

## Dignity, Older People, Health & Social Care

### Findings from a European Research Project

*Maintaining human dignity, particularly in the face of adversity, is a core human value*

*Respect for personal identity is the critical aspect of dignity that has to be addressed in health and social care*

*Increased reliance on technological solutions to health problems has supplanted human caring and human values*

*Fragmentation of health and social care, scarcity of resources and reductionist approaches have dehumanised and desensitised staff*

*In health and social care these factors have led to people being treated as objects, rather than individual human beings, resulting in detrimental effects on their well-being.*

### The 'Dignity Balance'



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## You can promote Dignity by:-

- Conserving the social standing of a person and confirm them in their social roles even when mental or physical deterioration occurs.
- Giving individualized care and support.
- Not putting anyone in a position which is likely to lead to their failure in a group.
- Not emphasising impairments and disabilities in front of others.
- Making the person feel that they have value.
- Supporting and maintaining autonomy.
- Respecting the individual's habits and values.
- Respecting their home, living place and privacy.
- Providing comfort and consideration.
- Seeking consent for any necessary care.
- Encouraging choice and decision-making.
- Promoting inclusion and participation and avoiding abandoning the person.
- Supporting the person in maintaining their hygiene and personal appearance.
- Allowing the person to take their time. Not hurrying them.

- Adapting care to the needs and rhythm of the Individual.
- Trying to anticipate individual's needs.
- Respecting the limits of an individual's capabilities.
- Not performing activities beyond one's professional competencies.
- Responding courteously to specific requests.
- Being polite: and demonstrating respect even when feeling bad-tempered or stressed.
- Whenever possible getting to know the person, before delivering care.
- Using respectful language and gestures.
- Allowing risk taking.
- Encouraging participation in daily life.
- Retaining a sense of humour.
- Doing one's absolute best even when time is short.

## Indignity will be caused by:-

- Neglecting people.
- Being verbally or physically abusive.
- Ignoring people or showing indifference.

- Exposing older people to situations they can no longer manage.
- Making older people look or feel ridiculous.
- Treating people as objects.
- Being occupied by the "material" side of care.
- Not respecting the need for privacy during intimate care.
- Not knocking at the door before entering.
- Not informing people of what is happening.
- Using disrespectful language.
- Not respecting death.
- Speaking about the person in their presence as if they were not there.
- Displaying a disrespectful attitude.
- Changing the person's environment without their permission.
- Intervening or performing care without consent.
- Not allowing the person to speak.
- Performing actions while ignoring the person.
- Lying to or deceiving people.
- Addressing them in ways they find disrespectful