

# SENSITIVITY SKILLS

Body checks used to determine the presence of marks or injuries on people receiving services are an invasive process that should be conducted in a respectful and supportive way. The list below is provided to support training and practicing of sensitivity skills for body checks and other direct care tasks.

## SUGGESTED PRACTICES

### ENVIRONMENT

Conduct the body check in a private and comfortable room. Choose a location that is separate from other people receiving services and has a door that can be closed.

### KNOW THE PERSON

Complete all training on plans of care for people receiving services so staff is familiar with their background, diagnosis, strengths, needs, experiences, preferences, and accessibility needs.

### KNOW YOURSELF

Be aware of your own personal biases, triggers, comfort with the person and/or their diagnoses to maintain a therapeutic approach.

### EMPATHY - PERSPECTIVES

Take part in sensitivity training exercises that will help you better understand the experience of people who are different from you. For example: walk across a room blindfolded, or be fed by another person, or hear challenges that people who are different from you experience.

### EMPATHY - LISTENING & ATTENTIVENESS

Show patience and interest in learning and understanding the person. Show that you are listening by remaining attentive, quiet, and accepting.

### EXPLAIN THE PROCESS

Let the person know you value and respect them. Tell the person what you are doing or planning to do before beginning the body check. For example, "I heard you just fell. It's important that we check your body to know if you hurt yourself."

### OFFER CHOICES

Offer choices. For example, "Would you like to take your shirt off or do you want help?" "I can help with that now or we can wait until Chris is free if you prefer."

### ASK PERMISSION

Ask permission before beginning the body check. For example, "I'd like to take your shirt off so I can do your body check. Is that okay with you?"

### EMPATHY - ACKNOWLEDGE MISTAKES

Apologize when mistakes are made. For example, "I am sorry that I touched the controls on your wheelchair without asking first.", "I am sorry that I did not explain why I took that picture and who will see it."

### EMPATHY - REFLECT & VALIDATE

*Reflect* what you hear or see the person communicating. For example, "I see you pulling away. Do you need me to do something differently?", "I heard you say you want Yolanda to help you instead...". *Validate* the person. For example, "I can understand why you feel more comfortable with more familiar staff. Do you want me to ask Yolanda if she can help you instead?"