

# A Simple Ritual

## Semi-Finalist

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## Image Description

Brushing your teeth is a simple ritual that you do every day. However, this simple ritual isn't always available for older adults in the hospital, especially if they are not capable of brushing their own teeth. My research explores hospitalized older adults' oral care experiences. Through interviews I am learning about the struggles older adults have with oral care, and how we can improve it in the healthcare system.

The toothbrush is at the forefront, because it is an essential tool whether an older adult has natural teeth, dentures, or just gums. All require the force of brushing to remove plaque and biofilm to keep the mouth fresh and clean. The bristles are colourful to represent the diversity in oral care and the different oral care plans that may be required for older adults; special care is required for dentures that differs from care for natural teeth.

The teeth is blurred in the background as oral care in older adults can be precarious, and is often overlooked or is low priority for hospital care staff. Lack of oral care can bring embarrassment, shame, and reluctance to socialize with others, so it is vital we ensure this simple ritual is available for everyone.