

Hartman's

In-Service Education SourceBook Series



# Preserving Dignity for People in Your Care

Suzanne A. Rymer, RN, C, LSW



**Preserving**

# **DIGNITY**

for People in Your Care

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## NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with healthcare professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning healthcare practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his healthcare facility/agency.

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**D**ignity is one of those qualities that everyone agrees is necessary for excellent care. Dignity needs to be part of the care that is given to people who need the assistance of others in their everyday lives.

However, it seems to be easier to identify what *isn't* treating someone with dignity than it is to define or describe dignity in its broadest sense. Certainly, treating residents with dignity and working to preserve their dignity is the desired end result of hundreds of tasks and encounters every day. The briefest interaction, which may seem insignificant to a staff member, may have a tremendous impact on the resident. Direct service staff may go through their day very task oriented and oblivious to what they might have done better to preserve the dignity of those they work so hard to care for physically.

This in-service strives to show how dignity can be preserved using very practical suggestions that don't cost a lot or take a lot of additional time.

As an important aside, a discussion of how residents are treated would not be complete without mentioning that the manner in which the direct service staff are treated in the workplace impacts on how they interact with those in their care. Dignity and respect are important at all levels of care and through every interaction that occurs in the healthcare facility.

Please note that limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service. Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited.

To use handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out.

Convert transparency masters to acetates for use with an overhead projector. You can do this by purchasing transparency film at an office supply store and photocopying the transparency masters onto the acetates, or you can have a copy company do it for you. If overhead projection is not convenient for your presentation area, you may wish to copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalkboard, flip chart or dry erase board.

We hope you find this in-service helpful, and, as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

**Happy Teaching!**

# Introduction and Assessment

**Estimated Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Tools:** Handout Intro-1 Assessment A  
Handout Intro-2 Assessment A Answer Key  
Handout Intro-3 Key Terms  
Handout Intro-4 Note-Taking Worksheet

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**Distribute  
Handout Intro-1  
Assessment A**

Assure participants that this test is used to see how much the group has learned after completing the in-service. Point out to them that their names are not even on the test, and that no one will know how they did. Allow enough time for participants to finish the assessment.

If you decide to use the same assessment as a post-test at the end of the in-service, withhold the answers for now. Use the assessment to lead into a discussion of dignity and care.

**Distribute  
Handout Intro-3  
Key Terms**

This handout is for the participants' reference.

**Distribute  
Handout Intro-4  
Note-Taking  
Worksheet**

Encourage participants to take notes during the lecture, as this will help them learn and remember the information.

## Assessment A

**True or False.** For each of the following statements, mark “T” for true, or “F” for false.

1. \_\_\_ The words dignity and respect mean similar things.
2. \_\_\_ The Residents’ Bill of Rights does not say anything about treating residents with dignity.
3. \_\_\_ Only nurses need to think about the issue of dignity when providing care.
4. \_\_\_ It is a good idea to speak, or at least smile, when passing a resident in the hall.
5. \_\_\_ All older women like to be called “Granny.”
6. \_\_\_ Nursing assistants should always open residents’ mail for them.
7. \_\_\_ People are sexual throughout their lives.
8. \_\_\_ I haven’t made any choices about my life today.
9. \_\_\_ What a resident wears and how her hair is styled is important.
10. \_\_\_ It is better for the residents and employees if staff members work together and cooperate.
11. \_\_\_ This facility only provides physical care to our residents.
12. \_\_\_ If someone is dying, they should be moved to the end of the hall so as to not disturb other residents.

## Assessment A Answer Key

1. **True.**

2. **False.** Treating residents with dignity and respect is a very important part of the Resident's Bill of Rights.

3. **False.** *Everyone* involved in providing care must treat those in their care with dignity and respect.

4. **True.**

5. **False.** Many older women would be offended by such "pet names." Always ask your residents how they would like to be addressed.

6. **False.** Never open your residents' mail!

7. **True.**

8. **False.** You probably made several choices today, even before coming to work, such as when to get up, what to eat, what to wear, etc.

9. **True.**

10. **True.**

11. **False.** In addition to physical care, this facility also provides emotional, mental, spiritual, and social care.

12. **False.** It is important *not* to isolate a dying resident, as moving him or her to the end of the hall would do. Respect privacy, of course, but do not isolate the person.

## Key Terms

**Dignity:** The quality or state of being worthy of respect, esteem, nobility, and honor.

**Hospice care:** Special care that a dying person needs.

**Residents' Bill of Rights:** A set of rules that spell out how residents in health care should be treated — including with dignity, respect, and whenever possible, self-determination.

**Respect:** To appreciate, regard with honor and esteem, be polite.

**Self-determination:** Freedom to make one's own choices about how to live, etc.

**Sexuality:** “Maleness” or “femaleness.” Also, having to do with sex or sexual expression.

# Note-Taking Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1-1 What does “dignity” mean to me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2-1 Why should I treat my residents with respect and dignity? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3-1 What kinds of care (besides physical care) do I provide for my residents?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4-1 How can I speak respectfully to my residents?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

5-1 How can I treat my residents with dignity during physical care?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

6-1 How can I show more respect for my residents’ belongings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

7-1 Some choices that I make every day include:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

7-2 How can I help my residents make their own choices?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**8-1 My favorite type of clothing to wear when I am not at work is (describe the entire outfit):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8-2 How can I help my residents “look like themselves”?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**9-1 What are some ways that I choose to express my sexuality (“femaleness” or “maleness”)?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9-2 What are some myths about older adults and sexuality?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**9-3 How can I respect my residents’ privacy concerning their sexuality?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10-1 What are some basic rights that all dying residents have?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**10-2 How can I treat dying residents with dignity?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**11-1 What are some reasons why a resident might treat me with disrespect or anger?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**11-2 How can I respond in a positive way to an angry or upset resident?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_