

<p>Status: Guideline: offers direction and guidance on good practice, need not necessarily be strictly adhered to.</p>	<p>Policy No: ADLG 04 Revision No: 0 Date Approved: 01/03/11 Review Date: 01/03/13</p>
<p>Title: Guidelines for assisting a User of a Cheshire Service with Finger and Toenail Care</p>	
<p>Written by: Clinical Practice Project Group</p>	
<p>Approved by: National Risk Management Committee</p>	
<p>Cross Reference: ICG 02, BPH 02</p>	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure appropriate assistance is offered to Cheshire service users with finger and toenail care and to ensure the dignity of the person is respected when staff are providing assistance.

2.0 Scope

These guidelines refer to all Cheshire Services where staff assist service users to care for fingers and toenails. All the activities of daily living are generic, however in line with the Best Possible Health plan, staff will assist service users to discuss their own personal care needs and put actions in place where needed. This will be recorded in the service user's Best Possible Health Personal plan and will be kept in a secure place of the service user's choosing. It will be adapted and updated as the needs of the service user changes.

3.0 Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of all staff involved in assisting service users with finger and toenail care to be familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.
- It is the responsibility of all service managers to ensure staff are familiar with the guidelines and to monitor compliance.

4.0 Definitions

N/A

5.0 Guidelines

Equipment

- Bowl of warm water
- Nail clippers or scissors
- Nail file or emery board
- Hand cream or lotion
- Towel.

Procedure

- All Cheshire service users will be supported to manage their own finger and toenail care. However, in circumstances where this is not possible or the service user chooses not to, Cheshire Ireland will provide support in line with a person centred approach using the Best Possible Health Personal plan. In relation to finger and toenail care, staff will respect the rights of Cheshire service users to be treated with sensitivity and respect as individuals, and to have wishes and opinions in relation to nail care considered fairly (Cheshire Ireland National Consumer Committee, 2004).
- Explain the process to the service user and engage with the service user to ascertain usual nail care habits.

Fingernails

- As per Best Possible Health Personal plan.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly (Ref: Guidelines for Hand Hygiene, ICG 02).
- Ensure adequate privacy.
- Inspect the hands, fingers and nails, being aware of any signs of dryness and the condition of the nails and cuticles.
- If the person has recently had a bath, nail care may continue. If not, soak the hands in a bowl of warm water for 15 minutes. This will soften the nails.
- Clean under the fingernails while the fingers are soaking.
- Remove hands from water and dry thoroughly.
- File torn, broken or rough edges carefully.
- **Carefully and gently trim or file the fingernails level with the top of the finger.**
- The nails can then be smoothed and rounded to the shape of the finger with the nail file/emery board.
- Push the cuticles back gently.
- Apply cream or lotion as appropriate.
- Clean the equipment thoroughly.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

Toenails

It is recommended that service user's toenails are maintained by a chiropodist.

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly (Ref: Guidelines for Hand Hygiene, ICG 02).
- Ensure adequate privacy.
- Inspect the feet and toenails, being aware of any signs of dryness, inflammation or cracking. Also note any calluses or ulcerated areas and the colour and temperature of the feet to assess adequacy of circulation.
- Clean and dry between and under toes.
- **Toenails may be filed. Do not file the corners as this may encourage in-growing nails.**
- Clean the equipment thoroughly.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
- If any problems which are not being treated are highlighted, please identify in Priority Areas for Action for Personal Care. This may require appointments with Chiropodist/Podiatrist to check footwear. (Diabetic Nurse Specialist).

Troubleshooting

- It is essential that feet are protected when mobilising/ transferring to prevent damage from equipment and the environment.
- Relieve pressure (Pressure over a bony prominence like the ankle is often a source of skin breakdown.
- Cracks, calluses, toenail hypertrophy, cuts, burns, cracks and incorrect toenail care can lead to skin breakdown.
- Service users with diabetes must have rapid treatment of all foot problems as they are more likely to get foot/leg ulcers and infection due to decreased sensation in the lower parts of the body.
- Check footplate placement.

6.0 References

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