

Fundamental care is the foundation of a successful healthcare system. Prioritising the fundamentals — such as, safety, dignity, mobility, nutrition, and respect — ensures that every individual receives the essential care they deserve, no matter the clinical condition or setting.

WHY FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTAL CARE

When we invest in fundamental care, we reduce risks, prevent avoidable complications, and minimise errors. Improving fundamental care can lower hospital readmission rates, reduce the incidence of infections, and decrease the need for costly interventions, leading to significant cost reductions. Focusing on fundamental care not only enhances patient safety and well-being but also boosts staff retention, creating healthier, more resilient organisations. These efficiencies translate into better resource utilisation and financial savings for healthcare organisations.

As leaders, your commitment to strengthening the fundamentals of care is essential. It's not just about improving individual experiences — it's about transforming healthcare systems to deliver safe, compassionate, and cost-effective care for all. Let's lead the change and make fundamental care the foundation of every healthcare encounter.

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The ILC is a global organisation dedicated to transforming care by valuing and prioritising person-centred fundamental care. Its mission is to embed person-centred fundamental care into everyday practice, by reshaping care education, research, advocacy and relevant care-related policies.

What high-quality Fundamental Care looks like

For the person receiving care

Improves Patient Outcomes: Ensuring timely care reduces delays and prevents serious complications.

Prevents Fatalities: Addressing concerns and needs early can prevent tragic outcomes, such as deaths from overlooked deterioration.

Supports Patient-Centred Care: Encouraging active listening to patients and families, fosters trust and improves satisfaction.

For the person providing care

Reduces Workload Stress: Prioritising the delivery of essential, person-centered care, helps to reduce burnout and stress from dealing with complex, unmet patient needs.

Enhances Team Collaboration: Emphasising teamwork and clear communication, fosters a supportive work environment where staff feel valued and engaged.

Recognises and Supports: Acknowledging the importance of staff roles leads to improved morale and increased retention.

Improves the Work Environment: Providing the tools, training, and resources necessary to deliver fundamental care creates a safer, more efficient work environment.

For healthcare organisations and systems

Reduces Healthcare Costs: Preventing prolonged hospital stays and additional treatments caused by missed fundamental care needs.

Enhances Communication: Promoting better communication between healthcare teams, ensures all care aspects are addressed.

Addresses Staffing Shortages: Ensuring that even in understaffed settings, essential care needs are met effectively.

Promotes Quality Care Culture: Embedding fundamental care as the norm, creates a consistent and high-standard approach across healthcare settings.

What high-quality Fundamental Care looks like

Ensuring high-quality fundamental care within and across healthcare systems is not a simple task. It requires:

- effective leadership and a supportive culture at all levels,
- healthcare professionals with advanced knowledge and skills to expertly navigate the complexities of modern healthcare environments and address people's physical and psychosocial needs in ways tailored to their unique circumstances,
- education systems and initiatives that value fundamental care and support students and healthcare professionals to enhance their skills in this area; and
- a rigorous evidence base that demonstrates how fundamental care should be delivered and taught and the impacts of this for care recipients, healthcare professionals and students, and organisations and systems.

Investing in enhanced fundamental care is vital for ensuring the sustainability of our healthcare systems into the future.

References

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