

Oral Hygiene Modifications for the Intellectually & Developmentally Disabled

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Abstract: This program's goal is to inform individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) of the many different tools and ways a toothbrush can be modified to make oral hygiene easier. Different handle modifiers are discussed and demonstrated to show ease of use. According to the American Dental Association, individuals with IDD are more at risk for developing caries due to the lack of motor skills that have been acquired throughout their life span. This program involves individuals who are residents at an independent living center here in Wichita, Kansas. This group of people varies in age, gender, ethnicity, cognitive and physical ability. The independent living center is named Arrowhead West and serves the adult population of our community. There are many different tools available that can help someone with disabilities form a better grip and adapt their toothbrush in their mouth. Electric toothbrushes have been shown to remove plaque better than manual brushes and allow better grip. The IDD individuals were interested in their oral health and actively interacted with the demonstrations. To better understand how well the modifiers are being used and tolerated, a follow up program should be done with the participants and their healthcare aids to assess their oral health. A review of handle modifiers would be helpful in future programs like this. Follow up sessions should be done with both patients and caregivers to ensure that modifiers are being used correctly and proper oral hygiene is being conducted daily.

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