

H – Sensory Based _____

Protocol 4 – Sensory Hand Washing to Stay Healthy

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This program helps to reduce pre-meal time disturbing behaviors and to improve personal hygiene.

Staff Requirements: One CTRS and aides so that each staff member supervises one table.

Entrance Criteria: Anyone capable of independently washing hands. Clients who are bored or anxious while waiting for meals to be served.

Exit Criteria: Able to structure pre-meal time independently without disturbing behaviors.

Group Size: Dining room table (usually 4 clients) serve as one sub-group.

Duration: 10-15 minutes prior to meals.

Safety Considerations

Environmental Risks: Water, sponges, and soap.

Client Risks: Could ingest, throw or spill basin of warm water. Skin sensitivity to soaps. Not for clients with skin tears or open areas on hands or wrists. Water should be warm, not hot.

Facility & Equipment Required

Facility: Each dining room table will serve as a sub-group for this program. Facility needs to supply one staff member or trained volunteer at each table. Tables should be stable, free of movement, and seating should be comfortable and stable. Area should be well lit.

Equipment: Each client needs his or her own wash basin, fragrant soaps, sponges, and towel to use to meet health department standards.

Methods

- According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease. Most diseases are spread through contact with body fluids. A good example is the common cold. If a person has a cold virus and touches his own mucous, even by simply blowing his nose, and then touches a door handle, the virus can live for a time on the handle. A non-infected person may open the door, touch her eyes inadvertently, and catch the same cold virus. The chance of infection would be substantially lower if both people washed their hands more frequently and were conscious of what they touched. This program is based on these health principles and the need for something meaningful to do prior to mealtime.
- Provide clients with information each time about preventing infections with hand washing as the educational component.

- Provide each client with basin of warm water, small scented soaps and towels. The actual act of washing using fragrant soap, sponges, and soft towels serves as a sensory awareness activity prior to eating.

Educational Questions for Therapist to Use: Reduce Your Risk

Pay attention to what you touch and wash your hands. When are some important times that we should all wash up?

- After you use a rest room
- Before and after you eat
- Before you touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Before and after you prepare food, and after you handle meat or fish, before moving on to other food items
- After you change a diaper
- After you pet a dog, cat or other animal
- After you touch plants or soil
- After you visit a hospital or nursing home
- After you come in contact with any body fluids or touch items that may have come in contact with body fluids.

Know the Technique

Scrub your hands for 15 to 30 seconds with regular soap and water (it doesn't have to be antibacterial soap to work) before rinsing. Studies show it is the length of time spent washing, not the type of soap that makes the difference. Antibacterial waterless gels can be used if the skin is easily irritated or soap and water aren't readily available.

Kids and older adults tend to spread infections more readily. Teach these individuals hand washing tips and techniques and set an example by following them yourself in this program.

Possible Client Objectives

- Reduced pre-meal time boredom and behaviors.
- Increase independent hand washing.
- Increased food intake.
- Increased independence and self-determination.
- Decreased infection incidence.

