CRISIS PREVENTION INSTITUTE®

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The 5 Essential Elements

# For Promoting Person-Centered Care

# Person-centered care is all about honoring an individual's unique needs, values, and preferences.

If you work in a care profession, you likely use person-centered approaches every day. This guide will help you discover even more ways to help every person in your care thrive.

**As you read these tips, think about:**

- What does "person-centered" mean to me?
- What does "strength-based" mean to me?
- What do these approaches mean to each person in my care?
- How do I practice these values in my day-to-day work?

And share your thoughts, challenges, and successes—in team meetings, during training sessions, at lunch and learns, online—anytime you're inspired to teach and learn from others!

TIP 1

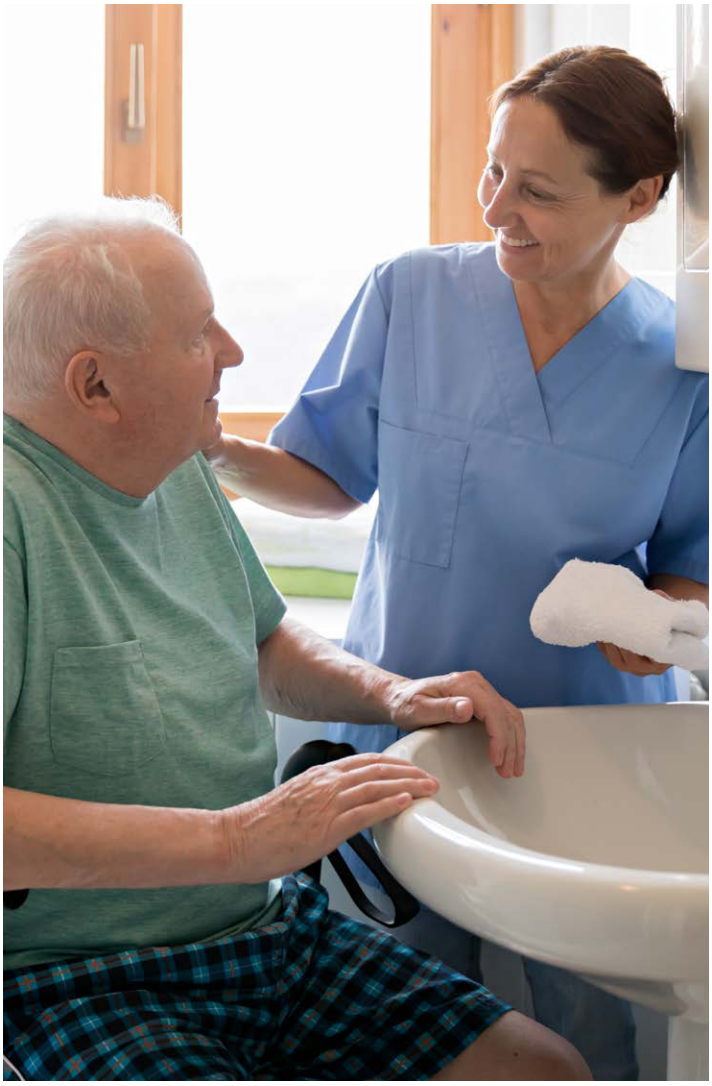
# Get to know the person.

- What's their background?
- What are their interests?
- What are they good at?
- What makes them feel supported?
- What makes them feel happy?
- What makes them feel scared?

To find this out, talk to the person. Greet them by name in a friendly tone. Use supportive body language. Be calm and rational, and treat them like they're calm and rational—even if they're being anything but. Build their trust. Also talk to others: Ask your colleagues, other professionals, the person's family, etc.

The very best way to avoid going hands-on is to avoid the need to restrain in the first place. To do that:

- Be aware of changes in the person's behavior. These can be warning signs of anxiety.
- Use prevention skills. Focus on proxemics and verbal de-escalation.
- Learn how to set limits effectively.
- Get training in how to assess risk.
- Avoid being drawn into power struggles.
- Choose the least restrictive option possible in every situation.



## Ask the person about their preferences.

Offer choices and let the person know you aim to meet their needs. For example, if they don't like to shower in the morning, can you allow them to choose the time of day that feels best for them? If you can offer personalized options and flexibility, you can often avoid unnecessary altercations.

TIP 2

## Look for Causes of Behavior

Behavior is a form of communication. If a person in your care exhibits difficult behavior, seek to understand the function of the behavior. What you might view as a frustrating behavior may actually be a coping mechanism attempt. If your response is understanding and individualized, you can help the person replace problem behavior with positive, productive behavior.

**Some examples:**

- Overstimulating environments (loud dining rooms).
- Staff moving faster than the person can process what's happening (often occurs during ADLs when staff are task-centered).

Common functions of behavior include access, avoidance, and meeting a sensory or emotional need.

## TIP 3

# Start immediately.

Big changes can take time, but ask yourself, what small changes can I make right now for one person to honor their preferences?

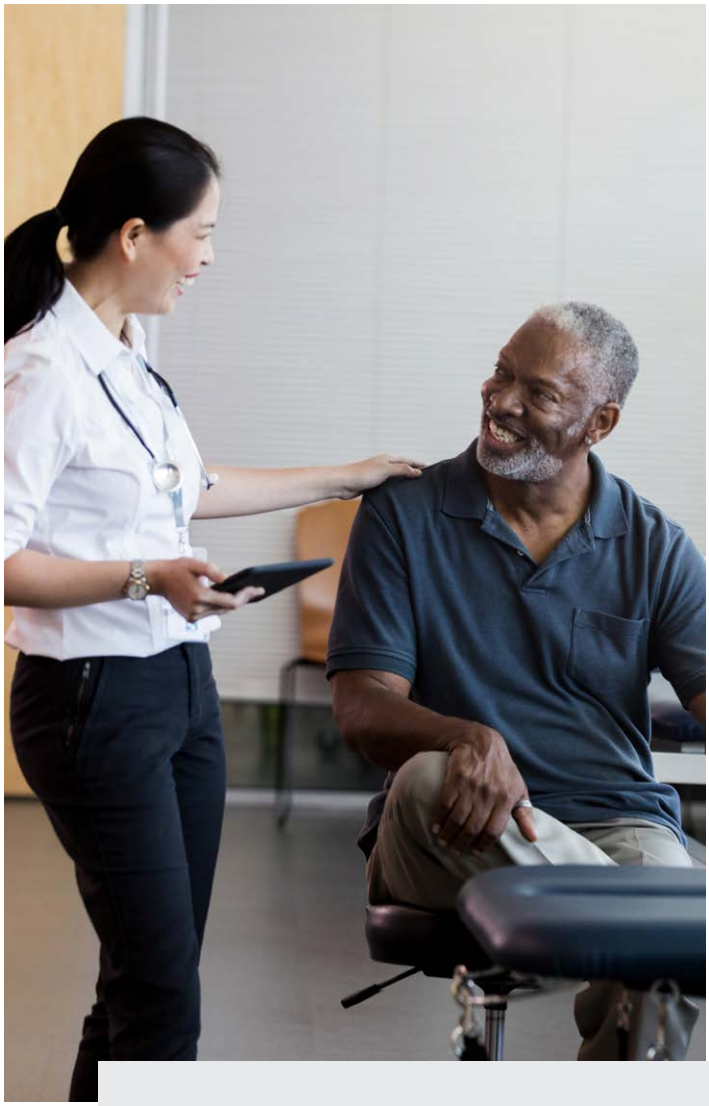
**Some examples include:**

- Changing the shampoo the person uses to something they've used and enjoyed in the past.
- Holding up two blouses and let the person choose what they would like to wear that day.

## TIP 4

# Work with and support staff.

Give staff time to be person-centered – which will require some new learning and new forming of habits for staff at first. Role model for staff what they can do differently, point out & highlight what they already do well that's person-centered. Additionally, staff who are treated in a person-centered way tend to treat the people in their care in a person-centered way – because being person-centered towards staff also means empowering them with the tools to do their job successfully.



When you model person-centered care, you create a cultural shift in how staff and clients interact.

People are more likely to stick with something when they feel that they're supported and rewarded for their hard work.

## TIP 5

# Debrief.

Be sure to debrief after any crisis. This will help you find patterns and triggers—and prevent the situation from reoccurring. It will also help you help the person foster resilience and develop effective coping skills.

### > QUICK LINKS

**Here are more resources to help:**

- A Tool to Assess Risk Behaviors
- How to Avoid Power Struggles
- How to Set Limits [PDF]

## We hope you found this resource helpful.

Please feel free to share this guide with a friend or colleague.

**Have questions? We're here for you!**
Give us a call at 800.558.8976 or email info@crisisprevention.com

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