

Section 5

Basic strategies for everyday living

Overview

For someone with challenges, sorting out the basics of life can sometimes be difficult and limit the person's quality of life. Without the basics it is hard to feel good about oneself, get out of the house in an organized way, and get on with important aspects of life—in leisure, friendships and work. However, these areas are not necessarily problems for everyone with schizophrenia: while some people may find certain basics of life challenging, others may not at all.

With or without a mental illness, no one sets laundry and using the toilet as life goals. So, when working on basics like these, always discuss them as a step to a more important life goal: time with friends, finding a romantic partner, working, getting to temple, going on a road trip. (For example, it will be easier to get a date if your clothes are clean and you have bathed.) This will help the person feel motivated to keep working on these strategies.

With some people, you might work on one or two basics at the same time as a higher-level task, as outlined in Section 6. With others, it's best to start simply with one or two basic tasks.

Try things, and consider strategies together. Most importantly, discuss, find common ground about where you and they hope this effort might lead, and then dive into the details.

We provide information about strategies in four different ways:

- For each activity, we provide a list of supplies your relative will need.
- We include illustrations with suggested supports for each activity, and a numbered list beneath them that provides additional information about how your relative could use the supports in their own home.
- You can download for free everything you see here—all of the signs, checklists, forms and even icons to make your own posters—from our website **www.schizophreniafamilystrategies.com**.
- You can review the accompanying videos in which actors demonstrate how the strategies work in real world environments, also at **www.schizophreniafamilystrategies.com**.

Your relative doesn't need to implement all these suggestions at the same time—that would probably be overwhelming! The illustrations and numbered lists below each one are there to give ideas about how to lay out the agreed strategies. Some of these strategies will be more relevant for people who have trouble getting started on an activity. Others may be more relevant for people who don't have trouble getting started, but who have trouble staying organized: these people can get distracted and off track once things are in motion.

In the lists of supplies and the illustrated list of strategies, we also use symbols (like the symbols in a menu for spicy food or vegetarian options) to highlight strategies particularly relevant to those who have trouble getting started **TGS** and those who have trouble staying organized **TSO**. For some activities, we also break out “trouble getting started” and “trouble staying organized” strategies into separate illustrations and numbered lists.

Feel free to mix it up, though. Be creative. Some “trouble getting started” strategies might be also helpful for people who get disorganized. Remember, this is a big experiment that you are working on together. Through trial and error, you will find out what works best for your loved one!

Bathing

Proper hygiene is critical to being with others and staying healthy.

For everyone, no matter what struggles might be happening, it is difficult to have a decent quality of life if bathing isn't being taken care of. Here we list the supplies you might find helpful with the suggested strategies and some comments about celebrating successes.



Let's start with supplies

Ideally, people will have bathing supplies that they like the look and smell of, that are in a convenient and obvious place, and are stored in a way that is easy to keep organized. Once you have your supplies, you will need to check periodically to make sure soap dispensers, shampoo and other bath amenities aren't empty or misplaced.

Here is a list of some potentially useful supplies (this will vary depending on the particular difficulties the person has).

In the bathroom: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Soap	Fragrant soap can help prompt people to wash. Bar soap TSO lasts longer than liquid soap TGS	
Shampoo	Pre-measure for single use or use travel-sized shampoo TSO if person takes too much at a time	
Shower caddy	Alternative: a colourful basket that will fit on a peg in the shower	
Loofah or other rough-textured sponge TSO	Can help people who might forget to wash parts of their body	
A terry cloth robe TGS	Robe is useful if the person tends not to dry off properly	
Audio recorder or laminated checklist with step-by-step instructions for showering	Checklist in shower with step-by-step instructions for washing hair: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wet hair 2. Apply small amount of shampoo to palm of hand 3. Lather hair 4. Rinse hair so no shampoo is left. 	
Waterproof timer or talking alarm clock TSO	Reminds person how long they've been in the shower	
Music player or radio TGS	Makes the showering experience more engaging and pleasant	
Slip-proof shower mat	For safety	
Laminated signs	For example, a sign saying "Do I have all my supplies?" or a sign saying "Take shower" TGS posted on the wall near the shower	
LEGEND: TGS trouble getting started TSO trouble staying organized		



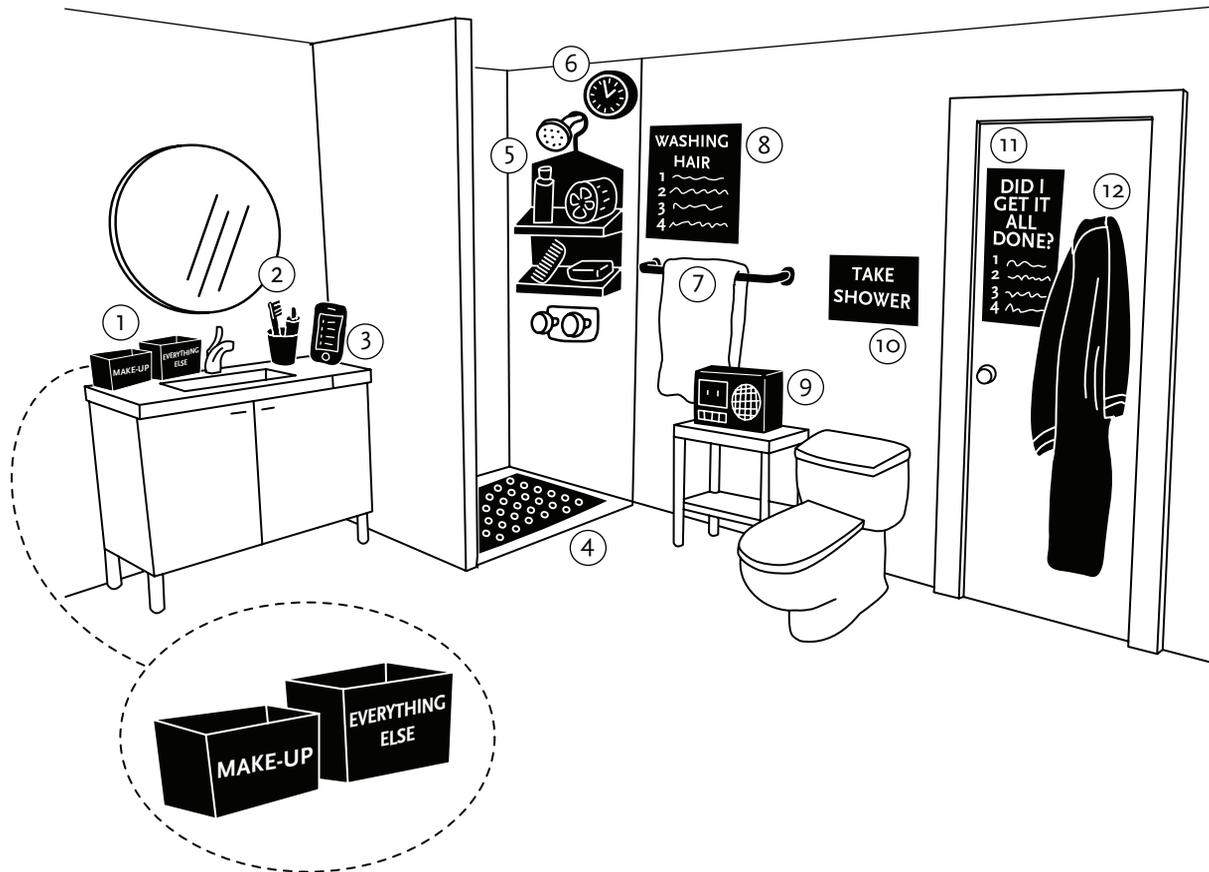
Strategies

The first step is to discuss the importance of bathing and have the person recognize it as a step to reaching life goals. (For example, if dating is a goal, they need to recognize that it is harder to get a date with body odour and greasy hair.)

After this conversation, you will have a rough sense whether their challenges relate to getting started or to getting disorganized once they start showering. You can then begin to work through the strategies listed below.

You'll find that some strategies work, while others do not or are less relevant. Mix it up if you have to: you might need to pull strategies from both categories (trouble getting started and trouble staying organized) if the person has difficulties in both areas. Keep in mind that an uncluttered space is helpful, particularly for people who have trouble staying organized. This includes removing any unneeded objects from the shower stall.

Bathing



1. Organize makeup in one container and other bathroom supplies in another. These can be put on the counter or next to the sink.
2. Put toothbrush in a toothbrush holder. Use travel-sized tubes of toothpaste **TSO** if over-use is an issue for a person with more challenges.
3. Put an audio recorder or smartphone with step-by-step instructions next to the tub or shower. For people with more challenges, have more steps.
4. Use a slip-proof shower mat.
5. Hang a shower caddy over the showerhead at eye level for soap, loofah and travel-sized shampoo bottle. (Use liquid soap **TGS**; use bar soap **TSO** if the person tends to use too much soap.)
6. Set a hanging shower clock over faucet to go off after 10 minutes to prompt the person to finish shower. **TSO**
7. Install a towel rack in view of shower.
8. Laminate and tape step-by-step instructions for washing hair to the bathroom wall.
9. Provide a music player or radio in the bathroom to make bathing more enjoyable. **TGS**
10. Put a sign over the toilet: “Take shower.” **TGS**
11. Put a sign on the bathroom door: “Did I get it all done—shower, shave and everything between?”
12. Supply a terry cloth robe that dries the person without much effort. **TGS**



Celebrating successes

Point out specific examples of how your relative’s social life has improved as their hygiene gets better:

Your skin looks so healthy and your hair looks really nice and shiny since you started showering every day. Do you want me to pick up some of that styling gel you like?

Not being dressed appropriately can affect people’s first impressions of you, and can be particularly challenging if the people you are meeting are your employers or people you are hoping will become friends

Dressing

Getting dressed is about a lot more than simply putting your clothes on. There are considerations around:

- finances: having decent clothing that your relative wants or needs can mean careful shopping (thrift shopping can be fun!)
- social demands: judging what to wear based on weather or level of formality or dressiness can be tricky for some people—and so can having the energy or caring enough to be bothered
- organization: keeping clothes clean and organized in the living space can also be a challenge.



Let's start with supplies

You may need your own checklist of items to help get things underway!

Here is a list of some potentially useful supplies, which will vary depending on the person's particular needs.

Getting dressed: What do I need?

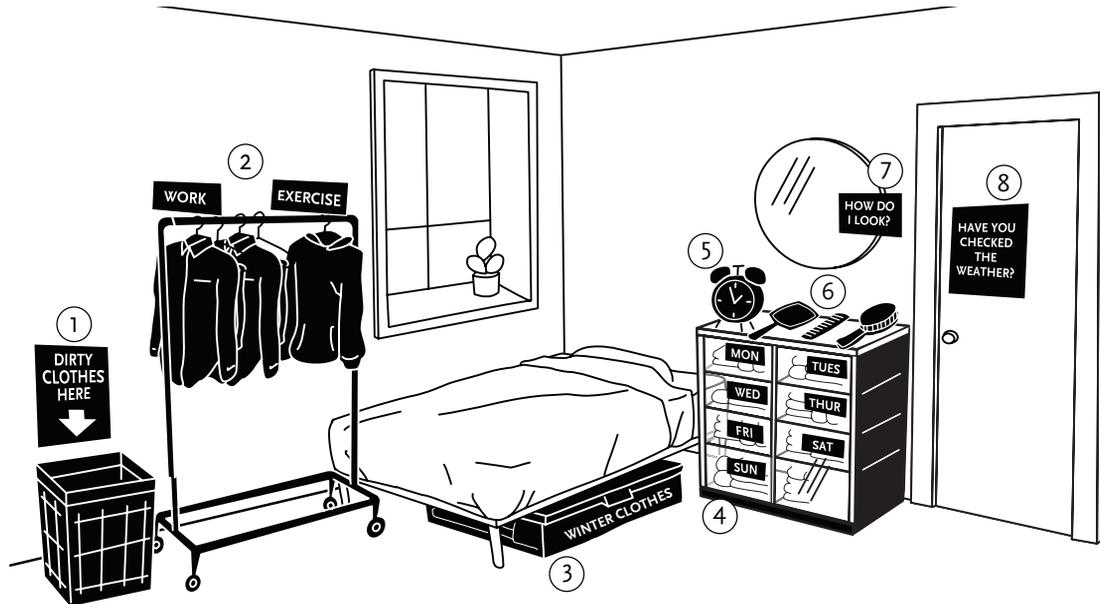
SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Clear storage bin	Alternative: portable rack ^{TSO} or something similar to organize clothes (if needed, you could have seven sections—one for each day of the week)	
Voice-activated alarm ^{TGS}	The voice alarm could prompt, for example: "Time to get dressed"	
Laundry hamper	Could have two—one for darks and one for lights ^{TSO}	
Photo of the person dressed well, for comparison ^{TSO}	Placed on vanity mirror.	
Sign listing things to check about clothes before you go out	Put on wall next to the key rack.	
Containers that fit under the bed ^{TSO}	You can use these to put winter clothes away in summer, and summer clothes in winter	
LEGEND: ^{TGS} trouble getting started ^{TSO} trouble staying organized		



Strategies

Here are some specific environmental supports targeted either to people who have trouble getting started or those who have trouble staying organized. As with bathing, it's okay to mix and match these ideas! Not everyone's difficulties fit neatly into one of these categories.

Getting dressed



1. Put out a laundry hamper for dirty clothes with a sign that reads “Dirty clothes here.” You could start by placing the hamper where dirty clothes tend to be dumped. **TGS**
2. Organize by outfit and put each on a separate hanger on a moveable clothing rack (e.g., workout clothes: running shoes, sweat pants, T-shirt). **TSO**
3. To reduce clutter in drawers and closets, make sure winter clothes are put away in summer and vice-versa. **TSO**
4. Set up clear plastic drawers to organize clothes by day of the week. (These will need to be restocked weekly.)
5. Use regular alarm clock or voice alarm for reminder to get dressed. **TGS**
6. Ensure that things on the dresser are organized neatly (e.g., comb, brush).
7. Put a sign on the mirror: “How do I look?”
8. Encourage a routine that includes checking the weather before dressing.

Additional strategies

These are for people with more challenges who may need extra supports.

Organizing clothes

- Consider together what is needed and what needs to go. Then shop together for clothes that the person will enjoy wearing and that fit the budget.
- Make up outfits, folding pants around (for example) a shirt, underwear and socks. Put each outfit in a separate plastic drawer, organized by day of the week.
- Colour-code garments that go together (e.g., red-tagged pants go only with shirts that have a red tag). If a rack works better (e.g., if the person tends to not use drawers or bins), organize clothes by day on a portable rack in an obvious place.
- Provide lists of clothing appropriate for specific activities and/or weather conditions (e.g., baseball: sweat pants, T-shirt, tennis shoes, sports socks, cap; cold weather: pants, long-sleeved shirt, socks, closed shoes, coat).

Talk with your loved one about how to provide feedback in a way that will seem supportive and not overly critical

Helping to dress to impress

- Take a photo of the person dressed well and put it by their mirror so they can compare how they're dressed to the picture.
- Place a sign on the mirror asking if the person is dressed properly (e.g., "Is my fly zipped, is my shirt buttoned, is everything clean, will I be too hot or cold, am I happy with what I'm wearing?").
- Use an audio-recorded message for the dressing sequence. Go through the dressing sequence in exactly the same order each day to help the person develop a habit.

Providing feedback

- Talk with your loved one about how you can provide feedback in a way that is supportive rather than critical. For example, you could both rate how much you like a given item of clothing on a five-point scale. If neither of you like something, you could agree to donate it to charity. (Hold off making decisions when there is a lot of disagreement.)



Celebrating successes

Call attention to compliments as they come up:

Aunt Diane said the other day that she thought you were looking really sharp lately and you seemed more confident about yourself. I think so too. What do you think about that?

Celebrate when dressing is going well by going out for coffee or lunch or on a shopping trip together, or by giving a genuine compliment. Or give your loved one a small gift card to buy something special. Alternatively, you could suggest going out to show off the new look.

Dental hygiene

Dental hygiene is another basic task that might not seem like a priority but has major implications—from toothache and bleeding gums (creating problems that can be costly to resolve) to bad breath and feeling self-conscious about smiling. Challenges can include not having the right supplies, not brushing properly, getting distracted, losing supplies and forgetting to brush daily.

Helping to schedule dental check-ups is a good way to help the person to stay on top of their brushing. And reducing clutter and removing distractions around dental supplies can really help people avoid getting distracted from brushing partway through.

Here are a few other suggestions for developing a healthy dental routine at home.



Let's start with supplies

The first step is to make sure your relative has all the necessary dental supplies. They can be put in a basket right in front of the mirror or attached to it by a suction cup.

You may need a checklist to keep track of things you'll need, and you may want to add brushing to other hygiene lists.

In the bathroom: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Toothbrush	Could be an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer to ensure thorough brushing ^{TGS} (or you could use a regular toothbrush and a separate timer)	
Toothpaste	You could use toothpaste with a flip cap (if the person often forgets to replace the lid), single-use toothpaste packets or sponge tips with pre-applied toothpaste (if the person tends to use too much): all can help with using the right amount of paste without it drying out ^{TSO}	
Dental caddy	Alternative: You could also attach a cup to the mirror for storing toothpaste and toothbrush	
Individual flossers	Package taped to wall next to toothbrush holder	
Dental dye ^{TGS}	This will show places on the teeth that the person has missed brushing	
Online video	This can be used to outline steps to proper brushing	
Mirror	Put on bathroom door: the person can smile and make sure that nothing is stuck in their teeth and that brushing has been done Alternative: You can also have a sign on the mirror to educate the person about how long to brush, or to ask "Have you brushed your teeth today?"	

In the bathroom (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Sign with detailed instructions about brushing	Tasks could be broken down as follows: 1. Turn on water 2. Wet the toothbrush 3. Apply toothpaste to the brush 4. Brush teeth in a circular motion starting at the back, and reaching top and bottom teeth 5. Rinse mouth and toothbrush Alternative: Attach pictures showing the tasks to the mirror	
LEGEND: TGS trouble getting started TSO trouble staying organized		



Strategies

The following illustration provides tips for brushing teeth. Walk through the routine with your relative, providing feedback or finding an online video that demonstrates the steps to proper brushing. It may be helpful to model by brushing alongside your relative.

Brushing



1. Create a sign listing the steps to brushing teeth. For people with more challenges, use more steps and/or pictures.
2. Put a toothbrush in the dental caddy. (This could be an electric toothbrush with a built-in timer ^{TGS} or a regular toothbrush with a separate timer.)
3. Provide a timer, such as the purchase of a toothbrush with a timer on it, so the person knows how long to brush. ^{TGS}
4. Put the dental caddy next to sink.
5. Use individual flossers if the person has more challenges and tends to use too much floss. ^{TSO}
6. Use toothpaste with a flip cap if the person tends to lose the cap. Or try single-use packets or travel-sized toothpaste if the person tends to use too much. ^{TSO}
7. Put a sign on the mirror: "Did I brush my teeth today?" ^{TGS}

Faster, less complicated and less expensive dental visits are a perk of improved dental hygiene



Celebrating successes

As the person's more regular brushing develops positive results (e.g., they have fewer difficulties with bleeding gums and sore teeth, and do better in social situations), highlight how their new brushing and flossing habits likely contributed to these gains.

You can also point out that faster, less complicated and less expensive dental visits are another perk of improved dental hygiene: "Hey, the dentist seemed impressed—and no time with the drill this month, which is pretty great!"

Once brushing becomes a habit and is worked into the person's daily routine, you will probably find that posting signs and providing other reminders becomes less necessary.

Applying makeup

While not relevant to everyone, makeup is an important part of how many people feel about themselves. Its importance may depend on their social and cultural scene. For those with trouble getting started, makeup doesn't get put on at all or stays on for days, causing acne and rashes. When people are disorganized, they can put on too much, apply it unevenly or put it on in ways that people important to them might consider strange.



Let's start with supplies

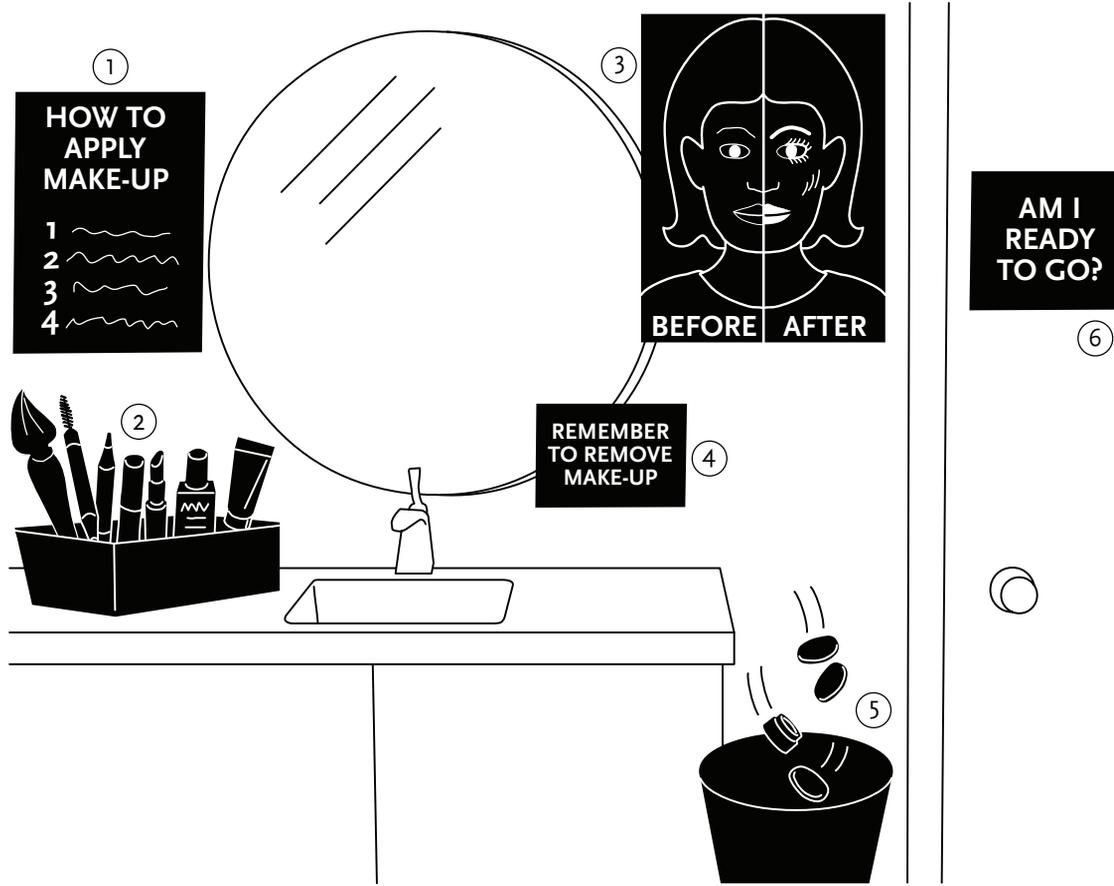
Go together to a cosmetic counter so the person can get a consultation on the best colours or products for their skin tone, and other makeup tips. You could also take this opportunity to buy some new makeup and get rid of products that are expired or dirty.

Using makeup: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Makeup remover, foundation, moisturizer, eye pencil, cotton pads, etc.	Put these in a basket on the dresser	
Makeup samples, or makeup bottles with stickers telling how much to use (if the person tends to use too much makeup at once)	Arrange them with more commonly used items in the front	
Pre-measured amounts of makeup, moisturizer, etc. (if the person tends to use too much makeup at once) ^{TSO}	Organized in a small tray with labelled drawers	
Signs (e.g., reminder to remove makeup)	Place at the top of the mirror, where the person sees it when brushing teeth in the evening	
Pictures (e.g., of face with well-applied makeup)	Place on the bathroom mirror	
Makeup lists	A list of products in the order of use, a list of colours, or types of makeup for specific occasions	
Makeup notebook	Use to record colours or tones that work for the person, and application procedures	
Sign with detailed instructions about removing makeup	Tasks could be broken down and put on a sign next to the mirror: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get towel 2. Wet face 3. Put one squirt of cleanser on hand 4. Rub onto face as you silently recite a favourite poem or prayer (for timing) 5. Rinse face thoroughly 	
Towel	Use to clean the sink area	
LEGEND: ^{TCS} trouble getting started ^{TSO} trouble staying organized		

 Strategies

Applying makeup



1. Put step-by-step instructions for applying makeup by the mirror, with more steps for people with greater challenges.
2. Provide a basket with makeup remover, foundation, moisturizer, eye pencil, cotton pads, etc. on the dresser. (This could include samples or pre-measured amounts of moisturizer and other makeup so the person doesn't put on too much at once ^{TSO}.)
3. Put up a two photos of the person, one with them wearing makeup and one without, to show the positive difference makeup can make.
4. Provide a sign to remind them to remove makeup. ^{TGS}
5. Replace old or otherwise less-than-desirable makeup with better products—perhaps after an outing with a makeup consultation on colours.
6. Put a sign on the door that reads, “Am I ready to go?”, prompting one last check before heading outside. ^{TSO}

Share tips about makeup, or go together for a free consultation or makeover at a cosmetic counter



Celebrating successes

Help your relative notice any compliments they are getting. Point out times they are feeling better about their appearance and how their improved skin tone could be related to the attention they are paying to cleansing and the products they are using.

Share tips about makeup, or go together for a free consultation or makeover at a cosmetic counter. Experiment together with different looks. Or go through fashion magazines together and make a collage of looks you like: these kinds of activities can be great opportunities to spend time together.

Using the toilet

Using the toilet is about as fundamental as it gets. The challenges and their implications can be embarrassing and uncomfortable: unflushed toilets, unclean hands, fly left open, accidents due to distractions, and unhappy roommates.

Note: If you are concerned that there could be a medical reason for challenges in this area, please consult a doctor.



Let's start with supplies

The bathroom: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Toilet paper	Put a small rack next to the toilet that is clearly visible and can hold several rolls	
Soap	Bar soap is better than liquid soap if you want to prevent overuse ^{TSG} . But liquid soap is better if the person is not washing well enough with the bar soap ^{TGS}	
A dark-coloured washable rug under the toilet	Listed as a wash item to remember for laundry	

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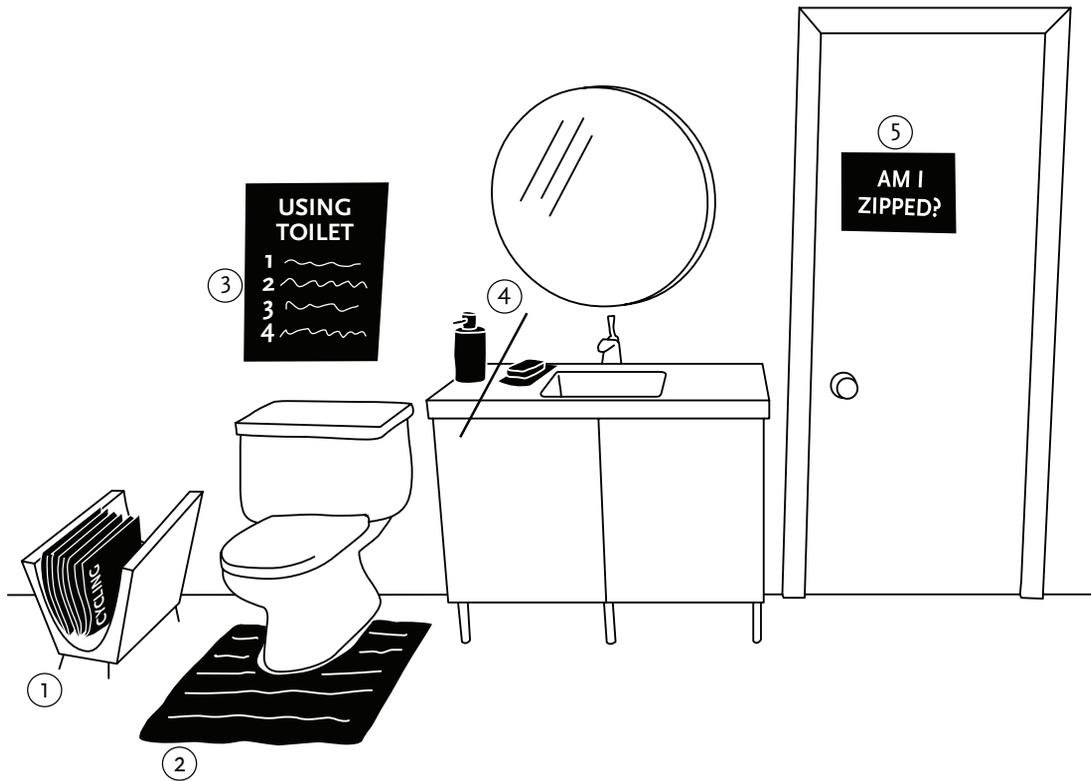
Using the toilet (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Mirror on the bathroom door	Check if zipped, shirt tails tucked in, etc., before leaving bathroom	
Hand towel	Place in an obvious location	
Sign on back of the toilet	It could say “Aim” or “Wipe thoroughly” or “Flush me”	
Instructions above toilet or on the door	<p>Could be instructions on what to do after using the toilet, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flush 2. Tuck in shirt 3. Zip and button pants 4. Wash hands <p>Alternative: Provide instructions on the mirror that outline the steps of hand-washing and how long each should take</p>	
Schedule for using the washroom	Alternative: Watch with alarm set at two-hour intervals TGS	
Sign at the sink: “Check water temperature”	Alternative: If the person tends to get distracted and could possibly get burned, turn down water heater temperature TSO	
<p>LEGEND: TGS trouble getting started TSO trouble staying organized</p>		



Strategies

Using the toilet



1. Put something to read or look at in the bathroom, to make being there more appealing.
2. Put a washable rug around the toilet.
3. Walk through the steps of proper toilet hygiene, and if needed place an instruction sheet above the toilet or on the door that reads: 1. Flush. 2. Tuck in shirt. 3. Zip and button pants. 4. Wash hands.
4. Provide liquid soap ^{TGS} if the person isn't washing up well enough or bar soap ^{TSO} to prevent overuse.
5. Place a sign that reads, "Am I zipped?" on the bathroom door. (Or, depending on the person's difficulties, a sign on the mirror or the bathroom door could remind them to check if their shirt tails are tucked in or their hands are washed. Another option is a sign above the toilet that reads, "Flush me.")



Celebrating successes

Compliment a clean bathroom:

Since we share this bathroom, I really appreciate that you've been flushing and cleaning up after yourself. Have you also noticed the changes you've made?

Keeping the home clean and tidy

Keeping a livable space is about more than being neat and tidy. Having a clean and orderly home affects a person's health, as well as their ability to be organized, accomplish daily tasks, feel good about themselves, and have a place that feels safe and that they are proud to socialize in. Being organized will also help your relative to get out the door on time—without forgetting their phone, keys, glasses or any other crucial items.

People struggling with getting started might not have cleaning supplies, and may live with a lot of clutter, and food waste and dirty dishes that attract insects. Those prone to getting disorganized might often misplace important items; leave tasks half finished and the place cluttered; spend a lot of time losing and looking for items, and as a result being late and disorganized.



Let's start with supplies

The first step is to stock cleaning supplies and, later, to take a weekly inventory, with the person's assistance, to see what supplies need to be replenished.

Cleaning my space: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Cleaning equipment	Mop, broom and dust pan, vacuum cleaner, paper towels, toilet brush, dusters, cloths, sponge with a soap handle	
Cleaners	Non-toxic all-purpose and floor cleaner, vinegar, baking soda, sample size dish soap	
Calendar	Use this to schedule necessary cleaning tasks on the same day each week. You can also use audio prompts	
A voice alarm	Use this to cue a specific cleaning task each day ^{TGS}	
Clear plastic bottles	Place a piece of tape nearer the bottom to serve as a cue to replenish the contents	
Laundry hamper	Put in a place where dirty clothes tend to pile up	
Pouch that can be attached to the bed for glasses	May need Velcro or doublesided tape to attach ^{TSO}	

Supporting a Family Member with Schizophrenia

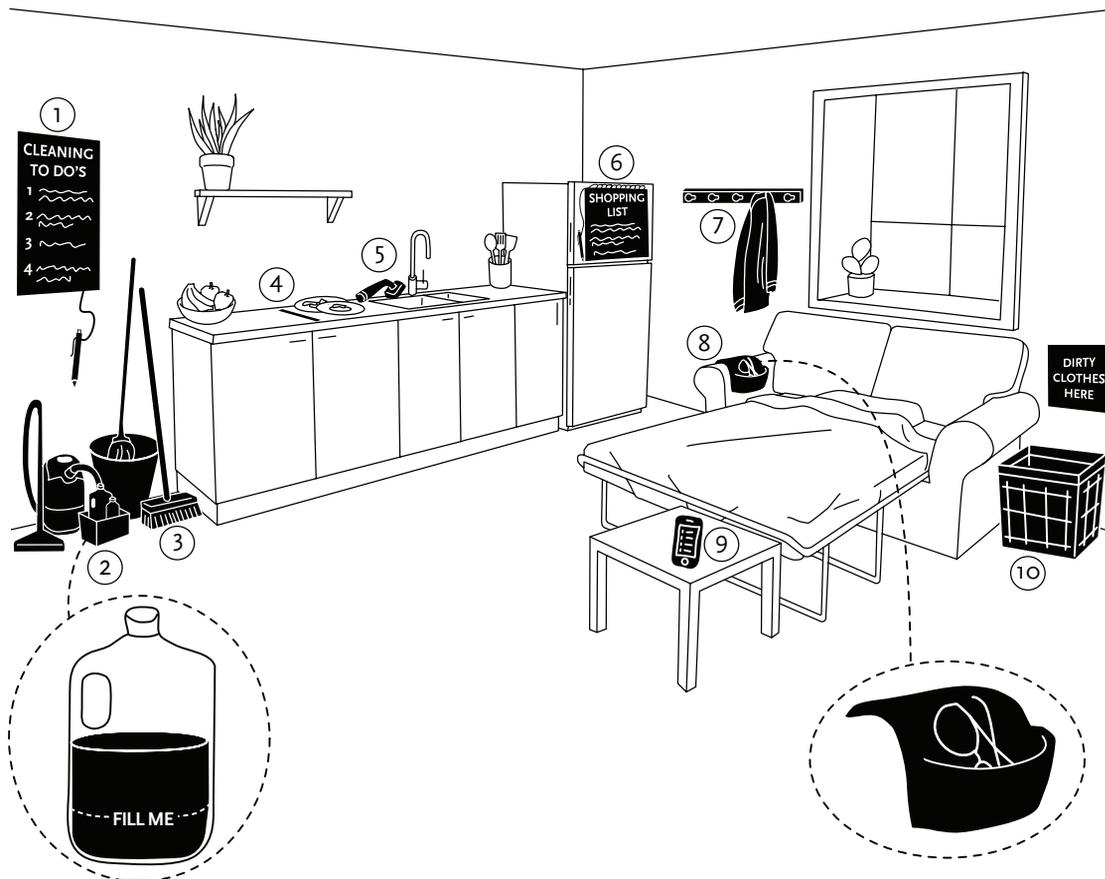
Cleaning my space (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Locating key chain (that barks or claps)	To help find keys. Alternative: hang a key rack next to the door	
Bins	Could be used for cleaning supplies, clothing, garbage, etc.; for garbage, put trash cans in plain sight in open areas (particularly in places where wrappers are opened and trash accumulates on the floor) TSO	
Ashtrays	Place in all areas where the person smokes, with a sign encouraging them to be emptied	
Sheets with Velcro attached	To make it easier to make bed	
Coat hooks	Place close to the door	
Magnetized note pad and pen or cleaning checklist	Put on fridge door with pen attached, to list cleaning supplies to buy, and a large detailed checklist with weekly cleaning routine so they can check off tasks they complete	
Masking tape	Use to mark area on counter to keep free of dirty dishes	
Signs about cleaning	Post signs in eating area to remind the person to clean up (e.g., "Take dirty dishes to sink," "Wipe off table")	
Labels around the room where each item needs to be placed TGS	Use bright colours!	
Step-by-step audio or visual cleaning instructions	Find these on YouTube or record instructions in real time. Allow a reasonable amount of time to pass, then give the next task (particularly for people with greater challenges) TSO	
LEGEND: TGS trouble getting started TSO trouble staying organized		



Strategies

Cleaning and tidying up



1. Develop a cleaning checklist, which can be put on the wall with a pen attached by a string.
2. Place cleaning supplies where they are visible and organized (e.g., in a small bin, close to where the relevant task is done, with a line near the bottom of the container showing when it needs to be replaced.)
3. Put a broom, trash can, mop and vacuum cleaner in the corner.
4. Put tape lines on counters: explain that dirty items should not pass these lines and can be a reminder to wash up. **TGS**
5. Provide a sponge with a soap handle next to the sink to make cleaning easier.
6. Put a magnetized note pad and pencil on the fridge door where cleaning items to buy are noted.
7. Put a coat hook on the wall that is visible when the person walks in the door.
8. Attach a pouch to the bed for the person's glasses. **TSO**
9. Use voice alarms to prompt daily cleaning. **TGS**
10. Place a laundry basket next to the bed with sign that reads, "Dirty clothes here." Or place the basket exactly where clothing is removed, even if this is in the middle of the room.

Other tips for keeping organized and uncluttered

A key way to keep the home organized is to place needed items around the room where they are most visible, rather than putting them away in cupboards or drawers where they might be forgotten. Work with the person to remove clutter, and put belongings near where they are used. Winter clothes can be stored away in summer, and summer clothes in winter. Remove unnecessary distractions, such as shoes that are seldom worn and unused items that are piled near used items.

To begin, have the person start cleaning while you are there. Run through the routine together, so they know the order of the tasks, how to do them and where things should be kept. As needed, supervise their use of cleaning products at first, particularly with ones that tend to get misused or overused, which can be a particular challenge for people who have trouble staying organized. Provide support on key tasks such as making the bed and doing dishes.



Celebrating successes

Use before-and-after pictures to show what a difference the tidying and cleaning are making to your relative's living space. If your relative expresses interest in entertaining, you could offer to buy some snacks and drinks, or something that would add incentive to wanting to keep the space looking good.

You could also call attention to the benefits of having an organized space:

Seems like you've been having friends over occasionally these days. Is that because it's easier to have people drop by now that the place is looking so good?

I noticed that your landlord hasn't been on you. He must be happy that you've been taking out the garbage and recycling every week.

Healthy eating and cooking

The health of our bodies and our minds are inextricably linked. But healthy eating isn't only about proper nutrition. Planning and eating meals are also important social and cultural activities. And figuring out a meal plan, grocery shopping, cooking and of course eating can be fun. As well as planning regular weekly meals, consider planning meals for the holidays or a special occasion.

“Trouble getting started” challenges include forgetting to eat, eating mostly junk food (as a personal choice or because the person can't afford or can't access good food), and leaving food out to spoil. For those who tend to get disorganized, challenges may include eating too quickly, not eating a balanced diet, burning or ruining food while cooking, and forgetting to turn off the burner. For both groups, dining habits can also be off track. People may need to be reminded to eat more slowly or quickly, keep the noise level down, and be more mindful to reduce spilling things.

You may want to arrange a physical exam and a consultation with a physician for health recommendations. (Refer to page 66 on grocery shopping for more on stocking up on healthy foods.)

Healthy eating isn't only about proper nutrition: planning and eating meals are also important social and cultural activities



Let's start with supplies

Here are some items to help stock the kitchen.

In the kitchen: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Vitamin supplements	Only if recommended by a doctor	
Prepared meals	Once a week, set time aside to prepare multiple meals and package them in meal-sized containers	
Healthy canned and dried foods	Develop new shopping habits, such as avoiding grocery shopping at more expensive convenience stores	
Alarms and checklist	Use these to prompt regular eating (e.g., alarm to remind the person to make a sandwich) ^{TGS} and checklists to track eating habits	

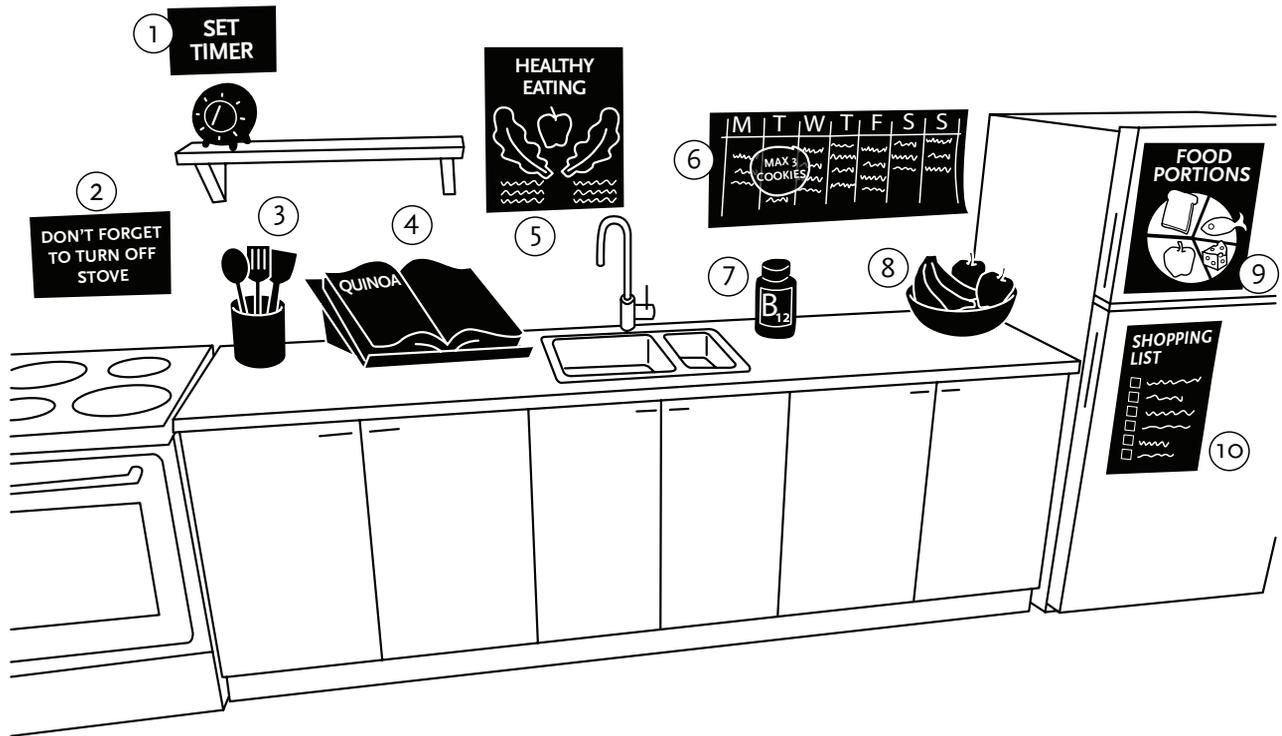
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In the kitchen (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Audio recording with “real time” instructions on how to make a simple meal or on how to pace eating a meal (for people with more challenges)	For example: “To make a sandwich you will need two slices of bread—go get them. Now you will need either meat, cheese or peanut butter . . . ; “Take a bite now” every minute or two	
Nutritional shakes	For people who are skipping meals 	
Healthy and balanced foods that are convenient and don't require cooking	For example, buy fruit, sandwich meats, low calorie snack packs, granola bars) and drinks (e.g., bottled water, diet and low-sugar beverages). Limit buying too much of foods that will spoil	
Sugar packets for coffee	Packets reduce excess use from pouring or scooping	
Shopping list and pencil	Attach list to the refrigerator and encourage reviewing regularly	
Educational material on nutrition, healthy eating habits and proper portion sizes	See www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php	
Timer	This could be a clip timer that attaches to clothing or an egg timer—used to time intervals between eating, or to lengthen the time spent chewing and swallowing, particularly for people with greater challenges	
Cookbook or box of family recipes	Bookmark favourites	
Fluorescent stickers	Put stickers showing the expiry date on perishable food and drinks such as milk or lunch meat	
<p>LEGEND:  trouble getting started  trouble staying organized</p>		

 Strategies

Healthy eating and cooking



1. Practise using cooking timers. Place a sign over the stove that reads, "Set timer."
2. Place a checklist or sign to prompt turning off the stove, wiping counters, etc.
3. Encourage cooking by putting spoons, spatulas, etc. in a canister on the counter.
4. Provide a cookbook with healthy—and easy—recipes. (Encourage the person to cook mindfully (i.e., not e-mailing, surfing the web or going out for a smoke at the same time); a clean, uncluttered space will help.)
5. Put up reminders about healthy eating.
6. Create a weekly meal schedule and checklist of items for quick meals to shop for and prepare, and place them on or near the fridge. Consider prepared meals that require little cooking and nutritional shakes for missed meals.
7. Check with doctor about whether vitamin supplements are needed.
8. Help stock the home with fresh fruit, healthy snacks and meals that are easy to eat and prepare. (Healthy foods can be kept out front and less healthy items in drawers and out of sight ^{TCS}. This includes putting a fruit bowl on the table, and placing groceries only one item deep in the refrigerator so everything is visible, with healthier foods on the top shelf and less healthy foods in the vegetable bin.)
9. Provide picture of healthy portions of dishes—and, if you want, other items that can be used for comparison.
10. Attach a shopping list with pen to the fridge door.

Other helpful tips

While signs can be helpful in every room in the house, they can be particularly useful in the kitchen where there are so many things to remember around eating and cooking.

Here are some examples of things you can write on signs, along with ideas on where to place them in the room:

- “Do I need my shopping list?” (on the door)
- “Put fork down after each bite”; “Clear place when done!”; “Food may be HOT!” (on the table)
- “Is it cooked enough?” (next to stove)
- “Turn off the stove”; “Put away unused ingredients,” “Wipe down counters” (above the stove)
- “Set timer” (on stove)
- “Open me—eat fruit” (on fruit drawer)
- “Remember XXX is in the fridge!” (on fridge door)

Consider sharing and enjoying a meal that the person you are supporting has cooked that includes some of his or her favourite things to eat

Here are some tips specific to meal planning, cooking and eating healthy foods:

- Work together to make a weekly list of quick meals to shop for and prepare. Do this for at least one month (i.e., at least four times) to create a new habit.
- Provide information about health eating—balanced diet, risks and benefits.
- Package or label soft drinks or foods the person eats too much of, to indicate a schedule for consumption (e.g., Friday lunch, Friday dinner, Saturday lunch). ^{TSO}
- For people with greater challenges: Remind person to cut food into small pieces and chew slowly to prevent choking. Use a timer (egg timer, small hour glass). Teach person to turn it over at each bite and to chew until the sand runs out. Then swallow. Place a sign on the timer with instructions.
- Provide support to the person as he or she follows a recipe and accurately measures out ingredients. Break down simple recipes into steps that can be ticked off when completed.
- Schedule favourite foods and drinks at specific times during the day.



Celebrating successes

There are many ways to celebrate success in cooking and eating nutritious food. Consider sharing and enjoying a meal that the person you are supporting has cooked that includes some of his or her favourite things to eat. As the basics are mastered, consider new more challenging recipes together. Compare notes on what is good and what didn't turn out, and try cooking with new and interesting ingredients.

And don't forget to support the gains being made.

Since you've started eating breakfast and having healthier meals and snacks, you seem to have lost weight and be less tired than you used to be. Have you noticed this yourself?

If the person is really interested in cooking and nutrition you could explore community kitchens, classes and volunteer or employment opportunities that involve food and food preparation. Remember, CAT is all about working on basic steps that lead toward larger goals: eating nutritiously at home could lead to helping others with their nutrition in the community.

Doing laundry

How we manage our laundry affects the organization of our living space, how we look, and how much time we spend digging around for presentable clothes. People who have trouble getting started may have dirty clothes piling up in their bedroom and may be wearing unwashed or wrinkled clothes. People who are disorganized may forget laundry soap, run out of money before the wash is done, mix dirty and clean clothes, forget clothes in the wash, and ruin clothes by improper mixing and drying.

If some of these difficulties sound familiar, we have some ideas for you. For this activity, we have included two illustrations. The first includes strategies for getting ready to do the laundry, for people who have trouble getting started. The second includes strategies for people who have trouble staying organized once they are doing the laundry.



Let's start with supplies

Laundry: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Laundry detergent and fabric softener	Use samples or buy large boxes of detergent and divide it up into single-load portions ^{TSO} that you can put in ziplock bags and store in the laundry hamper	
Clothes hangers	Place near the washer and dryer	
Laundry hamper(s) or basket(s)	Use two if you want to divide the laundry into light and dark ^{TSO}	

Supporting a Family Member with Schizophrenia

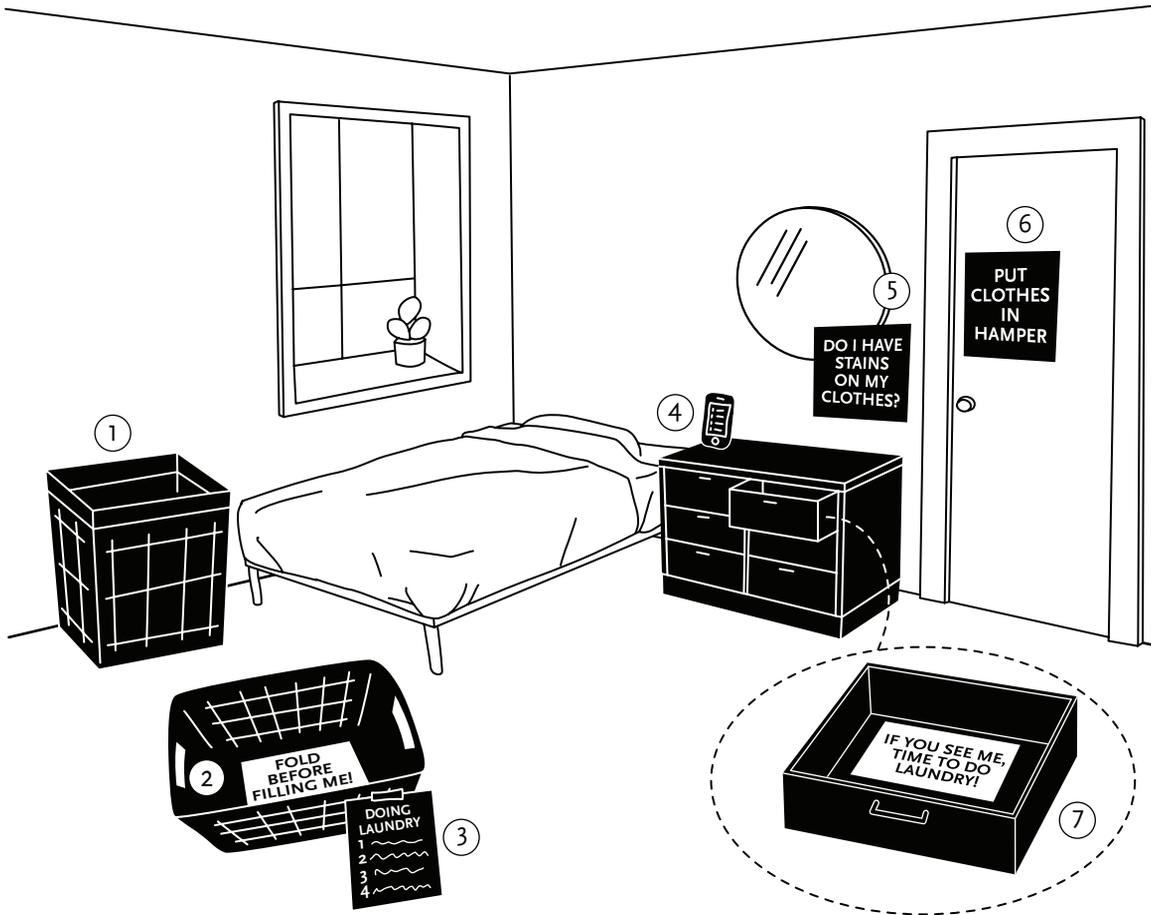
Laundry (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Voice or cell phone alarm or timer	Voice alarm can prompt picking up clothing off the floor ^{TGS} ; cell phone or timer can be clipped onto the person's belt and set to remind them to move clothes from washer to dryer ^{TSO}	
Quarters for laundromat	Put money in sealed envelopes labelled in large writing (e.g., "FOR DRYING CLOTHES ONLY")	
Magazines or books	Bring to the laundromat to pass the time	
Laundry time game for a smartphone	Find some apps or a brain teaser	
Audio recording of washing instructions on cell phone or digital recorder	Break down the steps in real time; e.g., "First, make sure all clothes are in the basket. Now get the laundry soap and put it in the basket. Now find out if you have X quarters. If not, go to the store to get change. Turn me [the recorder] off until you get back." Particularly helpful for people with more challenges. Alternative: You can also put these instructions in a sign over the washing machine	
Checklists	Add "Change clothes" and "Do laundry" to daily and weekly activity checklist. If doing laundry at a laundromat, make a checklist of "Things to do before going to the laundromat" and a separate checklist of "Things to check before leaving the laundromat"	
<p>LEGEND: ^{TGS} trouble getting started ^{TSO} trouble staying organized</p>		

 Strategies

Doing laundry

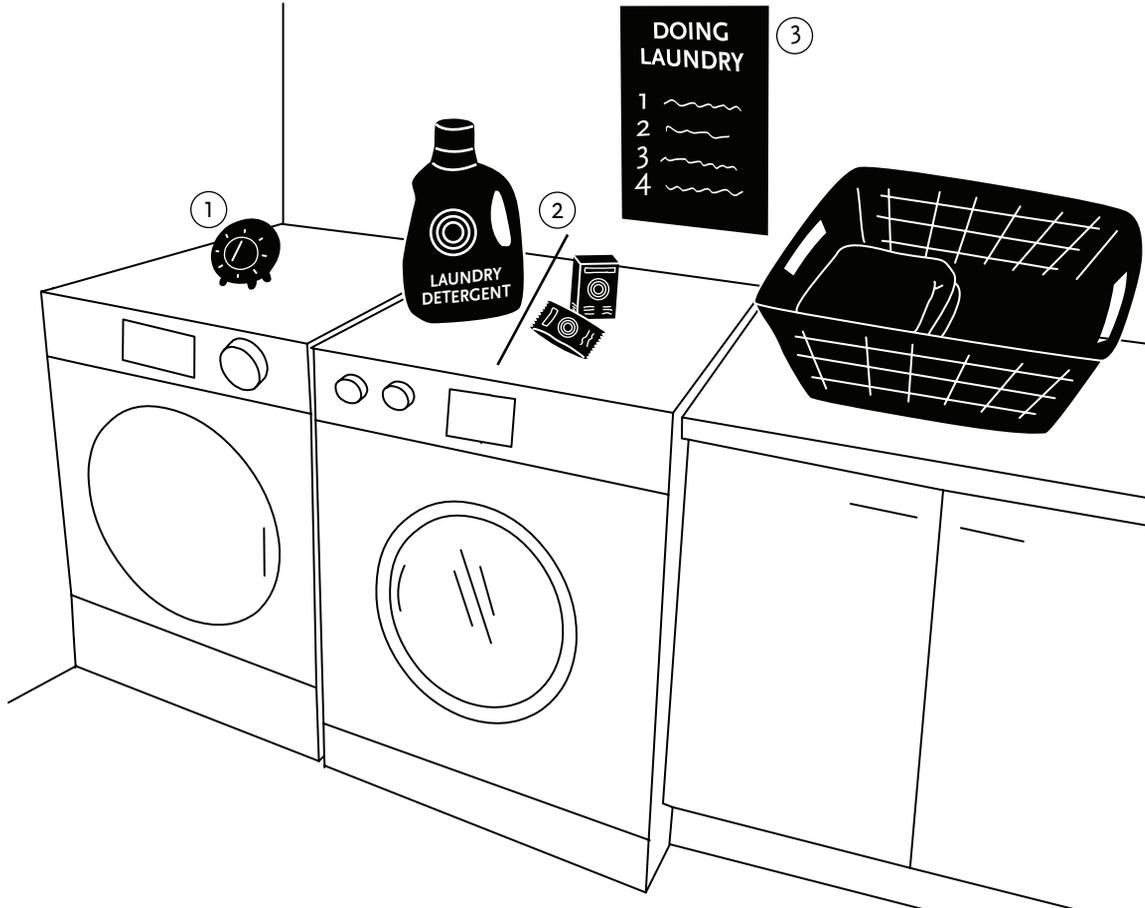
Trouble getting started



1. Put a hamper in the spot where the person tends to leave dirty clothes on the floor. Then once it is being used regularly, gradually move it to a better location.
2. Put a sign in the bottom of the laundry basket saying “Fold before filling me!”
3. Tape instructions for doing the laundry to the side of the laundry basket.
4. Use a phone (or other) alarm to prompt tidying.
5. Put a sign by the mirror that reads, “Do I have stains on my clothes?”
6. Put a sign on the door that reads, “Put clothes in hamper.”
7. Put signs in the bottom of sock and underwear drawers saying, “If you see me, time to do laundry!”

Doing laundry

Trouble staying organized



1. Make a checklist of things to do while in the laundry room. You could tape this to the side of the laundry basket. (If your relative uses a laundromat, organize money for the washer and dryer and put in separate envelopes.)
2. Provide detergent in single-use packets.
3. Work on using a timer or cell phone alarm when doing laundry, as a reminder to check loads or a signal when to move items to the dryer.

More general strategies

A great way to begin is first to practise doing laundry together, and make sure that the person adds “Is today laundry day?” to their hygiene list.

Doing a trial wash

Work with your relative to choose a specific day of the week to be laundry day. Then, before they do laundry independently, do a trial run together:

- Check the amount of soap used and ensure that washers and dryers are not overfilled.
- Put a line on the window of the machine to show the loading limit.

- Show the person how to choose a cold or delicate wash cycle if colours are mixed with lights.
- Demonstrate how to measure the appropriate amount of soap using the cap or measuring cup, and how to use the proper settings on the washer and dryer. Try using three steps, particularly when the person has more challenges:
 - Show the person how to do it.
 - Then watch and support as they do it.
 - Finally, ask them to teach you how to do it, telling you the steps as they happen.
- Think through with the person what they would like to do while they wait: bring a book or magazine, go for a coffee nearby, sit in a park? They will need to remember to use an alarm if there is a risk of losing track of time.

Using signs as reminders

You can post signs to help the person remember things. Pick and choose appropriate examples from the following:

- “Pick up clothes off the floor, put them in hamper” (on bedroom door)
- “Don’t forget to add soap!”; “Put clothes away”; “Remember to hang up your clothes” (in laundry area)
- “Check pockets! Put clothes in one at a time” (on the washing machine lid)
- “Wear clean clothing” or “Change clothing every day”
- “Dirty clothes only” (on top of hamper)
- “If you see me, time to do laundry” (at the bottom of underwear and sock drawer)
- “Do I have enough money to dry?” or “Do I have EVERYTHING I need to do laundry?” (inside the front door, if the person uses a laundromat)
- You can then follow up by calling the person once weekly and ask him or her to pick up all clothing and put them in the hamper. 



Celebrating successes

Have a conversation that encourages your loved one to think about the effects of their doing the laundry. Be mindful together of these small successes. Note how, along with success in other areas, this progress leads toward bigger life goals—dating, getting a job, developing and deepening friendships, and feeling like a whole person rather than a diagnosis.

I’ve noticed that your clothes haven’t had any stains on them, and your room is looking way tidier since you started using that laundry hamper. What changes have you noticed?

If your loved one doesn’t immediately observe any changes, you could ask questions that would prompt them to think about how things improved. For example:

Are you feeling more organized? Does wearing clean clothes make you feel better about how you look? Are you more comfortable having your friends over?

Be mindful of small successes and how this progress leads toward bigger life goals— dating, getting a job, developing and deepening friendships, and feeling like a whole person rather than a diagnosis

Managing medication

For some people with schizophrenia, medications work well and are pivotal in their recovery process. Others have significant challenges around taking their medications. They may be concerned about the medications' effectiveness. They could be dealing with side-effects, or they may have difficulties keeping medications organized and taking them as prescribed. These kinds of concerns aren't unique to schizophrenia. But the stakes are high for schizophrenia because the impacts of becoming unwell are often profound. The risks are even greater when medications are stopped abruptly without other supports being in place, or when medications are taken improperly.

The person you are supporting needs to communicate any concerns with the doctor, collaborate on medication decisions, and take medications as prescribed. Otherwise, it will not be clear how the medications are working. In the beginning you may need to help the person to do this, but over time the person will need to learn to manage his or her illness independently.

If your relative wants to stop taking medications, work on developing a "pros and cons" list, remembering what happened previous times and collaborating closely with the physician and clinical team on plans that come out of this work.

If your relative has trouble getting started, challenges can include not taking medications or taking them incompletely, not requesting changes in medications, not taking medication with food (if needed), and running out of prescriptions. For those who are disorganized, challenges include misplacing medications, taking too many pills, getting sidetracked in discussions with physicians, and taking medications with other over-the-counter drugs in combinations that might be dangerous. Here are some approaches that could help.



Let's start with supplies

Managing medication: What do I need?

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Water bottle	Put bottle next to bed	
Crackers or granola bars	Put in a zip-lock bag next to medications that need to be taken with food	
Dosette or blister pack or cabinet caddy	Use to organize medications; tape it to the fridge or store somewhere obvious, such as on a bedside table, where it won't get buried or lost	

Section 5 • Strategies for Everyday Living

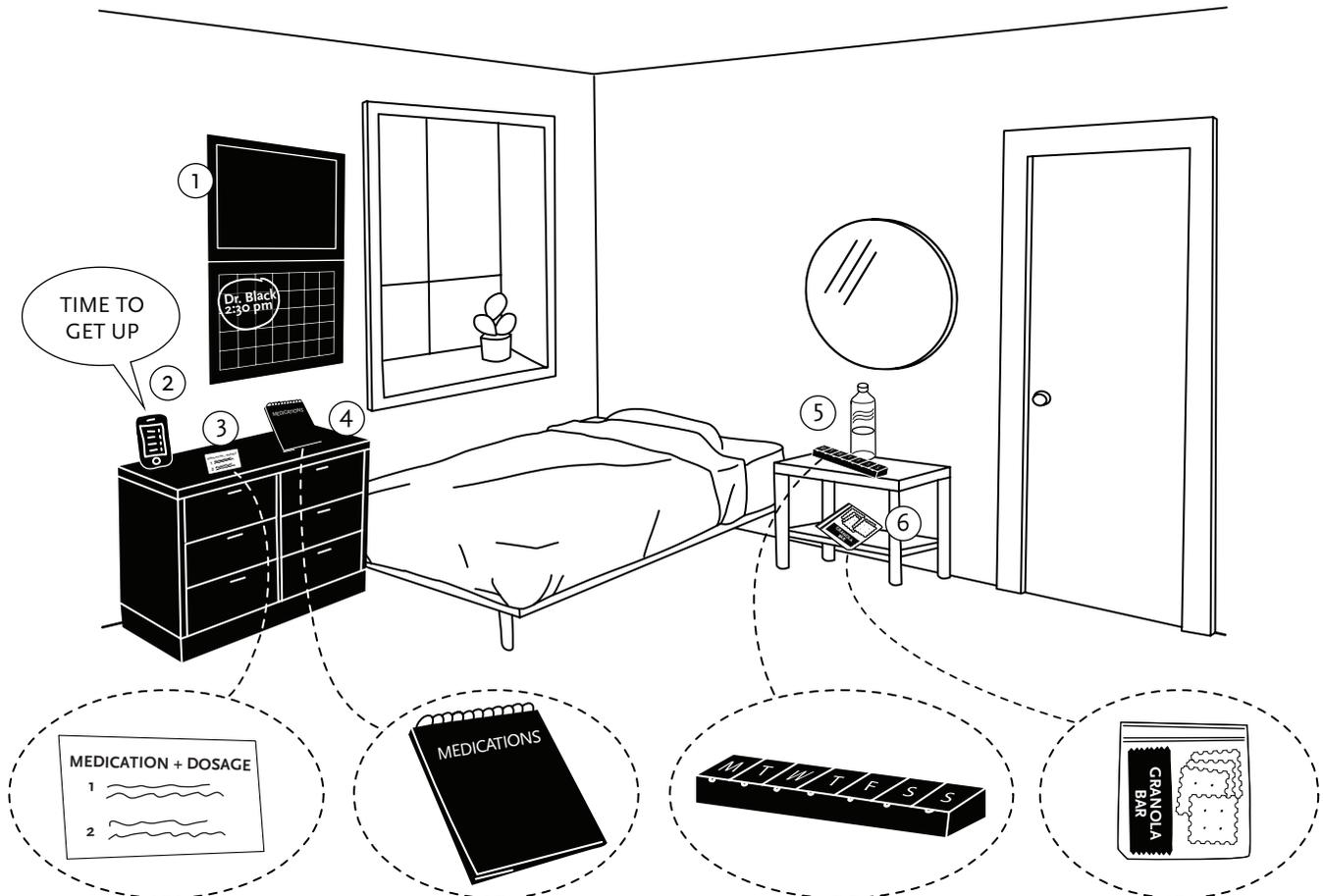
Managing medication (continued)

SUPPLIES	IDEAS	NOTES
Plastic medication container	Make sure it is clearly labelled and use it to store all medication bottles (if bottles rather than dosettes are used)	
Laminated wallet-sized card that lists all medications and dosages the person is taking	Keep in wallet	
Round coloured stickers	Use stickers to label each pill bottle or pill slot in the medication container; for example, yellow can indicate morning, blue can indicate evening ^{TSO}	
Voice-activated alarm	It can say, "It's time for me to get up and take my meds." Place it on a table away from the bed so the person has to get up to shut it off ^{TGS}	
Medication notebook	In a small notepad list the medication names, dosages, side-effects, pictures if available and reason for taking the medication	
Poster or whiteboard	Use to chart how they feel after taking medication. The person may notice they experience fewer symptoms after taking their medications	
Small notebook and pen	Use to write down questions for the doctor	
Daily checklist	Include the medication name and number of pills for every dose, to prevent the person from taking too many or too few pills. ^{TSO} Tape the checklist directly in front of pill container.	
<p>LEGEND: ^{TGS} trouble getting started ^{TSO} trouble staying organized</p>		

 Strategies

Managing medication

Trouble getting started



1. Incorporate a list of medications and doctors' appointments into a wall calendar (can also be done with checklists and alarm routines).
2. Set a voice alarm ("It's time for me to get up and take my meds") on a table away from the bed, so the person has to get up to shut it off.
3. Provide a laminated wallet card with a list of the person's medications and doses.
4. List each type of medication in a notebook along with the reason for taking it.
5. Keep a medication dosette and water bottle by the bed, so pills can be taken without having to get up.
6. Place crackers or other snacks in a zip-lock bag on the bedside table, next to medications requiring food.

Managing medication

Trouble staying organized



1. Designate a clean, visible area for a container with medication bottles and a sign that reads, "Do I have enough to last the week?"
2. Post a sign on the medication container saying, "If I am feeling bad, call the doctor (case manager, etc.)."
3. Store over-the-counter medications separately from prescription drugs, with a sign that reads, "Ask the doctor if it is safe to combine these medications with my prescription drugs."
4. List medications and doctors' appointments on a weekly wall calendar.
5. Put a sign on the fridge asking if medication has been taken.
6. Use a whiteboard to chart how the person feels after taking the medication, including both benefits and challenges.

Additional general strategies

Here are some other tips for storing medication, scheduling and attending doctor's appointments, and creating reminders and checklists.

Storing medication

- Keep medication in a cabinet or on a shelf by the bed with bottled water, so the person does not have to get up to take it. ^{TGS}
- Put the daily medication in a dosette and help the person fill it each week, until they are able to do it themselves. This will allow them to see if they will run out of medication before the week is up.
- Check to see if the person has enough medication for the week.
- Store over-the-counter medications separately from prescription drugs, with a sign that reads, "Check with doctor if safe to combine."
- If gel medications are getting stuck together in hot weather, store in the fridge.

Scheduling and attending appointments

- Make sure all medication appointments are scheduled to allow for missed appointments, rather than waiting until the last minute for refills. (Note: Many clinics schedule monthly appointments 29 or 30 days apart, without accounting for the fact that some months have 31 days or that people may be slow to pick up refills.)
- Practise sharing information with and making requests of doctors in advance of appointments, to help the person learn to advocate for themselves and more effectively make treatment decisions.
- Accompany the person to their first few doctors' appointments, and then gradually phase out your involvement—particularly for people with more challenges.
- Help the person to practise writing out information to bring in to appointments—notes about what is working, side-effects and any concerns or questions.
- Support the person in speaking with the doctor about any concerns or needed changes in prescriptions.
- Consider asking the doctor (together with your relative) for information about long-acting (injected) medications, if he or she is having significant difficulties taking medications as prescribed each day.
- Check and practise checking medication amounts in bottles or blister packs.

Creating reminders and checklists

- Add "Take medication" to the person's daily checklist.
- Remind the person to take their medication and to pick up their next prescription several days before their current one expires. Place a sign on the door: "Pick up prescription at pharmacy."
- Place a sign next to the medication container that reads, "Don't forget to take medication," "Refill medication container on ____day," or "Do I have enough medication to last the week?"

- If food is required with the medication, place a sign on the cupboard where medications are kept that reads, “Eat before taking medication.”
- Place refill dates on the calendar.
- Encourage the person to write down questions for their doctor in a notepad, and put a reminder on the calendar to bring the notepad to the appointment.
- Put a sign on the refrigerator and bathroom mirror: “Did I take my medication today?”
- Put a sign on the medication container: “If I’m feeling bad, call the doctor (case manager, etc.).”



Celebrating successes

Reinforce times that your relative speaks to their doctor about unpleasant medication side-effects or symptoms that don't seem to be improving:

I noticed that this time you talked to Dr. Richards about getting a dry mouth and having tremors since she increased your dose. I'm so glad you told her what was going on, rather than just going off the medication when you were frustrated.

Also point out ways that the medication seems to have helped:

I feel like ever since the meds have levelled off and you have them more organized, you've had a lot fewer ups and downs. Great to see. Maybe a step on the road to getting on with life, eh?