

Worksheet 14:

Positive approaches to enhancing the mealtime experience

Indicator	Guidance	Yes	No	N/A
People with dementia are involved in food/drink preparation activities.	<p>It is important to involve people with dementia in food and drink preparation to meet orientation, self-esteem and comfort needs.</p> <p>People with dementia are involved according to their level of ability and in accordance with all food safety regulations.</p> <p>People with dementia are observed preparing vegetables, buttering bread/toast, baking cakes and more.</p>			
People with dementia are involved in pre- and post-dining activities.	<p>People with dementia are observed laying tables, filling salt and pepper shakers and sugar bowls, and placing mats and napkins on the table.</p> <p>People with dementia are observed collecting plates and cutlery, brushing the table/ tablecloth, wiping tables, washing up and drying up.</p> <p>People with dementia are not left sitting at the table while tidying up goes on around them. This is disrespectful and undignified for them. →</p>			

<p>Meal choice is shown at the time of the meal.</p>	<p>Sometimes, it is unlikely that the person with dementia will be able to recall what they have requested for their meal. In addition, some people with dementia may not be able to indicate their choice of meal in advance.</p> <p>A variety of approaches are provided to reinforce meal choice at the time of the meal e.g. menus, photographs of the meal (on paper or tablet), staff telling the person with enthusiasm, or the actual plated meal being shown to the person to stimulate their senses and facilitate decision making.</p>			
<p>Staff, family and friends are encouraged and enabled to eat/drink with people with dementia.</p>	<p>Eating and drinking should be viewed as a meaningful activity with a significant social component. Staff should be available to eat/drink with the person with dementia to enhance the experience, model eating/drinking skills and observe the person's responses and needs.</p> <p>The family and friends of the person with dementia should be warmly welcomed, whether as a planned or unplanned activity, and offered food/drink if possible – or encouraged to bring their own. This activity will reinforce relationships, engagement and well-being for all involved.</p>			
<p>The mealtime experience is a flexible, relaxed social occasion and not a task.</p>	<p>The atmosphere throughout dining should be calm and unhurried. People with dementia should be enabled to move around if they wish and are able, and music and/or objects/photos can be used to enhance the atmosphere.</p> <p>Verbal communication must be at an appropriate volume and tone. Staff should not speak to each other across the room or to the exclusion of people with dementia.</p>			

<p>There is evidence that people with dementia who clearly show a desire to help/support one another are enabled/empowered to do so.</p>	<p>People with dementia are supported to converse with each other, pour drinks for each other, and pass plates to one other where it is safe to do so. Staff do not tell the person with dementia to “put that down” or “sit down”. If they are concerned, staff ask, “may I help?”</p>			
<p>24-hour visible finger foods and/or ‘grazing stations’ are out in public areas – changed hourly to meet Food Hygiene Regulations, with the aim of encouraging people with dementia to eat when they feel like it.</p>	<p>People with dementia may not wish or be able to sit for their food and drink. Routine and structure may not be of assistance to them. Being able to move, find food and drink and be supported to eat and drink at that moment in time should be encouraged.</p> <p>A variety of finger foods should be provided: e.g. sausage/veggie rolls, chopped fruit, peeled vegetable sticks, crisps, chicken nuggets, bite size burgers, falafel, savoury and sweet sandwiches, cakes, biscuits, pancakes.</p>			
<p>A variety of menu options are available to reflect the cultural diversity of those dining.</p>	<p>Menus should reflect the cultural diversity of people with dementia. Options may be hot or cold.</p> <p>All staff will know which meal is for which person with dementia without having to check at the time of offering the meal, having applied their knowledge of the person’s food/drink and cultural preferences.</p>			
<p>Smells from cooking, food discussion and food pictures are actively used to orientate individuals living with dementia 45 minutes prior to a meal with the aim of encouraging an increase in appetite.</p>	<p>Serious attempts are made to prepare the person with dementia for their meal prior to it being placed in front of them. This sensory stimulation will enable the person with dementia to begin orientating and preparing for the meal which may aid stimulation of appetite.</p> <p>A coffee maker or bread maker could be used to provide engaging, stimulating smells. Cue cards, pictures on paper or tablets, cookery books and TV cookery shows could also be offered and discussed in advance of the meal.</p>			

<p>People with dementia who are being assisted to eat/drink are supported to do so in a dignified manner.</p>	<p>If a person with dementia requires significant support to eat and drink, this is offered in a respectful and dignified manner. The support offered is unrushed, and the focus is entirely on the person with dementia. Privacy is maintained as needed, staff sit next to the person with dementia and they maintain eye contact. All objects not related to dining are removed from the immediate area e.g. urine bottles, sick bowls, wipes, tissues, medication pots, dirty cups or crockery, personal care objects.</p>			
<p>Language used is appropriate to the person and there are no references to inappropriate or infantilising terms or actions such as 'bibs', 'feeds', 'feeders' or 'purees' (in reference to people).</p>	<p>All those supporting people with dementia to eat and drink are heard to use adult, person-centred language at all times. Infantilising, demeaning, disrespectful language is not heard. If it is heard, the person using the inappropriate language is asked to correct it.</p> <p>The person with dementia is always referred to by their preferred name, not by the care needs they have.</p>			
<p>Health and safety protocols are not carried out in a manner that might cause confusion or distress to individuals living with dementia (e.g. checking temperature of food within their visual field, or recording how much food has been eaten).</p>	<p>The focus is on the dining experience of the person with dementia.</p> <p>Any health and safety protocols are carried out discreetly and out of sight of the person with dementia.</p>			
<p>There is a sufficient amount of appropriate crockery and cutlery for everyone. Adaptive cutlery (easy grip handles, plate guards, spill-proof cups, etc.) is available.</p>	<p>People with dementia are invited to participate in the choice of crockery and cutlery style.</p> <p>Food and drink is clearly placed in their visual field and located towards their dominant hand.</p> <p>An occupational therapist and/or speech and language therapist has been consulted about adaptive cutlery and crockery and they have assessed the needs of the person with dementia before prescribing adapted equipment.</p>			

Table coverings and place mats are not patterned, and are of a notably contrasting colour to the plates.	Patterned table coverings and mats may be disabling for people with dementia who have visual, spatial and perceptual difficulties. Patterns might appear raised, or to be moving. This may distress or distract the person with dementia who may therefore not enjoy their meal.			
When necessary, small plates are used to support people with smaller appetites.	<p>People with dementia may feel overwhelmed and 'put off' by a large plate of food. They may feel that it is too much for them and may make no attempt to touch the food.</p> <p>Placing food onto a smaller plate may compensate for this. The person with dementia can then be asked if they would like some more, and provided with more as their appetite allows.</p>			
There is a visual contrast between foods on each plate.	Thought has been given to the presentation of food which should look inviting, tasty and recognisable. Foods of different colours are adjacent to each other so that they can be visually differentiated. Pureed food is provided in the same way.			

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