

MOVEMENT WITH LESS DISTRESS

Suggestions for Moving a Part of the Body of a Person who Needs Help

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1. Keep in mind that moving a part of a person's body can be difficult, painful, or uncomfortable, particularly in the joints. This is especially true if this person has many cognitive needs and/or they are experiencing brain changes, aging, weakness, rigidity, or a history of physical, emotional, or sexual pain, trauma, or discomfort, including injury. Move slowly, be gentle, show compassion and respect.
2. See other CAIS Handouts and the *Cognitive Abilities and Intervention Strategies (CAIS): Intervention Strategies the Cognition part (Sensory and Motor sections) and the Communication part (Body Language section)* by S. Weaverdyck at <https://www.improvingmipractices.org> for more details.
3. **Prepare** this person both physically and emotionally, before touching or moving a part of their body. They may not be able to easily transition from being still to moving a part of their body.
4. Remember discomfort with movement may be **unpredictable**. Each part of this person's body may have a different level of sensitivity and discomfort, and may change from one moment to the next.
5. **Watch** this person's face and body constantly, and **listen** to what they say or how they sound, to discern how sensitive or uncomfortable a body part is with touch or movement at this time.
6. Read and use suggestions from the **CAIS Handout #27 "Touch: Suggestions for Touching a Person with Changes in Cognitive Abilities"** by S Weaverdyck, before touching this person.
7. **Go slowly** enough to allow this person time to prepare to move, and to respond to what you say.
8. Encourage this person to **move their body part on their own**. This will likely be most comfortable.
9. **Ask them to move** their body part, before you touch it. For example, say "Please lift your arm."
10. **Ask them for permission** to touch or move a body part if this person cannot move it. For example, say "May I lift your arm?" or "May I touch your arm?" or "May I help you move your arm?"
11. **Add a nonverbal gesture** with your verbal request. For example, point to their body part or to your own body part. Whether or not this person can understand or speak, a nonverbal gesture can make it easier for them to focus on the particular body part.
12. To **draw this person's attention** to a body part, use the palm of your hand to gently but firmly touch or move your hand on their body part to be moved, if they are comfortable with touch.
13. If their body part is stiff or uncomfortable, gently but firmly with the palm of your hand, **move your hand slowly on the body part** and joint to be moved, before it is moved. Or begin away from the joint or painful area, and move your hand gently toward the joint and painful area before it is moved.
14. Use **warm water** or **warm, damp washcloths** draped over their body part and joint.
15. Move a body part **as little as possible** and only as much as is necessary.
16. Minimize the number of starts and stops during the movement. Make the movement as smooth and as **uninterrupted** as possible.
17. **Tell this person** before touching and before actually moving their body part, so they can prepare emotionally and reduce the physical discomfort.
18. **Maintain eye contact** with this person throughout the movement, if they are comfortable with eye contact. Direct their gaze to the movement when necessary, or talk about something else to distract them if necessary.
19. Minimize the number of times your hand leaves and returns to their body part, since this person may have difficulty adjusting to the initiation of your touch.
20. **Use the palm of your hand** rather than fingers to touch, to reduce the number of contact points.
21. **Rest on your arm**, the **joint** or body part you are moving, rather than simply lifting it with your hand.