

THE POWER OF PAMPERING IN A DEMENTIA ENVIRONMENT

Wendy Payne, Marketing Manager, Active Bathing

Personal care is often a very task-orientated activity that only allows for the bare essentials of washing, dressing and being helped to the toilet. When time allows, care staff are expected to ensure that fingernails are cut and people can see the hairdresser, barber or chiropodist when they wish, but often that's as far as 'pampering' goes.

However, there is much more that can be done to make people feel special. Small touches such as a favourite bubble bath, hand/foot massage, painting nails, applying make-up or a special blow dry can be important. Also, for gentlemen having their facial hair trimmed in a particular way, can make all the difference.

Bathing plays a vital part in the daily care of people with Dementia and residents of Buckingham Lodge Care Home, in Aylesbury are benefitting from the latest bathing innovation, the Active Bathing Compact bath. Buckingham Lodge, part of the Anchor Group, a not for profit charitable organisation, opened in April 2015 with six Compact baths installed over three floors. Home Manager Wendy Luck explained. "At Anchor, we are always looking for the best possible solutions when specifying equipment. Buckingham Lodge is primarily for people living with Dementia and we were looking for equipment for this condition, which would allow them to bathe as independently and safely as possible. The Compact bath met these requirements".

The Compact bath has been designed with the residents and staff in mind which was a significant factor for Wendy. "Our aim is to keep residents living as independently as possible for as long as possible and the Compact bath helps ensure this. The chair lift offers a very safe and smooth transfer into the bath and once the resident has been lowered into the water, the design of the chair and bath means many don't even realise they are still in the chair and can bathe themselves, depending on their level of mobility, which is excellent for their confidence



and dignity. The Compact bath provides a relaxing experience for our residents; in the past I have worked in care homes which have spa baths and these often left the residents feeling unnerved and even scared by the noise and sensation of the jets in the water. The baths are very easy to operate, clean and maintain and offer exceptional value for money” continued Wendy.

Many of these caring actions require a time commitment, particularly if you are going to make them a luxurious experience, but this one-to-one time is often vital for people living with Dementia in a care home. Occasionally relatives get involved in these activities too, as Beth Britton one of the UK’s leading campaigners for people with Dementia (www.d4dementia.blogspot.co.uk) explained: “I spent many hours doing my dad’s nails, cutting his hair and giving him a shave or a hand massage. Never underestimate the simple happiness and the huge bonding potential of making someone feel just a little bit more special than they did the day before. Also, remember

that pampering can go beyond bathing and extend to choices of clothing and accessories. The same drab outfits day after day are likely to dampen anyone’s mood. Why not treat your loved one to a shopping trip, either by going out to the shops or via online or catalogue shopping, or even just jazz up tired outfits with new accessories?”

Active Bathing is proud to be a part of the Astor-Bannerman (Medical) Ltd group of companies. Established in 1993, Astor-Bannerman has built an exceptional reputation within the Social Services and Local Authority Sectors where it’s held in the highest regard. For more information on the full range of bathing solutions available, call 01242 820820, email sales@activebathing.co.uk or visit www.activebathing.co.uk/info

Beth Britton is a campaigner and consultant, writer and blogger. Beth’s aim is to provide support and advice to those faced with similar situations, inform and educate care professionals and the wider population, promote debate and create improvements in Dementia care.



