



Therapeutic Massage Support For The Elderly



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As life spans increase, the number of people requiring long-term health care is also increasing.

Americans will need extended health care services, some of which will be through rehabilitation in nursing care facilities as a result of accident, injury, or to convalesce after a serious illness.

Others will live out their lives in the care of a health care facility, too frail to take care of themselves to live safely at home or they may suffer from a chronic illness and need constant medical attention.

As we know, family care may not be available for various reasons. The move into a health care facility can signal a significant loss of independence and constitutes a major lifestyle change for both the person involved and their family.

Multiple losses combined with decreased mobility and functional impairments frequently lead to depression. Continued stress/depression can lead to muscle spasms, body contractions, restricted movement and rigidity. Physical stress tends to produce more emotional stress, thus setting up a cycle of susceptibility to disease, discomfort and anxiety, which generate feelings of confusion, frustration, isolation, and vulnerability for the elderly and

ill. Such feelings eventually lead to inertia, despondency, withdrawal, and a "failure to thrive" syndrome.

Touch becomes especially important for those confined to health care facilities. It is the longest remaining of our senses. We may lose our eye-site, ability to speak or hear but touch remains a primary means of connection and communication to the surrounding world.

Massage is no longer something we "treat" ourselves to while on vacation or a special occasion to get pampered. Massage therapy has been proven to have beneficial health affects both physically and emotionally. I'd like to emphasize massage is not a 'cure-all' but an adjunctive approach to assist in improving the quality of life for those who receive massage.

Massage in this setting uses the traditional Swedish message strokes and strokes designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals whose skin quality can be very fragile. Massage can be administered to those wheelchair bound and bed-ridden. Side-lying positions, using pillows and towels are used liberally to position individuals comfortably. They remain fully clothed. No special equipment is required. Every precaution is taken to assure safety and maintain one's privacy and dignity.

In general the technique executed is light opened handed compression. Pressure is applied perpendicularly to the skin, thereby preventing tearing of the skin or bruising of the tissues. It works in a way as to cause deep relaxation. It is administered using whole opened hand, the palm, or heel, or base of thumb. Contributing to a feeling of wholeness, of being cared for and acknowledged as a worthwhile human being.

Some additional benefits to those receiving this method of massage:



- Back rubs worked wonders for those confined to wheelchairs, those with chronic pain and those who exhibited irritability or even anger.
- Foot massage proved calming for those exhibiting hyperactive behavior, restlessness, and "wandering" behavior.
- Hand massage or face stroking seemed to help those exhibiting anxiety, worry, sadness and fearfulness.
- Massaging temples, scalp, and forehead helped reduce head-



As we age, the part of our body which have loved, and tended to, those around us become brittle and filled with arthritic pain. Fortunately, there is a loving solution.

aches, and tension, shoulder and neck massage seemed useful for those exhibiting tiredness, irritability or mild upset.

- Improved blood circulation, decrease in blood pressure.
- Improved sleep patterns

In addition, at least half the population in most skilled nursing facilities suffers from some form of dementia. Massage offers therapeutic support for such people by increasing body awareness and helping to ground those who are confused and disoriented. As a therapeutic modality, age-appropriate massage is a cost-effective, non-pharmacological resource for reducing stress, managing challenging behaviors and enhancing quality of life for the elderly and ill, particularly those who reside in a Sub-acute rehab & LTC facility.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AMPUTEE SUPPORT GROUP MONTHLY MEETINGS

2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12TH
 FROM 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
 GUEST SPEAKER FROM DIABETES OUTREACH EDUCATION SYSTEM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9TH
 FROM 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
 GUEST SPEAKER FROM NEW BRUNSWICK MOBILITY

CALL TO ARRANGE FREE TRANSPORTATION TO THE MEETINGS!
 SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR, SHERRI RIDGWAY
 (609) 748-9100, EXT. #189

The Health Center At Galloway

66 West Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway, New Jersey 08201
(609)748-9100

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- Respite Program.

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If you'd like to make a referral, schedule a tour or if you would like additional information, call our Director of Admissions, Sherri Ridgway, at 1-609-748-9100.

