

# The Task and Daily Routines Intervention Strategies

## I. TASK STEPS

Shelly E. Weaverdyck, Ph.D.

**Look for ways to ensure the task steps are not:**

- Too many
- Too complex
- Too unfamiliar
- Too abstract

**A. Do I break the task down into steps?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Think of each task as a series of task steps.

#### **EXAMPLES for #A.1:**

- *To put on a shirt, one must see the shirt, reach for the shirt, pick up the shirt, find the entrance to a sleeve, put the correct arm into the sleeve, pull the sleeve to the shoulder, find the other sleeve, put the free arm into the sleeve, pull the shirt over the shoulders, and fasten each button.*
2. Make each task step small enough for this person to successfully perform at this moment.
  3. Write each task step down to help you remember.
  4. Make sure each task step is completed before initiating the next task step.
  5. Change the task steps as this person changes over time.

**B. Do I perform, adapt, or assist with steps that are difficult for this person, so this person feels competent and comfortable, and can perform as many task steps as possible?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Encourage this person to perform as many of the task steps as possible, while still feeling comfortable. Help them feel as successful, independent, and competent as possible.
2. Avoid encouraging this person to perform more task steps than they are comfortable with. Note their preference and comfort as well as their ability, to determine when to provide assistance.
3. Remind yourself that this person can likely perform at least one small task step.

#### **EXAMPLES for #B.3:**

- *Seeing the shirt.*
  - *Putting their arm into a sleeve that is held out for them.*
4. Identify which task steps are too difficult for this person to perform independently and comfortably.
  5. Assist this person with each difficult task step.

#### **EXAMPLES for #B.5:**

- *Remind this person with words, a gesture, or by touching the object or this person's arm, if they are comfortable with touch.*
  - *Orient the object, such as the shirt.*
  - *Guide this person's arm or hand to the appropriate position.*
6. Avoid helping with a task step more than is necessary, unless this person appears to prefer assistance.
  7. When help is necessary, provide the assistance discreetly to avoid embarrassing this person. Avoid drawing attention to your assistance. Help them feel competent and successful.
  8. If a task step is too difficult, adapt the task to this person's ability and preference.

#### **EXAMPLES for #B.8:**

- *Use a shirt that clearly contrasts with the surface it is lying on so it can be easily seen.*
- *Reduce the number of buttons to fasten.*
- *Increase the size of the buttons.*
- *Encourage this person to put both hands into the sleeves in front of them, then reaching*

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*both arms up while the care partner pulls the shirt down over the head (rather than reaching behind to find the second sleeve with the second hand).*

9. When a task step cannot be adapted enough to ensure successful and independent performance, do the task step yourself.

### **EXAMPLES for #B.9:**

- *Pick up the shirt and slip the sleeve over this person's hand and encourage them to pull the shirt up to their shoulder.*

10. When a task step is too difficult, encourage this person to perform the task step while you are performing it, so that they feel as though they are doing the task step or at least participating in the task.

### **EXAMPLES for #B.10:**

- *Give this person a wash cloth to use while you wash their arm, even if they don't seem to use the wash cloth successfully.*

## **C. Is the pace of the steps adapted to this person?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person perform each task step without interruption between steps. Avoid unnecessary pauses.
2. Watch this person to discern the proper pace at this time.
3. Slow the pace when this person shows evidence of anxiety, confusion, or distress.
4. Avoid a pace that is so slow that this person becomes uncertain which task step they are trying to perform.

## **D. If necessary, are task steps spread out over time? (For example, washing their upper body in the morning and their lower body later in the day?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Pay attention to the amount of time, focus, and energy this person is comfortable devoting to this task at this moment.
2. Spread the task steps out over time if this helps this person feel more comfortable.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.2:**

- *Help this person put their shirt on, then later button the shirt after they have rested or done some other task.*
- *Eat some of the breakfast in bed and the remainder later in the morning.*

## **E. Are complex task steps simplified? (For example, this person washes one arm and I wash the other arm?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Remind yourself that a high number and variety of task steps will likely make a task more complex for this person. To simplify a task that is too complex, reduce the number and variety of task steps.
2. Decrease the number of task steps by performing some of the steps yourself.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.2:**

- *You do all the task steps of putting this person's shirt on except they pick up the shirt and they fasten one button while you fasten the remaining buttons.*
- *This person might lift dishes from the counter, put them in the dish water, wash them, and put them into the rinse water. You might then rinse them, put them in the drying rack, dry them, and put them away in the cupboard.*

3. Eliminate task steps that are not necessary.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.3:**

- *Allow the dishes to drip dry.*
- *Skip applying make-up on some days.*

4. Decrease the variety of task steps.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.4:**

- *Instead of this person first folding 10 letters and then inserting them into 10 envelopes, encourage them to insert 20 already folded letters into 20 envelopes.*

5. Remind yourself to simplify the task without making the task seem childlike.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.5:**

- *Simplify an adult card game like Gin Rummy, rather than switching to a child's card*

*game like Go Fish.*

**F. Are the task steps familiar to this person? (For example, taking a bath rather than a shower?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Make the task steps as similar as possible to the way this person did them throughout their adult life.

**EXAMPLES for #F.1:**

- *If this person put a sock and shoe on one foot before putting a sock on the other foot, encourage them to do the same now.*
- *If they took a bath rather than shower, encourage them to take a bath.*

2. Avoid adding task steps that reflect a cultural bias that is not shared by this person.

**EXAMPLES for #F.2:**

- *Avoid saying a prayer before a meal, if that has not been a habit of this person.*

**G. Are the task steps concrete enough? (For example, showing this person their clothing rather than simply asking them to get dressed?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Make the task steps as concrete as necessary.

**EXAMPLES for #G.1:**

- *Encourage this person to sort playing cards according to suit or color, rather than to play a game of Solitaire or Bridge.*

2. Encourage this person to perform the concrete steps of a task, and you perform the more abstract ones.

**EXAMPLES for #G.2:**

- *While baking a cake, you measure the flour in a measuring cup, and they pour the flour into a bowl and mix it.*

3. Eliminate an abstract task step that is too difficult for this person and you are unable to do.

**EXAMPLES for #G.3:**

- *Eliminate the gargling step of the teeth brushing task.*

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## II. MODIFICATION OF STEPS

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### Look for ways to modify task steps:

- To make them less difficult for this person
- To accommodate changes over time in this person's cognitive abilities resulting in changes in needs, strengths, or preferences

### A. Does the order of the task steps meet this person's needs and preferences? (For example, does washing this person's feet first help them get used to the water or match the way they used to wash?)

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Watch for the best order of the task steps for this person. Use that same order consistently until their needs or preferences change.
2. Use the order of task steps that this person has used throughout their adult life. Change this order only when necessary.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.2:

- *Put their socks on before their pants, if this is what they have done for most of their adult life.*
3. Modify the order of the task steps as this person's needs and preferences change over time. Respond immediately to their changing needs and preferences.
  4. During a task, modify the order of the task steps as this person's needs and preferences change from moment to moment. Respond immediately to their changing needs and preferences.

### B. Are particular needs or preferences met by modifying the way a task is done? (For example, is modesty or temperature sensitivity addressed by covering this person with a large towel so that no part of their body, or only one part at a time, is exposed during dressing and bathing?)

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Be alert to this person's needs or preferences at this moment. Note needs and preferences that are:
  - Physical (such as feeling cold or pain).
  - Emotional (such as modesty or vulnerability when all clothes are removed).
  - Sensory (such as difficulty hearing your voice over the running water).
  - Cognitive (such as not being able to understand why they are removing their clothes when you aren't removing your clothes).
2. Watch this person's face and body and listen to their words and vocalizations to discern whether the current way of doing the task feels comfortable.
3. Respond immediately to evidence of discomfort by pausing to reassure or explain or by modifying the way the task is done.

#### EXAMPLES for #B.3:

- *If this person is distressed when their face is washed, apologize and reassure, then start washing their hands or arms instead.*

### C. Are physiological, emotional, and cognitive needs accommodated? (For example, draping a towel over this person, so the spray of water from the faucet or the shower nozzle doesn't touch their skin directly?)

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Remind yourself to assess changes in all aspects of this person, including their physiological, emotional,

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and cognitive status.

2. Assess regularly so that any changes are noted and accommodated immediately.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.2:**

- *Be alert to whether at this moment this person feels a touch to the arm like a hit, or experiences a soft water spray like pellets or needles in the arm. Immediately cover the faucet or shower nozzle with a washcloth to diffuse the spray, or cover their arm with a towel and spray through the draped towel.*

3. When assessing physiological status, consider this person's physical abilities, sensory and motor functions, medical status, and physical stamina. Consider physiological status in general and at this particular time. Remind yourself that physical abilities and needs may fluctuate from moment to moment.

4. Modify task steps to accommodate changes in physical abilities and needs.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.4:**

- *Encourage sitting in the shower when balance is uncertain*
- *When pain is present, move a joint more slowly and gently.*
- *Start the shower before this person enters the room, so the room is warm from the beginning.*

5. When assessing emotional status, consider this person's emotions in general, at this particular time, and about this particular task. Remind yourself that their emotions may change rapidly from moment to moment.

6. Eliminate a task that is emotionally distressing.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.6:**

- *If a shower is distressing or frightening to this person, especially after modifications to address the distress have been attempted, try a bath, bed bath, or sponge bath at the sink instead.*

7. Delay a task if it is distressing to this person. It may not be distressing at a later time.

8. Modify task steps to accommodate changes in emotions.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.8:**

- *If this person is distressed about taking a shower or bath, make the shower or bath more appealing, even luxurious. Create a relaxing spa-like atmosphere with a warm, colorful, and beautiful décor. Offer food or sweets to eat during the shower, such as pie and ice cream in the tub or chocolates in the shower.*
- *If this person is distressed about the shower or bath even after attempts to modify the task, try a bed bath or a sponge bath at the sink.*

9. Add task steps to help distract this person's attention during a distressing task.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.9:**

- *Offer food or converse about this person's family.*

10. Some tasks (such as bathing, showering, dressing, using the toilet) may cause emotional distress if they remind this person of past or current physical, emotional, or sexual discomfort, pain, or trauma. Try to avoid doing those tasks. When the tasks must be done, modify the task. As you talk about or touch this person during such activities, take this person's feelings and behavior seriously and respond with kindness and calm patience, especially when this person seems to be verbally or nonverbally reacting in an exaggerated way to tasks, rooms, objects, events, touch, certain people, or words they hear. Remind yourself this person has reasons for acting in this way, even if they can't consciously remember them or be able to tell you about them.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.10:**

- *Keep this person covered as you do the task. Wash this person through towels or under their clothes if that is helpful.*
- *Explain what you are doing and reassure them with calm clear words.*
- *Do less upsetting steps of the task first.*
- *Encourage them to tell you the minute they feel pain or distress.*

11. When assessing this person's cognitive status, consider all cognitive abilities and needs.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.11:**

- *Consider the ability of this person's brain to recognize sensory information, such as the ability to recognize objects and where they are in space, or to interpret the temperature of water.*

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- *Assess the ability to interpret events, switch gears, remember information, and know how to perform tasks.*
12. Assess this person's cognitive abilities and needs in general and at this particular time. Remind yourself that cognitive abilities and needs often fluctuate from moment to moment.
  13. Modify task steps to accommodate changes in cognitive abilities and needs.

### **EXAMPLES for #C.13:**

- *Help this person understand the task and feel more involved and in control, by encouraging them to hold and use a task object, such as a comb, while you use a second similar task object to perform the task.*
- *If water poured on this person's head is confusing and distressing, wash and rinse their hair with a damp washcloth instead.*

## **D. Is the location of each task step adapted to this person? (For example, washing their hair with a wet washcloth in the bedroom where this person feels safe, rather than in the shower?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Perform a task and each task step in the location this person has performed the task throughout their adult life.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.1:**

- *If this person always brushed their hair in the bathroom, then continue to brush their hair in the bathroom rather than the bedroom.*

2. Identify the best place to do each task step that avoids confusion, embarrassment, or anxiety.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.2:**

- *If the bath or shower room seems frightening or overwhelming, do some of the task steps in another room. Shower in the bathroom but wash hair in the bedroom with a damp washcloth.*
- *If this person loves to bake, but the kitchen is too overwhelming, try mixing the cake batter at the dining room table and going in the kitchen only when it is time to use the oven.*

3. Adapt the location and environment of a task to increase the chance of success and to help this person understand the task steps and feel comfortable.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.3:**

- *Turn on additional lights if the curtains in this person's bedroom must be closed for privacy making the room too dark for this person to see well.*
- *If this person has difficulty eating a meal in a cluttered space where many people are present, arrange a quiet corner of the dining room where they can sit at a table facing away from the rest of the people. Remove unnecessary and distracting items from the table and walls.*

4. Keep the location of task steps consistent over time, so that the location and environment can act as cues to the intent of the task steps.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.4:**

- *Encourage this person to dress in the morning on one side of the room and undress at night on the other side.*

5. When a task step, such as taking off clothes, creates anxiety, stay in the same location to perform task steps that will "fix" the tasks steps that created the anxiety, thus making it clear to this person that the problem has been resolved.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.5:**

- *Stay in the same location when taking clothes off and putting other clothes on. When this person is about to bathe, take clothes off and put others on afterwards in the bathroom. Moving from one room to another without clothes or wrapped in a robe or blanket (such as from the bedroom to the bathroom) might be embarrassing or provoke anxiety.*
- *When this person is getting dressed in the morning, stay in the same location when you take off the pajamas as you do when putting on this person's clothes for the day.*

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## III. MODIFICATION OF OBJECTS

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### Look for ways to:

- Adapt objects used during the task to fit this person's changing needs and preferences
- Accommodate this person's need for familiarity

### A. Are objects modified to accommodate changes in this person's needs? (For example, are zippers replaced with Velcro; foods difficult to chew or swallow cooked until soft; finger foods offered when using utensils or sitting is difficult?)

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Discern the best objects to use during a task with this person, and then use the same objects consistently until their needs or preferences change.
2. Use task objects this person has used throughout their adult life. Change the objects only when the benefits of simplifying the objects outweigh the challenges of reduced familiarity.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.2:

- *Use bar soap rather than liquid soap, or toothpaste in a tube rather than in a pump bottle. If this person's ability to hang onto a slippery bar of soap becomes too challenging, then changing to liquid soap from an unfamiliar bottle may be helpful.*
3. Modify the objects used in the task as this person's needs and preferences change over time. Respond immediately to their changing needs and preferences.
  4. During a task, modify the objects used as this person's needs and preferences change from moment to moment. Respond immediately to their changing needs and preferences.
  5. Discern this person's needs or preferences at this moment. Note needs and preferences that are:
    - Physical (such as trying to lift an object that is too heavy).
    - Emotional (such as using an object that is unfamiliar or frightening).
    - Sensory (such as not being able to see the object).
    - Cognitive (such as not being able to recognize the object or locate it in space).
  6. Modify objects to accommodate changes in cognitive abilities and needs.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.6:

- *Help this person understand the task and feel involved and in control by encouraging them to hold and use a task object, such as a washcloth, while you use a second similar task object (a second washcloth) to perform the task.*
  - *When this person can no longer easily hold a washcloth, offer a washcloth that fits like a pocket over their hand.*
7. Use an appropriate number of objects to accommodate changes in cognitive abilities and needs. As the ability to use multiple objects declines, decrease the number of objects used in the task.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.7:

- *This person might be able to fold three towels from the clean laundry basket, but not 10.*
8. Watch this person's face and body and listen to their words and vocalizations for evidence that they are comfortable, or not comfortable, with the objects currently used during the task.
  9. Respond immediately to evidence of discomfort by pausing to reassure or explain, or by changing the task object.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.9:

- *If this person is distressed when their face is washed with a washcloth, apologize and reassure, then start washing with your hands or a softer washcloth.*

### B. Do the modifications keep the objects as similar as possible to what this person is used to? (For example, easy-to-use bathtubs that still look normal; buttons changed to snaps)

**rather than Velcro; or soft foods that look normal rather than unrecognizable pureed food?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Use task objects this person has used throughout their adult life. Change the objects only when the benefits of simplifying the objects outweigh the challenges of reduced familiarity.

**EXAMPLES for #B.1:**

- *Use bar soap rather than liquid soap, or toothpaste in a tube rather than in a pump bottle. If this person's ability to hang onto a slippery bar of soap becomes too challenging, then changing to liquid soap from an unfamiliar bottle may be helpful.*

2. When changing a task object becomes necessary, make the changes as minimal as possible. Address only the feature that makes the object difficult for this person to use.

**EXAMPLES for #B.2:**

- *If a white towel is hard for this person to see because it blends into the surfaces around it, change only the color of the towel so that it contrasts with the surfaces around it. Leave the size, shape, and texture of the towel the same as it was.*

3. When changing a task object becomes necessary, keep the object appearing and feeling as similar as possible to what this person is used to.

**EXAMPLES for #B.3:**

- *When a bathtub needs to be changed to allow easier access, keep it and the faucets looking normal, easily recognizable, and familiar.*

**C. Do modifications reduce the need for significant range of motion? (For example, replacing shirts pulled over the head with shirts with buttons?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Modify the task objects to accommodate changes in this person's physical abilities and needs, such as increased stiffness and pain on movement. When this person has difficulty moving joints comfortably, modify or use task objects that require little movement or twisting of joints and body parts.

**EXAMPLES for #C.1:**

- *Instead of sweatshirts that pull over the head and require arms to be extended, use cardigan sweaters that button down the front.*

2. When this person has trouble reaching out for objects, modify the objects to avoid the need for reaching.

**EXAMPLES for #C.2:**

- *Put longer pull strings on lamp light switches.*

**D. Are emerging anxieties or preferences accommodated? (For example, replacing pants or slacks with a skirt when removing pants or slacks becomes upsetting; or using dry shampoo to keep their hair from getting wet?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Modify the task objects to accommodate changes in emotions and preferences.

**EXAMPLES for #D.1:**

- *When this person's preferences regarding color, texture or taste in food changes, modify the color, texture, or taste of food offered.*

2. Use task objects that don't require this person to do task steps they have difficulty with or would rather not do.

**EXAMPLES for #D.2:**

- *Use clothes that require no ironing when this person can no longer iron safely and independently.*
- *Use ready made tomato sauces, rather than creating a sauce with raw tomatoes, when making spaghetti.*
- *Use clothing that is easier to adjust or remove when using the toilet as incontinence becomes an issue.*

**E. Are changes in sensory or perceptual functions accommodated? (For example, covering**



**the faucet or shower nozzle with a washcloth when touch or skin sensitivity to the water spray makes the spray uncomfortable, painful, or frightening?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Assess this person's sensory and perceptual abilities regularly so that any changes are noted and accommodated immediately.

**EXAMPLES for #E.1:**

- *Be alert to whether, at this moment, a touch to the arm feels like a hit to this person, or a soft water spray feels like pellets or needles in the arm. Immediately cover the faucet or shower nozzle with a washcloth to diffuse the spray, or cover their arm with a towel and spray through the draped towel.*

2. Change the sensory modality required to use objects, when necessary.

**EXAMPLES for #E.2:**

- *When hearing becomes difficult, change the phone or door bell rings to visual light flashes to attract this person's attention.*

3. When patterns on objects or on surrounding surfaces prevent this person from easily seeing or recognizing an object and its location, change the color, figures, or patterns of the object or the surrounding area.

**EXAMPLES for #E.3:**

- *Avoid patterns on chairs and sofas, or on a table cloth that might obscure the dishes on the table.*
- *Especially avoid patterns, like plaids or stripes, which appear to "move" when this person moves. Such "moving" patterns can cause nausea, dizziness, loss of balance, and confusion.*

**F. Are emotionally pleasing objects used to increase the appeal of the task? (For example, using soft and colorful towels for drying; or eating ice cream during a bath or candy during a shower?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. When assessing this person's emotional status, consider their emotions in general, at this particular time, and about this particular task. Remind yourself that their emotions may change rapidly from moment to moment.
2. Modify task objects to accommodate changes in emotions.

**EXAMPLES for #F.2:**

- *If this person is distressed about taking a shower or bath, make the shower or bath more appealing, even luxurious. Create a relaxing spa-like atmosphere with a warm, colorful, and beautiful décor; or offer food or sweets to eat during the shower, such as pie and ice cream in the tub or chocolates in the shower.*

3. Use objects that have an emotional attraction for this person because they are familiar or reminiscent of past experience.

**EXAMPLES for #F.3:**

- *Use a familiar bedspread, favorite clothing, or photos of their family or childhood.*

4. Add task objects to help distract this person's attention during a distressing task.

**EXAMPLES for #F.4:**

- *Offer food, nice smelling creams, or a favorite small soft pillow to hold when dressing.*

5. When this person wants a certain item, have several of them available, so this person feels as though they are the same item.

**EXAMPLES for #F.5:**

- *When a shirt is a favorite, have several that look or feel exactly the same.*

6. When changing an object to accommodate physical or cognitive changes, ensure the emotional appeal of the object remains unchanged. Avoid making the modified object look child like or medical.

**EXAMPLES for #F.6:**

- *If a spoon needs to be altered to accommodate a person's physical challenges in their hands, keep it looking as normal and appealing as the spoons this person has used throughout their adulthood.*
- *While modifying the height of a toilet seat, change only the height and keep the rest of the*

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*aesthetic aspects of the toilet the same. If there was a soft cloth covering on the seat, don't remove it.*

- *Try to keep a modified toilet looking very similar to what this person has used throughout their adulthood.*

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## IV. TIMING

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**Look for ways to accommodate this person's needs and preferences in:**

- How the whole 24-hour day of this person is usually spent
- How similar this person's daily schedule is to the schedule they used to have throughout most of their adult life
- How appropriate the daily schedule is for this person now
- How the past 48 hours or longer have been going for this person
- What events or tasks usually precede this task

**A. Is the daily time of routines as normal and familiar to this person as possible, so that the tasks are done at the time of day this person has done them throughout most of their adult life?**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Find out the times of day this person performed all routine tasks. Ask people who knew this person well.
2. Help this person schedule their day to perform the tasks at the same time as they did throughout most of their adult life.

**B. Is the daily time of routines appropriate for this person now? (For example, does a bath at midnight soothe them, while a morning bath is upsetting?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Adapt the time of routines to accommodate this person's needs and preferences now. Help them perform tasks when they are ready, even if it deviates from their past.

**EXAMPLES for #B.1:**

- *In spite of a life-long routine, if this person now seems anxious about bathing in the morning, see if they are less anxious bathing at night when they are awake and restless. Bathing might feel soothing and help them sleep more easily.*
2. If conditions during the task are more challenging at the familiar time of day, choose another time when conditions are less challenging.

**EXAMPLES for #B.2:**

- *Perform difficult tasks when there is less distraction, such as at night when there are fewer sounds and fewer other people.*
- *Attend a smaller weekday worship service, rather than a weekend service where the crowd is larger.*

**C. Is the time of each task the same every day?**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose the best time of day to perform each routine task.
2. Help this person perform each routine task at the same time every day, so the routine feels familiar and they expect it, even if they don't consciously know the time of the task.

**D. Is the daily order of routines as normal and familiar to this person as possible, so that the tasks are done in the same order this person has done them throughout most of their adult life? (For example, getting out of bed, washing, dressing, and then eating breakfast?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

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1. Find out the order this person performed all routine tasks. Ask people who knew them well. Write down the order of tasks so you and others know and remember it.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.1:**

- *First get out of bed, then look at the newspaper, shower, dress, eat breakfast, and brush teeth.*
2. Help this person schedule their day to perform the tasks in the same order as they did throughout most of their adult life.

## **E. Is the daily order of routines appropriate for this person now? (For example, eating breakfast before washing and dressing?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Adapt the order of routine tasks to accommodate this person's needs and preferences now. Help this person perform tasks in the order they are most comfortable with, even if this order deviates from their past.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.1:**

- *Help this person eat breakfast before getting dressed, if they are now more comfortable with that.*
2. If difficult tasks are too challenging to perform after easier tasks, due to a build up of fatigue or frustration, then help this person do the most difficult tasks before they do the easier tasks.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.2:**

- *This person may be able to bathe more easily if they bathe before eating breakfast when they are less tired.*
3. This person may need to do more difficult tasks after easier tasks, so they can gradually prepare for the difficult task by having time to focus. Adjust the order of the tasks to accommodate this need.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.3:**

- *Eating a leisurely breakfast before bathing may allow this person to gradually wake up and become more oriented to the day.*

## **F. Is the order of routines the same each day?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose the best order of daily routine tasks.
2. Help this person perform each routine task in the same order every day, so the routine feels familiar and they expect the next task, even if they don't consciously know the order of the tasks and what task comes next.

## **G. Is there a familiar and appropriate pace of daily routines so the logic of the sequence is obvious to this person? (For example, is the time between getting dressed and eating breakfast the same length as they are used to throughout their adult life?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Find out the amount of time between routine tasks that this person was accustomed to throughout most of their adult life. Ask people who knew them well.

### **EXAMPLES for #G.1:**

- *Find out if they used to dress then immediately eat breakfast without a pause.*
2. Find out the amount of time this person used to perform each routine task throughout most of their adult life. Ask people who knew them well.

### **EXAMPLES for #G.2:**

- *Find out if they used to dress quickly, but eat breakfast slowly.*
3. Help this person continue the same amount of time between routine tasks that they were accustomed to throughout most of their adult life.
  4. Help this person continue to use the same amount of time during a routine task that they used throughout most of their adult life.

### **EXAMPLES for #G.4:**

- *If they lingered over tea during breakfast, then continue that now.*
5. Keep the amount of time between routine tasks the same every day. Establish a rhythm and avoid changing

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it or disregarding it, so this person can better predict what will come next, even if they don't consciously know what will come next.

6. Keep the amount of time used to perform each routine task the same every day.
7. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the time between tasks or during tasks, but as little as possible, and only when necessary.

### **H. Have the past few hours before each task been typical and not upsetting?**

#### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Note how the past two or three hours were spent before beginning a task. If the hours were unusual, confusing, or upsetting to this person, then allow extra time to help them relax and become comfortable with you before initiating a task.
2. Before initiating a task, help this person take time to transition or change focus from one task to another or from sitting still and relaxing to focusing on a task.

### **I. Is there enough time between tasks to allow for rest and recuperation?**

#### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Allow enough time between tasks for this person to rest and recuperate, especially after difficult tasks.

##### **EXAMPLES for #I.1:**

- *When the bathing task is upsetting or difficult, allow time to rest after bathing and before eating breakfast.*
2. If it's not possible to allow enough time to rest after a task, then change the order or time of routine tasks to allow for rest after each task that is difficult.
  3. If performing all the tasks is too tiring or distressing, perform some of the tasks, or parts of a task, later in the day after they have rested and are more relaxed.
  4. Adapt the pace, order, and performance of tasks to match this person's needs and preferences at this moment.

### **J. Is enough time allowed to complete the task successfully and comfortably for this person?**

#### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Remind yourself that planning your time with this person and the multiple tasks to be performed will save time and frustration for them and for yourself.
2. Establish goals and priorities regarding this task. Consider this person's own goals first, then your goals.

##### **EXAMPLES for #J.2:**

- *During a shower or bath, this person may want to feel relaxed, pain free, and luxurious, while you simply want this person to be clean.*
3. Plan your time and schedule of tasks to allow enough time to get the most important tasks and parts of task done, so that the goals of this person and yourself will most likely be met.
  4. To reduce frustration or confusion that could increase the time needed for a task, plan for the most challenging tasks and tasks steps to occur when this person is best able to perform them. Plan to do the most difficult tasks when this person is less fatigued or frustrated. This person may prefer the most appealing task steps first to entice them to begin the task and to be better able to understand and perform the more challenging task steps.
  5. Allow enough time to approach this person leisurely and calmly to prepare them emotionally for the task.
  6. Watch this person to discern their most comfortable pace while performing this task.
  7. Note evidence of fatigue or anxiety during a task. Modify the pace of the task to reassure this person or to help them rest and relax.
  8. To reduce distraction that could increase the time required for a task, prepare for the task out of this person's sight and hearing. Collect and organize task items (such as washcloths and a basin) before you enter their room. Arrange the task so this person sees and hears only those task steps in which they can directly participate.
  9. Perform the task steps that are not meaningful or helpful to this person quickly, efficiently, and out of this person's sight and hearing.
  10. Perform the task steps with this person slowly enough for them to participate, to understand what you are doing, and to remain relaxed and comfortable.

**K. Is the task performed as often as is appropriate?**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Discern how often a task actually needs to be performed to meet this person's needs and preferences regarding comfort, health, and safety.
2. Examine your own cultural and other biases that may not agree with this person's expectations.

**EXAMPLES for #K.2:**

- *There are often generational and cultural differences regarding hygiene and the frequency of bathing. Discern how often it is necessary for this person to bathe to meet their own needs and preferences and not the preferences of someone else.*
3. Identify those tasks that need to be increased as this person's needs and preferences change over time.

**EXAMPLES for #K.3:**

- *The need for planned exercise and range of motion of body parts may increase as this person grows older.*

# The Task and Daily Routines Intervention Strategies

## V. CONSISTENCY

Shelly E. Weaverdyck, Ph.D.

**Look for ways to ensure that each time the task is performed, it is:**

- With the same care partner (caregiver)
- Done the same way
- At the same time of day
- In the same place

**A. Is the same care partner (caregiver or assistant) helping each time the task is done?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Discern who the best care partner is to assist with each task.
2. Arrange for the same care partner to help with a given task as much as possible.
3. Arrange for the same care partner to help even when the primary care partner is absent.
4. When someone who is unfamiliar to this person must help, provide information about the primary care partner's routines, so this new care partner can help perform the tasks in as familiar a way as possible.
5. As this person's needs and preferences change, change to a different care partner if necessary.
6. When a care partner is no longer the best care partner to assist with a given task, change to a different care partner.

**B. Am I helping with the task the same way each time?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Discern the best way to help this person with each task.
2. Perform a task with this person the same way each time.

#### **EXAMPLES for #B.2:**

- *Wash the same part of the body first each time.*
3. As this person's needs and preferences change, adapt the way you help with a task.
  4. Adapt a task to this person's current desires and needs only as much as necessary, so you can keep the task as familiar as possible.
  5. Make the task as predictable as possible to this person, even if this person doesn't seem to know or to be able to say what the task is.

**C. Have the task steps become routine and predictable to this person?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Break the task down into steps appropriate for this person at this moment.
2. Perform the task steps in an order that meets this person's needs and preferences.
3. Perform the task steps in the same order each time the task is done.
4. Make the task as predictable as possible to this person, even if this person doesn't seem to know or to be able to say what the task is.
5. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the task steps, but only as much as is necessary.

**D. Are the same task objects used each time?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose task objects that are appropriate for them.
2. Use the same task objects each time the task is performed.
3. Have several objects that look exactly alike, so when one is lost there are other similar objects to replace it.
4. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the task objects, but only as much as is necessary.

**E. Is the task done in the same order with other tasks each time?**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose the best order of daily routine tasks.
2. Help this person perform each routine task in the same order every day, so the routine feels familiar and they expect the next task, even if they don't consciously know the order of the tasks.
3. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the order of tasks, but only as much as is necessary.

**F. Is the task done at the same time each day?**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose the best time of day to perform each routine task.
2. Help this person schedule their day to perform the tasks the same time every day.
3. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the time of the task when necessary or helpful.

**EXAMPLES for #F.3:**

- *This person may need to sleep in longer in the morning.*
  - *More difficult tasks may need to be spread out over the course of the day to reduce fatigue.*
4. If conditions during the task become more challenging at the familiar time of day, choose another time when conditions are less challenging.

**EXAMPLES for #F.4:**

- *Perform difficult tasks when there is less distraction, such as at night when there are fewer sounds.*
- *Attend a smaller weekday worship service, rather than a weekend service where the crowd is larger.*

**G. Is the task done at the same place each time? (For example, getting dressed in the morning on one side of the room and undressed at night on the other side?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Help this person choose a room or a place in the room to regularly perform each task.
2. Perform this task in the same room and same place in the room each time the task is performed.

**EXAMPLES for #G.2:**

- *Help this person get dressed on one side of the room and undressed on the other side of the room.*
3. As this person's needs and preferences change, change the location of the task, but only as much as is necessary.



# The Task and Daily Routines Intervention Strategies

## VI. TASK GOALS

Shelly E. Weaverdyck, Ph.D.

### Look for ways to ensure that:

- This person receives what they want and need from this task
- You receive what you want and need from this task

### A. Are this person's goals clearly identified? (For example, to feel safe, warm, relaxed, and comfortable?)

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Remind yourself that this person and their feelings are more important than the task you are helping them perform.
2. Remind yourself that this person's comfort is more important than their independent performance of a task step. Completing a task and independence are important only if they help this person feel good. If they can do a task step, but are physically or emotionally uncomfortable doing it, then assist or perform the task step for them.
3. Discern this person's goals for this task, even when this person doesn't state them or seem to know them.
4. Remind yourself that this person has goals, though sometimes their goals may be hard to discern or recognize.
5. Find out what goals this person has had throughout most of their adult life. Ask people who knew them well what kind of person they seemed to want to be, or what characteristics were high priority for them when trying to be successful as a person, such as accomplished, compassionate, admired, busy, elegant, or socially popular.
6. Imagine and write down how each half hour of a 24-hour day this person might have spent and enjoyed if they did not have cognitive or physical difficulties. Then write down how they spend each half hour of a typical 24-hour day now. Compare the two lists. Creatively explore how you can help this person live a 24-hour day the way they would if they could. Convert the desired 24-hour day to a set of goals this person might have.
7. Frequently examine this person's goals, needs, and preferences to recognize when they change.
8. Be creative when discerning what this person might want or need.
9. Remind yourself that this person can make choices and express preferences even when they have many cognitive needs or are unable to speak or move.
10. When this person is unable to communicate goals, present options so they can reject them or indicate preferences.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.10:

- *If this person is nonverbal or unable to see or recognize objects, try putting a small taste of each option of food in their mouth and watch for their response to each option.*
11. Frequently assess this person's ability to recognize and choose among options. Adapt your approach and presentation of options accordingly.
  12. If this person becomes increasingly confused, and less able to understand multiple or abstract options, simplify how you present their options.

#### EXAMPLES for #A.12:

- *Rather than asking, "Do you want eggs or oatmeal?" show them eggs and oatmeal to make the options more concrete and visible.*
  - *Reduce the number of options you present at a time, or show only one option at a time. Ask if they want oatmeal and wait for their response. Then ask if they want eggs and wait for their response.*
13. Watch and listen to this person to see how they are reacting to what you are doing and saying during a task. Immediately change what you are doing or how you are doing it when you see or hear negative reactions.

**B. Are my goals clearly identified? (For example, for this person to be clean?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Examine your own goals for this task as a care partner.
2. Compare your goals for this task with this person's goals.
3. Remind yourself that this person's goals must be considered first.
4. If your goals are in conflict with this person's goals, be creative as you figure out how to meet this person's goals and then how to meet your goals for this task.
5. Examine your own feelings to see if you unintentionally have goals that are harmful to this person or are irrelevant to this task. Do you feel anger or feel dislike regarding this process or this person? Is the task process not going the way you would like?
6. Recognize goals that are intended to give you pleasure, such as going out for ice cream, reminiscing with this person, receiving affirmation from this person, getting a break from doing tasks with and for this person.
7. Find ways to meet your goals that also meet this person's goals. When there is a conflict, discern the importance of each of the goals.

**EXAMPLES for #B.7:**

- *If it is very important for you to have a break, arrange the task to meet the most important goals and to minimize the impact of not meeting other goals.*
- *If your need for a break is in conflict with this person's need for a consistent care partner, then provide a care partner who is familiar to this person or is similar to you. Have the unfamiliar care partner help perform the task in a way that is as similar as possible to the way you do it.*

**C. Do I distinguish what is necessary from what is desired? (For example, cleaning a wound for health reasons versus washing to meet cultural norms?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Examine your goals to discern how well they meet this person's needs and preferences.
2. Ask yourself how important it is to meet your goals.

**EXAMPLES for #C.2:**

- *If this person doesn't want to take a shower, ask yourself why you think they need a shower. Consider other ways of meeting their goal to avoid a shower, and your goal of cleanliness, such as a bed bath or a sponge bath at the sink.*
3. Examine this person's cultural norms and past habits to see if they differ from yours. Avoid imposing your cultural expectations on this person.

**EXAMPLES for #C.3:**

- *Examine frequent showers, showers versus baths, speaking softly, or prayer before meals.*
4. Recognize the importance of meeting your goals of pleasure and use creativity to try to meet those goals.

**EXAMPLES for #C.4:**

- *If you want to see evidence of this person's strengths or abilities to help cope with your grief regarding this person's difficulties, look for ways to provide an opportunity for this person's strengths to be exposed without overly challenging or frustrating them.*
- *Reminisce over old photographs rather than quizzing this person about individual names.*

**D. Will modifying my expectations adequately meet the goals of both this person and me? (For example, bathing once a week rather than twice?)**

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Adjust your expectations to include the goals of this person.

**EXAMPLES for #D.1:**

- *Serve soft cooked carrots, fresh cut fruits and vegetables, small pieces of meat, or a sandwich so they can use fingers to eat, rather than insisting this person use a fork to eat.*
- *Serve food this person can eat while walking, rather than requiring them to sit at a table to eat.*
- *Accepting a shirt that clashes with pants rather than insisting this person change their*

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*shirt to match the pants.*

2. Prioritize the goals of both this person and you. Discern what is most important to accomplish with this task.

### **EXAMPLES for #D.2:**

- *The goal of washing dishes to help this person feel like they are participating in a useful task is more important than the goal of cleaning the dishes. Later, the dishes can be put into the dishwasher if they are not clean enough.*
3. Watch and listen to this person to see how they are reacting to what you are doing and saying during a task. Immediately change what you are doing or how you are doing it, when you see or hear negative reactions.
  4. Modify your expectations as this person's needs and preferences change over time, day to day, and moment to moment.

## **E. Will skipping the task or doing an alternative adequately meet the goals of both this person and me? (For example, a bed bath rather than a shower?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Clarify the goals of both this person and you. Identify the goals that are most important to meet this person's needs and preferences.
2. Discern how necessary it is to perform a task that this person prefers to avoid.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.2:**

- *If this person prefers to avoid showering or bathing, and you want to ensure this person is clean, consider alternatives to the bath or shower, such as sponge baths at the sink, bed baths, and a gel that sanitizes the skin without water.*
3. As this person's abilities get stronger or weaker and their needs and preferences change, examine the priorities of the goals of both this person and you. Eliminate unnecessary tasks that become too difficult.

### **EXAMPLES for #E.3:**

- *Celebrating a holiday with the entire family in a family member's home may become too upsetting or confusing. Celebrating quietly with only one person or not celebrating at all may be preferable to this person, though painful for the family.*
4. Examine the necessity of each task as this person's needs and preferences change over time, day to day, and moment to moment.

## **F. Will doing only part of the task adequately meet the goals of both this person and me? (For example, washing only the lower half of this person's body?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Clarify the goals of both this person and you. Identify those goals that are most important to meet this person's needs and preferences.
2. Do only as much of the task as is necessary to accomplish your goals to meet this person's needs, remembering they may not recognize this as desirable.

### **EXAMPLES for #F.2:**

- *If this person prefers to avoid washing, identify parts of their body that must be washed every day and those parts that can be washed every few days. Focus on doing only as much of the task as is necessary to meet these goals.*
3. Plan your time for the task before you approach this person with a task to be performed. Allow enough time to get the most important parts of the task done so that the goals of both this person and you will most likely be met.
  4. Examine the necessity of performing the entire task as this person's needs and preferences change over time, day to day, and moment to moment.

## **G. Will modifying the task adequately meet the goals of both this person and me? (For example, washing their hair with a damp washcloth rather than getting the hair dripping wet?)**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Clarify the goals of both this person and you. Identify the goals that are most important to meet this person's needs and preferences.

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2. Modify the task to meet the goals of both this person and you.

### **EXAMPLES for #G.2:**

- *It may be easier for this person to fold the clothes of small children rather than of big adults from the clean laundry basket, or fold dish towels rather than larger bath towels.*
3. Modify each task as this person's needs and preferences change over time, day to day, and moment to moment.
  4. Watch and listen to this person to see how they are reacting to what you are doing and saying during a task. Immediately change what you are doing or how you are doing it, when you see or hear negative reactions.

## **H. Is enough time allowed for the task to meet the goals of both this person and me?**

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Plan and adjust the time the task is performed to allow enough time to accommodate the goals, preferences, and needs of both this person and you.
2. Plan and adjust the duration of the task to allow enough time to accommodate the goals, preferences, and needs of both this person and you.
3. Adapt the time and duration of each task as this person's goals, needs and preferences change over time, day to day, and moment to moment.
4. Adapt the time and duration of each task as your goals, needs and preferences change over time.
5. Plan the details of how time for the task will be organized before approaching this person with a task to be performed. Remind yourself that planning your time and the multiple tasks to be performed will save time and frustration for this person and for yourself.
6. Establish goals and priorities regarding this task. Consider this person's own goals first, then your goals.

### **EXAMPLES for #H.6:**

- *During a shower or bath, this person may want to feel relaxed, pain free, and luxurious, while you simply want this person to be clean.*
7. Plan your time and schedule of tasks to allow enough time to get the most important tasks and parts of task done, so that the goals of this person and yourself will most likely be met.
  8. To reduce frustration or confusion that could increase the time required for a task, plan for the most challenging tasks and task steps to occur when this person is best able to perform them. Plan to do the most difficult tasks when this person is less fatigued or frustrated. This person may prefer the most appealing task steps first to entice them to begin the task and to be better able to understand and perform the more challenging task steps.
  9. Allow enough time to approach this person leisurely and calmly to prepare them emotionally for the task.
  10. Watch this person to discern their most comfortable pace while performing this task.
  11. Note evidence of fatigue or anxiety during a task. Modify the pace of the task to reassure them or to help them rest and relax.
  12. To reduce distraction that could increase the time required for a task, prepare for the task out of this person's sight and hearing. Collect and organize task items (such as washcloths and a basin) before you enter their room. Arrange the task so this person sees and hears only those task steps in which they can directly participate or that help them understand what will be done.
  13. Perform the task steps that are not meaningful or helpful to this person quickly, efficiently, and out of this person's sight and hearing.
  14. Perform task steps with this person slowly enough for them to participate, to understand what you are doing, and to remain relaxed and comfortable.