i Know . . .
- Older adults with dementia have the poorest oral health
- Oral health worsens as dementia becomes more severe
- More prone to oral infections
- Experience problems with dry mouth, reduced saliva, swallowing, drooling.
- Pocketing of food in mouth
- Increasingly rely on others to prompt or do their oral care
- Increasingly refuse oral care
- Difficulty wearing dentures
- Difficulty communicating their needs (e.g. oral pain)
- At risk for weight loss due to poor oral health
- Pocketing of food in mouth
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Oral Hygiene-Dementia 3

### i Tell...
- **Techniques to Help Deal with Refusal Behaviours**
  - Review the oral care plan/routine
  - Assemble supplies. Wear gloves
  - Explain what you plan to do
  - Talk them through the oral care steps
  - Encourage self-care when possible
  - Use high quality toothbrushes with rubberized large handles, small heads with soft bristles
  - Post reminders if they can do self-care
  - Keep a positive respectful approach
  - Make sure they are awake, not sleepy
  - If better, do oral care with a second PSW
  - Place in a good position for oral care, better in washroom
  - Massage the cheeks to relax muscles, stroke the face
  - Know what time of day is best for them for oral care
  - Distract them by placing washcloth or favourite item in their hands, talking, singing to them
  - Hand-over-their-hand to guide oral care
  - Have them hold a toothbrush while you brush their teeth
  - New toothbrush every 3 months

### i Do...
- **Preparation**
  - Keep a positive respectful approach
  - Post reminders if they can do self-care
  - Encourage self-care when possible
  - Use pea-sized amounts of fluoridated toothpaste or none with severe dementia
  - New toothbrush every 3 months

### i Share...
- **We'd like to hear from you!**
  - **www.rgpc.ca**
  - New topics?
  - Feedback
  - Phone: 905.777.3837 x12436
  - Email: sagel@hhsc.ca or dhm9@xplornet.com