

# Activities: Encouraging Resident Participation

## Learner Workbook



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## **ACTIVITY ASSESSMENTS – GATHERING INFORMATION**

Before you begin an activity program in your assisted living or residential care community, it is essential to gather information about each of the residents to provide activities the residents will want to participate in and are capable of participating. Strategies of social programming include:

1. Assessment tools
  - Lifestyle Assessment
  
2. Service plan
  - Identify the challenges
  - Select a goal
  - Develop steps to reach the desired goal
  
3. Measuring progress
  - Type of program
  - Frequency at each activity
  - Level of participation at the activity
  
4. Review process
  - Initial assessment
  - Observation
  - Quarterly review
  - Monitoring for change of condition

The assessment should describe the resident's capacity to perform daily life functions and participate in the recreational programs provided. The information obtained from the family during the admission process is imperative with a resident who is difficult to assess. Assessment information identifies methods used by the family or previous caregiver to calm the resident if he or she becomes agitated. You also want to review and record past and present leisure time and how it was spent by the resident. Lastly, define the resident's preferred social pattern and daily routine.

### **Getting to Know Residents, Family, and Staff**

Key players in the life of the resident may be able to assist with the collection of valuable information for the social assessment. Referencing all of the resources available will provide a broader perspective of each resident's preferred social pattern and identify his or her capabilities. Each family has a unique set of comments and concerns as you build their loved one's social service plan. Serving the needs of the residents requires a full knowledge of his/her medical and leisure history.

Activity assessments assist to help familiarize new staff with the residents as well as helps with activity planning. The following are sources of information about activity preferences:

- The resident's chart
- The resident
- Resident's family
- Care staff
- Direct observation

Make it personal and keep it positive! The activity assessments should start with a conversation. You should focus on the resident and the conversation not on any forms. Be aware that resident preferences may change over time, but the goal is to connect residents with enjoyable activities and with persons who have like interests. This may be another resident, or a staff member.

### **Understanding Ethnicity, Cultural, and Religious Diversity**

Sensitivity and understanding of diverse backgrounds, including religious and cultural background of residents, family, and staff is critical to personalizing an individual service plan and activity programs. Psychosocial aging changes may be characterized by cultural attitudes. There may be staff, family, or volunteers from the community that are sensitive to these factors that can assist with communication. Consideration of these culturally, ethnic, or religious factors may assist in providing programming to the resident. Special celebration for traditional cultural holidays providing traditional foods as well as the opportunity to participate in the resident's preferred religious services will enhance the quality of life familiar to the individual and assist with establishing a sense of identity. The social history and other information can be gleaned from formal or casual encounters with the resident, family, admission records, and or staff.



## MANAGING RESIDENTS AT-RISK FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION

Some residents have an increased risk of social isolation. Residents may isolate to his/her room because personal belongings are more familiar and comfortable. Moving out to other areas of a large setting can be intimidating.

Examples of self-isolating behavior may include limiting social contacts, sleeping the day away, and an overall failure to thrive. Many individuals find themselves paralyzed in self-isolation, choosing to remain in the privacy of their rooms with a television as a companion. Reasons range from adjusting to the new living accommodations “transfer trauma,” embarrassment related to loss of independence, fear associated with the challenges of establishing new beginnings, and the uncertainties of what the future holds.

Signs that a resident is at-risk of isolation include:

- Resident prefers to stay in room
- Avoids interaction with other residents
- Does not like to participate in activities
- Does not like eating in the dining room



## TECHNIQUES FOR INTERVIEWING RESIDENTS

In order to find out more about your residents you should sit down and get to know the residents personally. Interviewing the resident is a great way to get to know who he/she is, what are his/her likes or dislikes, and what types of activities does he/she enjoy doing.

### 1. Start a conversation

Take the time to listen to what the resident has to say. Ask questions about the resident's history (family, work, hobbies, etc). Residents have many interesting stories to share about his/her personal history; we just need to take the time to listen.

### 2. Search for a common thread (Common interests, common background, etc.)

What are things that this resident enjoys that maybe another resident or staff member in the community also enjoys? Does this resident like to listen to music, read magazines or books, or make crafts? What did this resident do for work when he/she was younger?

### 3. Link his/her interests to activities going on in the community

If the resident enjoys playing games, connect the resident with other residents for a game activity. If the resident enjoys reading, connect the resident with other residents that may have a book club.

### 4. Request permission to return later for another conversation

Getting to know the resident takes time. Make the most of every opportunity to communicate with the resident to get to know him/her more each day.



## **BREAK OUT PROJECT: ACTIVITIES: ENCOURAGING RESIDENT PARTICIPATION**

**Have staff members work with a partner, one as the “caregiver” and one as the “resident”**

- A. The staff member playing the “resident” should add 46 years to his/her actual age and select a resident profile from your current residents.
- B. The staff member playing the “caregiver” should conduct an interview to gather as much information as possible in a conversational style.
- C. Once completed, link the interests to activities currently offered in your community.

**Explain your results:**

## ACTIVITY TIMING AND SCHEDULING

Activities should be available during “windows of opportunity” throughout the day. An activity “window of opportunity” is approximately 1 hour long. Both residents AND staff must be available to create a “window of opportunity.”

Review the typical daily schedule in your community. How many “windows of opportunity” are available in your typical day?

Below is a sample weekly calendar. Take the time to draft a sample of activities you may offer and when the best time during each day of the week to offer those planned activities.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 am							
8:00 am							
9:00 am							
10:00 am							
11:00 am							
12:00 pm							
1:00 pm							
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:00 pm							
7:00 pm							

## LINKING RELATIONSHIPS

Not all staff members are the best match for every resident. Look for common interests between residents and staff members. Although you will not be able to please everyone all the time, it is helpful when you are able to pair up care staff with residents that have similar interest. Our goal is to provide the highest quality care we are capable of offering. Take the time to not only get to know your residents, but connect with them as well.

Discuss your current residents and the relationships he/she has formed (or could form) with other residents or staff members.

### Social Interaction Patterns

There are numerous ways people engage in activity. The following will discuss a few different social patterns and ideas for activity programs that a resident of that preferred social pattern may enjoy.

- The Aggregate Individual

The social pattern of a movie critic is an example of interaction that takes place between an individual and his/her environment in the presence of others. The other people are present; however, no interaction takes place between the individuals involved. If a resident is comfortable with this type of social interaction, he/she may enjoy listening to music, watching a play, or playing a table game involving trivia.

- The Extra-Individual

An artist on the other hand, is an example of interaction that takes place between the individual alone and his or her environment or objects in the environment. Chosen career paths may have included that of a writer, a crafter, or a painter. The activity professional can be supportive of resident's interests by offering materials, equipment, and supplies that connect them to their area of interest.

- The Inter-Individual

Another social pattern of choice is a one on one relationship. It may be competitive or cooperative interaction that takes place between two individuals. Few and far between are valuable relationships developed that last a lifetime. With respect to this social pattern, the activity professional needs to become the link in relationship building. Linking a resident to a peer, volunteer, or staff for a one-to-one relationship is a preferred strategy to averting tendencies to self-isolate. Assisting the resident in



meeting someone that shares a common thread of interest may be the support needed based on this social pattern. Once a person's social pattern is identified, we can begin to overcome the barrier to resident involvement.

- The Intra-Group Individual

A person with this type of social pattern will be found rallying behind a cause. An example might be this person is a supporter of a particular community concern. This individual might be found on the picket line, at a political rally, or knocking door to door in support of a chosen belief. Assisted living residents who prefer this social pattern may enjoy a group sing-a-long, a walk-a-thon for a common cause, or fundraiser to help the disadvantaged.

- The Intra-Individual

This interaction takes place within the mind of the individual. There are many individuals living in assisted living that think before they speak. In fact they spend most of their time looking through their mind's eye. Thinking through thoughts, daydreaming, and fantasy are common tasks this person enjoys. Programs that this resident may enjoy include meditation, imagery, humming, whistling, and talking to one-self. Activity staff can be supportive of this individual by providing privacy, music, art, and stories of interest to the resident. A scenic drive or sitting in a park might be another favorite activity of this resident.

- The Unilateral

This is interaction between a group and an individual. A perfect example of a resident with this preferred social pattern might be someone who previously was a presenter or entertainer, teacher, or performer. Activities that this resident may enjoy include speaking or singing to a group or leading an exercise or discussion group. Always in search of an opportunity to be noticed, this resident may enjoy being the MC at a talent or fashion show.

- The Inter-Group

This interaction is between members of a group, each with the other, with no leader. This is a resident who enjoyed being part of a group. For this resident past life skill might have been a player on a baseball, football, or basketball team. Being supportive of this social pattern will include offering opportunities for the resident to participate in group projects and organized events such as Senior Olympics. A person with this social pattern is always training for the next event.

## ACTIVITIES WITH A PURPOSE

Some of the best activities are ones with a purpose. Examples of activities with a purpose may include:

- Destination stations
- Art studios
- Workshops
- Charity projects
- Community projects
- A correspondence center



## Activity Interventions

Below are some interventions to keep in mind when scheduling activities in your community:

- Keep resident informed of scheduled activities
- Personally invite to activity programs in areas of interest
- Provide resident with materials, equipment, and supplies
- Involve in activities that highlight resident's abilities
- Introduce to other residents
- Assure resident sits close so they can see, hear, etc.
- Praise for participation in activity
- Attempt to keep residents attention – call name often – praise for participation
- Have volunteer sit with resident and assist as needed
- Place resident close to another resident who is willing to assist with activity
- Provide activities that can be done in a short time frame
- Praise often for tasks successfully achieved
- Prompt/redirect from negative behavior
- Provide one-on-one interaction for sensory stimulation
- Provide verbal and physical prompts and cues for maximum participation
- Provide task segmentation to maximize the opportunity for success
- Respect right to refuse

## **MOTIVATING RESIDENTS**

Residents will be excited about any activity if you are excited about it as well.

It is important to be:

- Optimistic
- Energetic
- Luring
- Interested
- Positive

And above all SMILE!

### **Understanding Barriers to Resident Participation**

Positive interaction techniques are principles to be followed when communicating with all residents. The concept behind these techniques is that by encouraging and considering the psychosocial needs of the resident, the overall communication and environment will be improved.

### **Participation Factors**

Residents experience success when they select experiences that match their own interests, needs, and developmental level. Residents make choices from a variety of centers of interest. They may experiment and try something new, or they may simply decide to repeat an action using the same materials over and over again. Meaningful experiences are age appropriate and give residents something to learn and/or do. The goal is to get residents involved and enjoy participating in activities that enhance his/her experience in the community.

Always follow your community policies and state regulations. Be sure to talk with your supervisor if you have any questions regarding appropriate activities for the residents in your community.