

Oral Care for People Living with Dementia: Supporting Care Staff

Oral care education and training are recommended for long-term care staff. They often lead to better oral health for older adults. When coaching or oral health championing is also provided, the benefits last longer.

Coaches are usually educators or oral health professionals, such as dentists. **Champions** are often staff who provide day-to-day care.

What Does a Coach Do?

After an oral health education program, a **coach** may:

- Visit the location once every 1-2 weeks
- Watch staff while they are providing daily oral hygiene (practice of keeping the mouth healthy, e.g., brushing)
- Answer questions and provide support
- Review training when needed
- Be available by phone or email to answer questions between visits
- Meet with administrators to discuss the education program and improvements in the oral health of those receiving care



Make sure to follow your work rules on glove use.

Consider Having a Champion

Another way to help staff use what they learned about oral health is to have a staff **champion**. The champion may receive additional education and be in a leadership role.

A **champion** is someone who will:

- Encourage staff to complete oral hygiene daily
- Be available to help staff in completing oral hygiene
- Ensure that oral care supplies are stocked and kept in good order
- Be the main contact for the coach and administrators



For more information related to oral health education, see the [Brushing Up Facilitator's Guide](#) and [Video Series](#).

