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Health Care Services

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Care Home Bedroom Mealtime Experience Checklist

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These are relatively simple tips that can improve the bedroom dining experience for the people you support and can make a big difference to their day and their overall wellbeing,

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☐ 1.Offer show plates of menu choices in peoples' rooms or use a menu communication book for those who struggle with verbal communication.

☐ 2. Ensure that meal delivery trays are attractively laid and include the same crockery, cutlery and condiments to complement the meal of choice. Think hospitality!

☐ 3. Take a picture of what a meal tray should look like and introduce this as the quality standard for every meal.

☐ 4. Know your ladies and gent's capabilities at mealtimes so that they are provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery to support independence wherever possible.

☐ 5. Plate meals up as close to delivery as possible to make sure hot food and drinks are still hot when delivered – use heated plates or keep warm plates and insulated mugs and lids to preserve heat.

☐ 6. Food that's hot should always be served one course at a time so it doesn't go cold.

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☐ 7. Check that all meals look appetising and visually appealing. Ask yourself - would I eat this meal? If the answer is no, why would it be good enough for anyone else?

☐ 8. For those on pureed diets, food moulds and food thickener can not only help to dramatically improve meal presentation, but nutritional intake too.

☐ 9. Have a friendly chat when delivering meals to help to lift peoples' spirits and prevent feelings of loneliness.

☐ 10. Open curtains and switch lights on, good lighting is very important for mood and enjoyment of mealtimes, particularly for those with visual impairment.

☐ 11. Your lady or gent should be sitting upright and alert and be ready for their meal before serving to them.

☐ 12. When presenting meals, always describe the food you're serving and ask if any assistance is needed to cut food up into smaller pieces for ease of eating.

☐ 13. Is there a friend or relative who could come in at mealtimes to sit and eat with them, instead of them having to eat alone?

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- [ ] 14. If not, what music do they like? Suggest playing some of their favourite soothing music gently in the background as they eat.

- [ ] 15. Position meals so that they’re within easy reach, directly within the eyeline and there is colour contrast between plate and tray.

- [ ] 16. Make sure mealtimes aren’t rushed and that people are given plenty of time to eat their meals so they can savour and enjoy them.

- [ ] 17. Keep checking back in to see if any additional support, encouragement eating, or second helpings are required.

- [ ] 18. Get feedback at the end of each meal on peoples’ level of enjoyment of their meal, and communicate this to catering staff and management.

If you have found this checklist helpful, why not download our FREE Dignified Dining Solutions Guide, for more tips on how to improve the mealtime experience for people living with dementia.

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