiar with the disease because somebody in their family circle is affected by it.

The objectives of this tool are to:

- improve the quality of life of the person with the disease;
 - help to support the person on a daily basis;
 - encourage a real synergy, consistency and collaboration between families and professionals;
- allow families and professionals to get in contact, even if they are not yet using the service.

Many thanks to all the members of this work group who allowed this tool to be developed.

This document must evolve, it is not exhaustive.

Please do not hesitate to share your experience and advice by contacting the professionals and associations listed on the final page.

Getting up

Make the person feel like getting up

Advice

- Let the person sleep if they want to (as much as possible).
Provide motivation for them to get up.

Tips

- Awaken the senses with typical morning aromas: coffee, toast...
 - Follow a particular ritual: turn on the radio, pay some attention to the person - a gesture, a kiss...
- Open the curtains and blinds to let the daylight in, to show that it is daytime.

!
Some senses may be exacerbated (sense of smell, taste...).

Dressing

Let the person get dressed by themselves

Advice

Value the person

Tips

- Whenever possible, let the person choose their own clothes by offering a limited choice.
 - Leave a minimum amount of clothes in the wardrobe.
 - Prepare clothes in the order in which the person will get dressed.
 - If the person is dependent, give them one item of clothing after another so that they can dress independently.
 - Maintain dress habits: if the person wears a cap, a scarf, let them keep this habit whatever the circumstances.
- If the person has put on several shirts or jumpers, do not belittle them by commenting on it and making them undress. Rather, say something like: *Are you feeling a bit warm?*

!
The person may lose their perception of changes in temperature: they wear too many clothes or not enough according to the reality of the weather.



Washing

Let the person wash by themselves

Advice

- Respect their privacy.
 - Let the person wash themselves and don't do it for them.
- Use eau de toilette or perfumed creams.

Tips

- Make sure that the bathroom is very warm.
- Do not force the person to take a shower if they are not used to it. Take their habits into consideration.
- Run the water so that it is at the correct temperature before the person enters the shower.
- Take precautions to avoid risk of slipping in the bath and shower.
- Prepare the person's toiletries and then let them manage by themselves.
- If need be, accompany the person in stages by giving them simple instructions: take the flannel, put on some soap... You can write instructions or use pictograms (drawings, images). The person can then see what must be done and where things are found.

!
*Avoid variations in temperature.
The person may be afraid of water.*

Washing

Teeth, hands, ears and feet

Oral hygiene

- Tilt dental appliances to remove them (do not pull).
 - Use children's toothpaste (pastes with pronounced flavours).
 - If normal oral hygiene becomes impossible, use pineapple juice on a compress to clean the mouth.
- Always wash dental appliances after meals.

Foot and hand hygiene

- Ensure that you cut finger and toenails.
- Dry thoroughly between the toes after the person's shower.

Ear hygiene

- Help to move the cotton bud around the ears when cleaning.
- Use a spray where possible.

!
If the person cannot hear, it might simply be because the ear is clogged or has been poorly cleaned.

Food

Make the person feel like eating

Advice

- Maintain eating habits both with regard to quantity and variety.
 - Respect the person's rhythm – do not insist on a schedule.
 - Value participation of the person in the form of a favour: *Would you do me a favour?*
- Do not dramatise a lack of cleanliness at the table, for example when the person eats with their fingers.

Tips

Preparing meals

- Make the person participate in choosing and making the meal.
- Cook dishes that are in season.

Food

Make the person feel like eating (continued)

Tips (continued)

The environment

- At the table, always sit facing the person.
 - Do not make changes: always use the same plate, the same serviette, the same bowl etc.
 - Use a plain tablecloth – patterns can distract the person.
 - Use contrasts: a dark plate for light food and vice versa.
 - Colour water in a transparent glass.
 - According to the development of the disease, only give the person one utensil at a time: first the spoon for the soup, then the fork for the dish...
 - Cutlery can be adapted using handle grips if the person has difficulty in using these utensils.
- Adapt to the development of the person's wishes.

!
It is not possible for the person to do several things at once (eat, talk, watch the television) or to see several things that have the same colour (tablecloth, plate, food).

Food

Make the person feel like eating (continued)

Tips (continued)

Food

- Make food more interesting by adding condiments (cream, sugar, salt) or by changing its consistency. Mix foods, whilst keeping a shape similar to the food.
 - The main thing is that the person can eat: make a sandwich if need be, choose foods that can be picked up with the fingers, such as fish fingers...
 - When the person cannot cut their meat, opt for food in small pieces.
- If the meal seems insufficient, prepare snacks in the day.

!
*Some senses are developed (smell, taste).
If the person is no longer eating, they may have an oral condition (ulcer, mycosis).
Do not let the person eat alone, sit with them. A dependence may develop with the progression of the disease (alcohol...): if necessary, seek medical advice.*



Going to bed, night-time

Make the person feel like sleeping

Advice

- Follow the rituals of going to bed.
- Understand why the person gets up in the night.

Reassure persons who are afraid of the dark.

Tips

- Make the person feel like going to bed by following rituals such as massages or some sort of affectionate gesture...
- Possibly keep on a light, such as a night light, so that it is not completely dark.
- Try to find out why the person is getting up in the night: Are they hungry? Thirsty?
- Close the curtains and the blinds to show that it is night-time.

Going to bed, night-time

*Make the person feel like sleeping
(continued)*

Tips (continued)

- The person will not sleep well if they are hungry or thirsty.
 - You could put something to eat or drink near the bed. Make sure that everything is already prepared: cakes on a plate, water in a glass...
 - Leave the bedroom door ajar.
- Activities add variety to the day, preserve independence and allow the person to sleep better at night. Keep activities for the daytime so that night-time is dedicated to rest.

!

Getting up in the night can be caused by hunger or thirst...

Having food available on a plate or a drink in a glass avoids the problem of the person having to open the container (bottle, cake packet...). The person may be afraid of the dark and night-time.

Preventing aggression, anxiety

Advice

- Anticipate situations that could cause anxiety or aggression.
- Follow rituals.

Tips

- Do not put the person in a situation in which they may fail.
- Frustration is a source of anxiety or aggression, for example when the person can no longer carry out their usual activities. It is necessary to speak to them and reassure them.
- Aggression on the part of the home care worker can provoke aggression in the person.
- Ensure that the timing of regular events is strictly adhered to (at a particular time...). The notion of time is important.
- Keep your word (do what you say you will do).
- Agitation or aggression is not necessarily linked to the disease but can be in relation to another problem (physical pain or feelings that have not been expressed).

Preventing aggression, anxiety (continued)

Tips (continued)

- Be attentive to the early warning signs of aggression (change of expression...).
 - Anticipate aggression – do not be afraid and talk calmly to the person.
 - In case of hallucinations, bring the person back to reality but be aware that this will not necessarily be effective.
- Do not raise your tone of voice, try to divert their attention by talking about an object or subject that the person likes and that will hold their attention.

!

The dark and nightfall can cause anxiety.



Incontinence

Advice

Respect privacy.

Tips

- Create habits by giving regular prompts throughout the day to go to the toilet.
- Do so even if the person has protection.
- Do not wake the person just to make them go to the toilet (let them sleep).
- Respect the person's privacy by closing the toilet door.
- After returning from a stay in hospital, if the person has an urinary catheter, this will require frequent accompaniment to the toilet.
- Use language the person is used to (*to go for a "pee" – to go to the toilet*).

Wandering

Advice and observations

- It is necessary to inform neighbours about wandering behaviour.
 - It is a good idea for the person to wear a bracelet or pendant stating their name, address and telephone number.
 - Preventing the person from going where they want to can cause aggressive behaviour.
 - A person who constantly wanders is expressing the need to walk, be active.
 - Wandering is often linked to looking for something or somebody.
- If the person wanders off outside and does not return, it is because they no longer recognise their house or surroundings.



Living environment

Adapt the environment and make the living quarters safe

Advice

- Make the environment safe.
 - Adapt the environment.
- Maintain the living environment.

Tips

Making the environment safe

- Do not change the places of objects and furniture.
- Do not leave obstacles in places where people walk.
- Get rid of any wires trailing along the ground.
- Fix carpets securely to the floor.
- Opt for electric hobs rather than gas ones.

Medicines and cleaning products must be stored out of reach.

Living environment

*Adapt the environment and make the living quarters safe
(continued)*

Tips (continued)

Adapting

- Try to replace the bath with a shower, which is more suitable.
- Put grab handles in the toilet, the shower...
- Use contrasting colours between the doors and the walls to allow the person to find their way more easily.
- Simplify the environment by limiting the number of accessible objects: for example only leave visible the person's toiletries.
- When the person first enters an establishment, reproduce as far as possible the environment of the house: furniture, frames, photos...

Do not leave any places in darkness, unless you do not want the person to access the room.

!

Any change to the layout of the home can be a source of anxiety and insecurity. People are generally attracted by light. Darkness and dark colours can cause anxiety and psychological block (fear of the dark).

Communication, language

Advice

- Combine gestures with words.
- Talk in a calm manner.

Tips

- Always talk in the second person (you).
- Do not use child-like language.
- Do not raise your voice and use a monotonous tone of voice.
- Directly face the person when speaking to them so that communication takes place. If you speak behind the person, they will not understand that you are speaking to them.

- Combine gestures with words. If you say "go this way", at the same time use gestures to show the direction to take; if you want the person to wash their face, point to the face.

Facial expressions, smiling and attitude are important to communication. Humour is also a good mediator.

Communication, language (continued)

Tips (continued)

- Avoid sudden gestures, which might be interpreted as aggression.
- Touching must be limited to caresses, using a delicate approach: stroke the hand at the same time as you speak to the person to attract their attention; give massages to create a sense of well-being and establish communication.

Do not try to hide happy or unpleasant family events that may occur.

!

Take into consideration the person's life history to avoid calling to mind any unsettling or key events in the past (previous traumatising situations, death of a loved one...). Familiar language or the use of a surname should only be with the agreement of the person and only by the person who is authorised to do so (just because a professional has been given this agreement it does not mean that everyone can do it).

Associations and professionals to help you

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More information :

[Www.gatine.org/equal](http://www.gatine.org/equal)