

CMI

**CASE
MANAGEMENT
MAGAZINE**

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**Major
Trauma
Awareness
Week
2025**

**Giving hope
to survivors of
life-changing
injury**

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The Value of Showering



Joanna Sale, director of **Dignity Access**, explores the importance of being able to shower independently for individuals who have experienced a traumatic injury, and the impact it can have on an individual's physical and mental wellbeing >



WHAT DO YOU NORMALLY THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU ARE IN THE SHOWER?

Probably your plans for the day, chewing over a particular problem that's troubling you or perhaps the ending of the TV series you watched last night. It's certainly something most of us take for granted and don't consider too closely.

That's until it's taken away from you or someone close to you is in hospital 'enjoying' the unique experience of a bed bath. It's very much the case for those who have had a sudden trauma, physical or mental, that has turned their life upside down and presented them with a whole new raft of challenges. These are people who have had no time to plan or adjust that case managers and the professional healthcare team, are trying to help.

SPEED IN DELIVERING SUPPORT IMPACTS POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Whatever the condition, we know that speed is proven to be everything when it comes to restoring dignity, improving morale and expediting recovery. It's also good for case managers to be able to provide some quick answers and begin to develop the trust and relationship with a new client. At times of trauma and vulnerability, these clients will likely be on high alert to find professionals that they can trust and if they don't feel it, they might become despondent and difficult to engage. So, why is speed so important in providing that independence and dignity? Essentially, it has a bigger impact on the outcome in a variety of ways.

VERY RECENTLY THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK AND FOUNDATIONS UNDERTOOK THE BATH-OUT 2 STUDY, LOOKING AT THE EFFECTS OF TIMELY, SWIFT ADAPTATIONS IN PROVIDING A WALK-IN SHOWER.

- **The first was improved physical wellbeing. Participants who received adaptations more quickly reported significantly better physical wellbeing scores and they demonstrated measurable improvements in their daily lives.**
- **There was a 70% reduction in falls, reducing hospital admissions and the associated strain on healthcare services.**
- **There was increased independence. The ability to bathe independently improved dramatically, with the bathing-specific independence rising nearly tenfold.**
- **And it was a cost-effective solution. Faster installations saved an average of £1,100 per person in health and social care costs. That's exactly how much it costs a day for a typical inpatient treatment in a spinal injury unit equating to nearly £8,000 a week.**

Being able to wash yourself is a fundamental need in life – particularly at such vulnerable times. At Dignity Access, we've come across so many people who have had to wash themselves in the kitchen sink, in front of others, or even with the garden hose for want of suitable accessible bathing. ➤



“
It gave Luke so much independence and dignity at a difficult time which was crucial”

LUKE WAS WASHING WITH THE GARDEN HOSE

This was very much the case with Luke who was paralysed at 18 by a hit and run who mounted a pavement when he was at university. Before he had his WashPod interim accessible wetroom, he was washing in the garden with the garden hose.

Luke had a large external WashPod for six years, which gave him plenty of room in which to manoeuvre and was bolted directly onto his bedroom to give the space and privacy he needed.

His mother commented: “It gave Luke so much independence and dignity at a difficult time which was crucial”.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL BENEFITS OF SHOWERS

Warm showers help stimulate circulation, relax tense muscles, and relieve stiffness, turning a simple daily act into a powerful tool for physical and emotional wellbeing. Recent studies have shown that warm water can ease muscle spasms, increase flexibility, and boost blood flow - supporting the delivery of oxygen and nutrients needed for cellular repair and recovery.

Regular washing and showering offer more than just physical benefits - they also play a powerful role in supporting mental health. Warm water can help calm the nervous system, reduce anxiety, and create a soothing sense of routine during stressful times. This effect is partly due to the release of endorphins which are the “feel-good” hormones triggered by warm water that promote a sense of wellbeing.

Seth suffered a spinal injury following a road traffic accident when he was 18 and spent two years in Salisbury District Hospital and the spinal injury unit there. His mother said that he is a proud youngster who takes an interest in his appearance, and during his hospital stay he dreamt of being able to shower properly and get himself clean and presentable.

“When he was in hospital, he said that what he needed most when he came out, was to be able to have a shower every day. So, I started hunting on the internet to find something suitable, which is where the WashPod came in”.

An Internal Micro WashPod was installed in the kitchen, just a couple of days before Seth came home and it’s been a ‘big positive’ in his transition.

“I see him in the shower with water running over his face and I can see how much he is enjoying every drop of water. It’s a real morale booster for him, allowing him to feel clean and good. He can do his hair. He feels fresh and it sets him up for the day. It makes him feel human again,” says Julie. >

SHOWERING

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Whatever the circumstances, although being able to wash yourself becomes incredibly important at these difficult times, disruption in the home can also be very upsetting. Having a solution that can be quickly and easily provided is a huge bonus.

THE MEDICAL BENEFITS OF SHOWERING

For amputees, regular and safe cleansing of the residual limb (stump) is essential to prevent infection, inflammation, and skin breakdown. It's recommended to wash, clean, and thoroughly dry the area daily as part of a consistent hygiene routine.

And this was a real issue for Steve, who is an amputee who lost his lower leg in a traffic accident when he was involved in a collision with a car when he was driving his Vespa motorbike.

He was able to return home from hospital, but there were no suitable washing facilities and he was using a commode. Not only was Steve coping with this loss of independence and self-esteem but he was getting into trouble at the hospital.

He said: "Every time I returned to have my wound dressed, I was berated by the nurses as I wasn't washing my stump properly; it's all part of the healthy tissue recovery to shower it diligently."

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I was able to have a shower for the first time in three months which felt fantastic and I didn't have to rely on my girlfriend for help. What's more, the doctors were happy with me”



In a great display of teamwork, the other driver's solicitor introduced Steve's solicitor to WashPod and within a couple of weeks his washing facilities had improved.

Steve commented: "I really loved my WashPod. I was able to have a shower for the first time in three months which felt fantastic and I didn't have to rely on my girlfriend for help. What's more, the doctors were happy with me."

There's obviously a price to pay with any adaptation but what price do you put on independence? As the Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori said: "Human dignity is derived from a sense of independence and the essence of independence is being able to do something for oneself."

A shower is definitely something you take for granted until it's taken away.

To find out more about WashPod visit:
DignityAccess.co.uk