

### A Client Care Module:

**Dressing & Grooming Tips**

**LOOKING GOOD...AND FEELING BETTER!**

At first glance, getting ready for the day is so clear-cut and easy that we often don’t give it a second thought. We simply get dressed, brush our teeth, comb our hair and perform all the other tasks we need to do to make ourselves presentable.

Now, just imagine if:

- Your arm was stiff and you couldn’t get your shirt on.
- You couldn’t reach back to close a zipper or hook your bra.
- Your legs hurt and you couldn’t reach down to put on your socks or shoes.
- Your fingers were bent from arthritis and you couldn’t tie your shoelaces.
- You were unable to remember how to put your clothes on—or in what order.
- Your arms shook so badly you couldn’t brush your teeth, comb your hair or shave yourself.

For people who have physical or mental impairments, dressing and grooming tasks are often difficult to manage alone. Sometimes they might take their frustration out on the people around them.

That’s where you come in. With your help and encouragement, your clients won’t feel discouraged by their appearance or ashamed that they can’t dress privately by themselves.

As you read through this inservice, you’ll pick up pointers on how to keep your clients looking—and feeling—their best, regardless of their current health status.

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**There was probably a time when your clients looked in the mirror and felt good about wearing stylish clothes and updated hair-dos.**
Throughout history, people have put importance on both grooming and dressing. Here are some interesting facts:

- Those old-fashioned hoop skirts made getting through a door or into a carriage very difficult and, if a woman sat down too fast, the hoop could fly up and break her nose!

- For centuries, Asian men and women have worn pants for warmth, comfort, and convenience. In ancient Rome and Greece, both men and women wore “dresses” called tunic

- Until 1970, it was not fashionable—and sometimes against the law—for American women to wear pants in offices, classrooms, and restaurants.

- The ancient Greeks were the first to wear girdles. A band of linen or soft leather was bound around a woman’s waist and lower torso to control her shape.

- Some wealthy Europeans in the 1600’s wore six-inch-high heels. It took two servants, one on either side, to hold the person up!

- The first sneakers—called Keds—were made in America in 1916.

- During the middle-ages, people “deodorized” their clothing with the smoke from a wood fire.

- Underarm deodorants were first used during the 18th century. And in the late 19th Century the first commercial deodorant, Mums, was introduced.

- The first hair dryers in the United States were adapted from vacuum cleaners!

- The 18th century French used carbonated water as a hair spray to keep hair in place.

- Both Egyptian women and men shaved their heads—and then covered them with wigs.

- Ancient Egyptians used wigs, hair extensions, henna and makeup to improve their looks. However, women were put to death if they wore nail polish of “royal colors.”

- The Chinese started using nail polish over five thousand years ago!

- The Romans made nail polish out of sheep fat and blood.

- During the 1960’s, purple was the most popular color for lipstick. In the ’70’s, white lipstick was the “in” thing!

- Most women weren’t concerned about shaving their underarms until a 1915 media campaign pushed the idea that underarm hair on a lady was unfeminine and unhealthy. Who paid for that campaign? *It was the Wilkinson Sword razor blade company!*
The Benefits of Good Grooming

- Letting your clients choose their own clothing gives them feelings of being independent and in charge.
- Cheering clients on to do their best while dressing supports a team spirit and gives them a feeling of belonging.
- Allowing your clients to do as much as they can by themselves helps their self-reliance grow.
- Voicing your approval during dressing and grooming gives clients a sense of being valued.
- Looking good boosts each client’s self esteem and may even help a bad mood disappear!
- Reporting toenail changes helps your clients get care from a podiatrist as needed. This can prevent complications for people with diabetes, heart conditions or poor circulation.
- Moving your clients’ joints and muscles during the grooming process helps maintain body movement and prevents contractures.

Dressing and grooming tasks give you daily opportunities to look for clues that trouble may be brewing:

- Be aware of clients’ facial expressions. Clients may tell you that they have no pain, but their faces may reveal the real story.
- Clients get in and out of clothes several times a day. While assisting them, look over the whole body, making note of any areas of redness, rashes, bed sores or other changes in the skin.
- Report any unusual body odors. A strange odor may be a symptom of an illness.
- Some health conditions cause the body to swell. Watch for signs of swollen hands (such as tight rings) and swollen feet (such as shoes and socks suddenly being too small).
- As you brush or comb your client’s hair, check for head lice. (Lice can happen to anyone—no matter how young or old, dirty or clean, rich or poor.) Look for white eggs known as “nits”. They look like small bits of dandruff, but do not wash or flake off. Instead, they stick firmly to strands of hair.
- If you provide nail care, look for white or yellow areas on finger and toe nails. Your client may have a nail fungus.

What’s the Bottom Line?
When people look good, they generally feel better!