



The spa treatment

At many communities, staff and residents dread the thought of bath time. Yet bathing is intrinsically enjoyable and relaxing. One way to restore its appeal: adopting a spa like approach.

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Bathing does not have to be a stressful time for your residents. In fact, bringing a spa like experience to your community can make a huge difference, as John Andrews reports



A positive

Taking a warm bath should be an enjoyable experience. Along with its hygienic benefits, a comfortable bath should be a soothing, relaxing time that allows the bather to unwind and take a respite from the day's demands.

Yet enabling residents of a congregate care environment such as a nursing home or assisted living community to have such a positive bathing atmosphere can pose a number of challenges. Selecting the appropriate bathing time, determining the resident's readiness, coordinating the proper scheduling, ensuring privacy, maintaining plentiful supplies and keeping equipment in working order are all essential to providing a pleasant, dignified bathing session.

Perhaps the most important factor is the facility's commitment to making dignified bathing a high priority. In consultant Elaine Griswold's view, creating a positive bathing routine is part of an overall industry trend of culture change.

"The culture change movement in the long-term care setting has enhanced facilities' bathing programs with more attention to the bathing surroundings, individualization of resident preferences and promoting a more positive experience for residents," said Griswold, a registered nurse and founder of Lebanon, OR-based Best Practices in Long-Term Care. "The facilities that are promoting culture change to the best of their abilities and resources are the ones where their residents are experiencing the more positive bathing experiences."

Griswold sees a sweeping change among the nation's long-term care facilities in their approach to bathing.

"Some, without the monetary resources available, are doing what they can by painting the shower rooms, putting up decorations, silk plants and cheerful shower curtains," she said. "Many small, old facilities do not have whirlpool baths, but they

are doing the best with what they have available in order to provide a more positive experience for their residents.

"Other facilities with more monetary resources are putting in spa tub rooms with more elaborate designs, televisions, furniture, warm towel racks, music and aroma therapy to promote the positive experience."

Eliminate the negative

Even the most conscientious caregiver can encounter circumstances that lead to a resident having a negative bathing experience. To get a detailed sense of how a bathing session can go wrong, Griswold asked a group of CNAs to share some of their worst episodes. They include:

- Staff having too many baths scheduled during one shift without additional assistance.
- Staff members feeling rushed to get their work done without having the time to complete the bath in a relaxed manner; this increases resident agitation, promotes a negative attitude and increases the likelihood of injuries.
- Not having the allotted time or other staff assistance. "Working short" does not promote a positive bathing experience.
- Supplies, towels, soap are not in an appropriate quantity or of good quality.
- Water temperatures are too cold or too hot.
- Not having the right equipment or it is not in good working order.

"There are many examples of negative bathing experiences where residents are yelling, screaming and striking out at staff members," Griswold said. "Residents can be injured from faulty equipment, incurring skin tears, bruises and falls. Every facility has these experiences; they are not uncommon and have been occurring throughout the years," she says.

experience

Penner Patient Care

Bathing simplified

Having the right equipment is crucial to the success of a facility's dignified bathing program. That is why Aurora, NE-based Penner Bathing Systems is focused on developing a product line that fosters positive bathing, said Vice President Kirk Penner.

"Bathing systems in the market today have one function – to bathe the resident," he said. "The difference with Penner is we simplified that process for both staff and residents. Our spas have no complicated computer boards, the controls are easy to use and the integrated transfer systems designed specifically for our spas have made the bathing process easier. Moreover, our products are designed to be easy to maintain. There is no need for certified service technicians; if it isn't easy to replace or isn't a reliable component, we do not use it in our systems."

A classy, elegant spa room is an attraction residents really appreciate at the newly constructed Courtyard Terrace in Hebron, NE, says Administrator Michelle Plock.

"The Penner spa provides a new level of comfort for our residents and they absolutely enjoy it," Plock added.

Function also follows form with the spa, as residents have found it to be very easy to enter and exit, said Plock.

In business since 1980, Penner's approach to the bathing marketplace is to create a product line that surpasses customer expectations in design, functionality and durability. Since introducing its first whirlpool spa in 2000, the company has strived to create the most comprehensive and innovative line of bathing systems in the industry.

Kirk Penner maintains that today's market demands a higher level of design and performance.

"When we first developed our products, we took existing concepts in the market and made them better," he said. "Since that point we have moved to taking the products we developed and making them less institutional and more home like. We listened to the marketplace."

Hearing what their customers want, Penner has focused on producing spas that dispense with electronic bells and whistles and instead emphasize performance.

"New technology is fine to a point," Penner said, "but many times new technology comes with a price and in the end, our customers are looking for a reliable product to bathe their residents at a reasonable cost. We see ourselves as leaders and innovators in the industry. Penner gives a nursing home or assisted

Gofigure

5 Penner is the only company to offer a five-year limited warranty on its bathing equipment.

15 Penner offers 15 models, which have been designed to accommodate differing tastes and budgets.

30 Penner has been in the bathing business for 30 years.

living community the ability to choose a product that best accommodates the needs of the staff and residents. One spa does not fit all."

Spring House Estates, an ACTS Retirement-Life Community, has three Penner systems in its community. "Penner offers a variety of systems that can be tailored to the specific needs of our residents," said Executive Director Holly Schade.

"Residents and staff love the built-in reservoir that fills up the tub with warm water in a matter of minutes, as opposed to having the resident sit in the tub waiting for it to fill up," she said.

"In addition, the appearance of the spa system makes it a much more welcoming and home-like experience. Having the LCD with the DVD player enables us to provide a tranquil environment with playing spa music and scenery. This enables the residents to relax and enjoy the whole spa-like experience."

Proper equipment usage

Equipping a bathing area also extends to providing the right number of shower chairs, gurneys and transfer lifts for the staff to use, Griswold said.

"Too few pieces of equipment can cause delays in time and increase frustration among residents and staff waiting to get into the tub or bath," she said. "It is also the facility's responsibility to provide specialized bathing equipment to meet all of the residents' needs. If there is an oversized piece of equipment required for resident use, it must be provided."

Equipment should be in good working order, but if a breakdown occurs, it should be fixed immediately before an accident can happen.

Accentuate the positive

Creating a positive bathing experience begins with meeting the resident's preferences and expectations, Griswold said. Scheduling is a very important aspect. That entails setting the time of day and how many times a week the resident likes to bathe.

"It is essential that the facility establish a routine – especially for residents with dementia," she said.

Keeping a positive attitude is also critical for staff members, Griswold said, and they should always provide a relaxed environment for the resident.

Supplies should be prepared ahead of the bath, including warm towels, shampoo, soap and fresh clothing. To create a warm ambience, Griswold suggests using faux candlelight, soft music and aroma therapy.

"The end result of a positive bathing experience is a happy resident," she said. ■

Penner Spas

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than any other company.

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Customer-designed bathing spas
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6 Unique Features

Penner offers six advantages, notes the firm's president

1 Low cost of ownership. Penner spas come with a five-year warranty. They were designed from the beginning to be dependable. In addition, parts are easy to replace.

2 Home like feel. Penner spas are available in many colors and customers are able to choose the design and style that's preferred. No more white, institutional-looking bath tubs!

3 Easy to operate. Penner spas do not use complicated computer boards to operate. All controls are easily accessible and the components were chosen to be simple, dependable and reliable.

4 Marketing advantage. Penner spas are home like and have become the highlight of many facility tours. Set your community apart from the white institutional bath house in the nursing home down the street and show families how they are going to enjoy a relaxing spa!

“Bathing should be an enjoyable, relaxing activity for residents and staff.”

*Lee Penner
President
Penner Patient Care*

5 Reliable. Penner spas were developed using three-repeated criteria: ease of operation, low cost of ownership and dependability. There are no expensive electronics to replace. Instead, your community can rely on proven components. Plus the parts come with a five-year limited warranty.

6 A proven product. The only true way to know that what you make is what your client wants is repeat business. Penner knows from our repeat business and from the continued relationships with both large and small operators that we have a proven product that is both attractive and is saving facilities money. All Penner products are listed with Underwriters Laboratories and are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Plus, our spas are proudly made in the United States of America!

A wide-ranging line of products

CASCADE™

The **CASCADE™ Premier Standard** is shown in cherry wood grain. It is also available in walnut or oak wood grain. Your residents can enjoy the ultimate experience while watching TV, a DVD or listening to soothing music.



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The **CASCADE™ End-Opening Series with Aqua-Aire®** is designed to give the resident a comfortable and dignified bath. The resident faces forward, maintaining contact with the care-giver.



PACIFIC™

The **PACIFIC™ series** is a unique height adjustable recumbent bathing system. The **PACIFIC™** is wider, longer and deeper, giving residents the full benefits of a bathing system. Available with Penner Aqua-Aire®.



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For more information about Penner Patient Care, call (800) 732-0717 or (866) 736-6377
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**Penner offers more models
and more features
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Over 25 models

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