

PRINCIPLES OF CAREGIVING: FUNDAMENTALS

CHAPTER 10 – HOME ENVIRONMENT MAINTENANCE

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OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the relevance of the care or support plan for home maintenance.
2. Describe the importance of client rights and cultural or religious issues in regard to home maintenance.
3. Demonstrate the ability to plan and organize tasks according to the care plan and the client's wishes.
4. Identify home maintenance tasks and describe procedures for maintaining a safe and clean home environment.

KEY TERMS

Appliance

Manufacturer's directions

Care plan

Prioritizing

Chore

Service plan

A. DECIDING WHAT TO DO

1. Care and Service Plans

- The *care plan* or *service plan* usually lists general tasks, such as, clean the kitchen or wash clothes. It does not list the procedures. That is up to the DCW and the client.
- **FOLLOW THE SERVICE PLAN.** If a client wants you to do something that is not listed in the plan, you need to contact your supervisor. **You may be held liable if you do something for the client that is not on the service plan and an accident occurs.**
- With some services, especially those that are government funded, the DCW is only allowed to provide service for the client and not for his/her family or others living in the home. For example, if cleaning the client's bedroom, kitchen and living room is on the service plan, you would not be cleaning the daughter's bedroom. Cleaning common areas that all household members (including the client) use, such as the living room, should be cleaned. However, washing dishes for the entire family instead of just the client may be an issue. Ask your supervisor if you have any questions.
- Make a list of tasks that need to be done according to the care plan.
- Ask the client to prioritize the tasks that need to be done. If the client lists more tasks than what can be accomplished in your allotted time, try to negotiate with the individual to do it another day.

2. Client Rights

- Be considerate and cautious of client's supplies, equipment, and furnishings. Conserve whenever possible.
- **Show the same respect for the client's property as you would for your own.** Take care during use so that things do not get broken or damaged. **If there is something that does get damaged, do not try to hide it! Contact your supervisor.**
- The client has a right to be a hoarder. Do not throw anything out without first checking with the client. What is trash to you may be treasures to your client. The client has the right to refuse housekeeping tasks. If the task is necessary to avoid a health and safety risk such as clutter in a pathway, explain your concern to the client. If the client still refuses, contact your supervisor.
- The client has the right to refuse service. If the task is something that might be a health or safety risk for the client, explain why the task should be done. If the client still refuses, talk to your supervisor.



Stick with the Policies!

Let me start by saying it is amazing how easily things can become a mess when one does not follow the service plan. When a new worker comes through orientation it is emphasized what can and cannot be done. The same is true when a new client is opened. There are times, however, when caregivers believe they are doing a “good” thing by completing extra things for their client, but after awhile the “good” things become expected things.

When instructing about homemaking services, it is stated that the service is for the client and the client only. I have often stated, “Be careful what doors you open, because once a door is opened it is extremely hard to close.” I have found this to be true in several situations.

When a caregiver is asked to go outside their homemaking responsibilities “just this once” and they agree, they have opened a door. I once had a caregiver that was cleaning out birdbaths, watering lawns, preparing meals for the entire family, and cleaning up after the client’s grown son. Then she left the position. The new caregiver came in and wouldn’t complete these tasks, stating, “It’s not allowed, I’m here for you and you alone.” The client was upset to say the least, stating, “My other worker did this stuff and so should you.” When the new worker wouldn’t, the client made life hard for the caregiver.

It is reasons like this that it is so important to stick to the service plan. If your client asks you to go beyond the service plan, then call you supervisor.

Once again, be careful what doors you open, because you may find yourself regretting what you’ve started.

Marie Adams, Supervisor



3. Planning and Organizing Tasks

- Follow the client’s directions when performing tasks, even if you know a better way.
- Plans may also change depending on the client’s needs or health status.
- Use a tray to carry dishes to and from the table.
- Carry cleaning supplies from room to room in a shopping bag or basket (keep a small plastic bag for trash with you while cleaning—saves steps to the trash can).
- *Sample plan:* A load of laundry can be put in the machine just before lunch. While the machine is running, prepare and serve lunch to the client. Dry and fold clothes while client is resting after lunch.

B. SUPPLIES

- Maintain list of items in short supply.
- Have a shopping list posted on the refrigerator door for the client and family members to use.
- Adapt to the client's household. Clients have their equipment and their own favorite cleaning products. Unless instructed differently, the DCW should be using the equipment and cleaning products that are supplied by the client.
- **When using cleaning products or appliances, read labels and directions carefully.** Look for warnings, use protection (e.g. gloves), and follow all manufacturer directions.
- If equipment is faulty, notify client and/or supervisor.
- **Be considerate of the client's financial resources. Buy and use cleaning supplies sparingly.**



C. CLEANING

1. Cleaning Appliances

- **Dishwasher:** Clean exterior and interior.
- **Freezer:** Defrost once a year. Wipe inner surface with a damp cloth. Check for outdated food, and dispose of food with the client's permission.
- **Refrigerator:** Clean inside and outside with soft wet cloth and mild soap or baking soda. Check for spoiled food and dispose of food with the client's permission.
- **Trash compactor:** Replace bags as needed.
- **Garbage disposal:** Run cold water during use and for one minute after. Oranges, lemons, and ice can be used to maintain freshness.
- **Microwave oven:** Wipe with wet cloth and soap. Rinse and wipe dry.
- **Stove/oven:** Wipe up spills and grease immediately! Clean oven with vinegar in water to remove grit.
- **Washing machine:** Wipe exterior and interior with soft wet cloth. Clean lint filter.
- **Dryer:** Clean lint filter. A heavy buildup of lint can catch fire.

2. Dishwashing

Hand wash dishes in the following order:

- Glasses
- Silverware
- Plates and cups
- Pots and pans
- Rinse with hot water and allow to AIR DRY



3. Dishwasher

- Run only full loads to conserve water, soap and power costs.
- Do not interrupt the dry cycle to save money if sanitizing the dishes is needed.

4. Bathroom

- Wear gloves.
- Clean from cleanest areas to dirtiest (toilet is considered the dirtiest).
- Clean sink, countertops, and shower/tub with disinfectant (bleach solution 1:10 works well).
- Use a brush to clean the toilet, and brush under the rim.



DO NOT COMBINE cleaning chemicals, especially AMMONIA AND BLEACH. This forms a toxic gas!

5. Floors

- Use a clean mop and change mop water frequently. Flush dirty water down toilet.
- **Vinyl:** Use mild soap and rinse with clean warm water.
- **Ceramic floors:** Use vinegar and water. Check with client if soap can be used.
- **Carpets:** Vacuum frequently. Be sure the bag does not get overfilled. To remove stains, a carpet stain remover like Spot Shot works well.

6. Trash removal

- Empty trash on a daily basis to decrease mold and bacterial growth.
- Rinse out and clean household trash containers with a bleach solution on a regular basis.

- If the client recycles, use appropriate recycle containers and empty into the appropriate recycle bins. Do not mix regular trash with recycle trash.
- **In dealing with clutter:** The client must at least have clear pathways from the bed to the bath and for all exits. This also means the pathway must be wide enough for the client and any assistive mobility device he/she is using, such as a walker or a wheelchair.

D. LAUNDRY

Washer use

- Check labels for special washing instructions. Check the clothes for stains and pre-treat. Check the pockets. Zip pants and skirts.
- Turn dark clothes, beaded, or appliquéd garments inside out.
- Take care when washing red or vibrant colors. There are products that can be put in the wash water to pick up any excess dye in the water. These can be re-used a couple of times depending on how much dye residue is in the sheet.
- Sort clothes by colors (whites and colors), lint generators such as towels, lint magnets (corduroy), and delicates.
- Use liquid bleach for white cotton materials only.
- Do not overload the washer. This decreases the agitation and cleaning power.
- Distribute clothes evenly in the wash drum.

Dryer use

- Do not put delicates in the dryer unless directed by the client.
- Remove clothes immediately when dry, and hang up or fold.
- Some permanent press clothes will be less wrinkled if taken out of the dryer while still slightly damp and hung on a hanger.
- **Clean lint filter after every load.** Clogged lint filters cause the dryer to overheat and catch fire.
- If the client uses fabric softener sheets, be aware that some of these sheets create a film on the filter. This will block the flow of air causing the dryer to overheat and catch fire. Try running water through it. If the water stays on the surface, clean the filter with soap and water.

E. BED MAKING

- Place clean linens near the bed.
- Strip the bed gently to avoid spreading pathogens into the air. Fold blanket(s) and place nearby. Place linens to be washed in a plastic bag or hamper.
- Open sheets gently. Do not shake.
- Put the fitted sheet or flat sheet at the head of the bed working toward the bottom. Only work on one side at a time to save time and energy.
- Square off the corners and tuck the sheet under the mattress.
- Place top sheet over the clean bottom sheet wrong side up with the top edge of the hem even with the top edge of the mattress.
- Place any blanket(s) back on the bed with the top edge of the blanket(s) about 12 inches from the top of the mattress.
- Tuck both the top sheet and blanket(s) under the mattress.
- Repeat procedure on the other side of the bed.
- Place blanket with top at bed head and extend to foot.
- Remove surface wrinkles.
- Fold excess top sheet over top of blanket and cover with spread if desired.
- Put clean pillowcases on pillows. Arrange side by side on top of folded top sheet.
- Take soiled linens to bathroom or laundry.
- If you have linens that are soiled with body fluids (feces, urine, vomit):
 - Put on gloves before handling soiled linens and carry at arm's length (not against your clothing).
 - Put linens in a plastic bag (NOT THE FLOOR) and take them to the bathroom.
 - Rinse the large solids out in the toilet and place the soiled linens back in the plastic bag.
 - Launder immediately, using bleach if linens are white. If the sheets are colored, make sure they are dried completely in the dryer (the heat is as effective as bleach in killing the bacteria).



Note: See Chapter 7, Infection Control, for more instructions on handling infectious waste and soiled linens.

F. CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Be aware of the following issues that may affect how and what you clean:

- Culture affects a person's belief in how things are treated (e.g., money, time, animals).
- Religious beliefs affect holiday observations, cooking, and cleaning and handling of religious artifacts.



G. ACTIVITY: PLANNING AND PRIORITIZING CHORES

Break into groups and discuss the following scenario:

You are assigned to provide eight hours of housekeeping and personal care services for an incontinent client. When you arrive you encounter piles of laundry, dirty floors, soiled bed linens, dirty dishes in the sink, and no food in the refrigerator. The client needs a bath and is hungry but wants to go for a walk in the park. How would you respond to the client's request? How would you organize and prioritize the other chores on your care plan?

What would you do if you only had three hours scheduled?