

Title of WI: Digital Stimulation

Custodian: Group Managing Director

Version Number: 03

Issue date: 03.06.26

Review date: 03.06.29

WORK INSTRUCTION (WI)

Title of WI	Digital Stimulation		
What type of document is this?	Work Instruction	WI Reference Number	HHH-W.I-029
Purpose of WI	To ensure that all employees who work with the relevant customers have the competency and knowledge to support with digital stimulation		
Role	Responsibility		
Regional Clinical Lead	Responsible for assessing the clinical needs, obtaining a prescription from the relevant healthcare professional, training and signing off carers' competencies, writing the relevant support plan and risk assessment, and completing six-monthly (three-monthly in Wales) customer clinical reviews to ensure safety.		
Carer	Responsible for performing the digital stimulation in accordance with the support plan. Report any concerns to the manager and a healthcare professional.		
Branch Employees	Ensure that only competent employees care for customers requiring digital stimulation, provide support as required, and liaise with the Regional Clinical Lead over ongoing care of the relevant customers.		
Scope of WI	This work instruction applies to the safe preparation, performing, and documentation of digital stimulation for clients by authorised Helping Hands employees. The work instruction outlines required employee training, competency, and compliance requirements.		

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WORK INSTRUCTION (WI)**1.0 Purpose**

Digital rectal stimulation (DST) is a technique used to start a bowel movement when the nerves that allow a person to control bowel movements are impaired. By gently touching the wall of the rectum, it will relax and open the passage and trigger muscle contractions, which push stool out of the body. It is a procedure commonly used by individuals with a spinal injury or a neurogenic bowel as part of their routine bowel care routine. It is often used alongside rectal medication such as enemas or suppositories.

- 1.1 Digital Stimulation is classified as a Level 2 clinical intervention within Helping Hands. The Regional Clinical Lead must attend all customer reviews, develop and maintain the clinical support plan, and train, assess, and formally sign off carer competencies

2.0 Process

- 2.1 Explain the procedure to the customer and gain consent.
- 2.2 Prepare the area, ensuring the customers privacy and dignity.
- 2.3 Carer dons' apron and gloves.
- 2.4 Support the customer to lie on their left side with their knees bent (left lateral position is ideal). They may however choose to be seated on a commode or over a toilet.
- 2.5 Lubricate your gloved finger and inform the customer you are about to begin. The carer should have short nails and no jewellery other than a plain band.
- 2.6 Gently part the buttocks and insert the single, gloved, lubricated finger, slowly and gently into the rectum. The carer may choose to double glove in the event that the glove may split
- 2.7 Remember to monitor your customers conditions throughout, especially for signs of autonomic dysreflexia in customers who have a spinal injury above T6.
- 2.8 Turn the finger so that the padded surface of the finger is in contact with the bowel wall.
- 2.9 Slowly rotate the finger maintaining contact with the bowel wall throughout for 30 – 60 seconds.

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- 2.10 Withdraw the finger and await a bowel movement.
- 2.11 Repeat the process every 5-10 minutes until the rectum is empty or the bowel movement finishes.
- 2.12 Remove the soiled glove and replace, re-lubricating as necessary between insertions, until rectum is empty.
- 2.13 Place any evacuated faecal matter in an appropriate receptacle (such as a small waste bag) as it is removed and dispose of it either into the toilet or double bagged into the household waste.
- 2.14 Support the customer to wash and dry their buttocks and anal area.
- 2.15 Remove your gloves and apron and wash your hands.
- 2.16 Document the procedure in the customer's visit record notes, including the result of the procedure using the Bristol stool chart
- 2.17 Report any abnormalities to the customers district nurse and/or GP.

TRAINING	
Is training required?	Yes - Sign off training can be achieved by completing the online Learning Management System (LMS) module followed by training and a competency sign off with a Regional Clinical Lead or registered healthcare professional i.e., District Nurse.
COMPLIANCE	
How is compliance with this document going to be monitored?	Annual competency assessments with practical sign off with Regional Clinical Lead or another Registered Nurse.
PROCEDURAL INFORMATION	
Changes since previous version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail of Level 2 intervention • Wording corrected to remove title of live in manager • Placed on new template
Who was involved in developing	Clinical Manager

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/reviewing/amending the document? (list titles)		
How confidential is this document	Public	Can be shared freely within and outside of Helping Hands
References	<p>NMC (2018) The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour</p> <p>Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014</p>	
Associated Documents	<p><i>HHH-POL-092-Clinical Governance</i></p> <p><i>Clinical Training Flow Diagram v3</i></p>	

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT