Supporting a Better Tomorrow...Today

Easy Activities for Care Partners

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Importance of Activities

- Our lives are defined by what we do.
- Everything we do, from the time we wake up, to the time we eat dinner, to the time we go to bed, is an activity.
- A person’s self-identity, self-esteem, and mood can be greatly influenced by the activities in one’s life and the success or failure experienced during these activities.
Importance of Activities

- Meaningful activities can help reduce inappropriate behaviors, such as boredom, frustration, anxiety, and agitation.
- Activity is much more than what we see on the activity schedule.
- Successful activities can improve the relationship between staff and residents, thereby making one’s job more enjoyable and enriching.
Why are activities important?

- Active brain = healthier brain
- Pet therapy can reduce depression
- Art therapy allows for expression
- Music therapy triggers memories and emotions
- Activities enhance quality of life
Meaningful Activities

Need to:

- Have a purpose
- Be voluntary
- Feel good to the participant
- Offer a reasonable chance for success
Meaningful Activity

- Productive
- Enhances self-esteem
- Link to the past
- Opportunity to leave a legacy
- Retain life long skills
The meaningful activities must be designed specifically for the mid-stage and advanced stage abilities.
Activities Can Be:

- Naturally occurring in the environment
- Daily household routines
- Spontaneous
ADL’s as Activities

- Help establish routines
- Reduce resistive behaviors
- Reduce fear and anxiety
- Reduce aggressive behaviors
- Can make tasks more interesting to resident
Stimulate Senses, Activate Memory

- Address many interests
- Appropriate for all stages of dementia
- Each activity is accompanied by questions
Memory

Declarative Memory
- Facts
- World Knowledge

Procedural Memory
- Events
- Vocabulary
- Skills
- Simple Classical Conditioning
- Habits
- Priming
Joy Kits

- Angels on Main Adult Day Services
- Project funded through demonstration grant from Admin. On Aging
- Inspired from Montessori based activities for persons with AD or other dementia
Joy Kits

- 1:1 or Group Activity
- Themed boxes:
  - Holiday
  - Vacation
  - Back-to-School
  - Gardening
  - Mechanical
Joy Kits (cont.)

 Multi-Sensory Items
   Visual
     Familiar Scenes
   Tactile
     Scarves
     Yarn
     Textured wallpaper samples
     Lotions
Joy Kits (cont.)

- Olfactory
  - Aroma Fan
  - Essential Oils
  - Scented Lotions
  - Unlit candles

- Can be used with multiple functional levels
Ideas for Personalized Activities

- Jewelry Box
- Sewing Box
- Coin Collection
- Bead Stringing
- Clay Molding
- Stamp Collection
- Old Photos
- Sorting Nuts and Bolts
- Button Sorting
Habilitation

- Identify problematic behavior
- Keep log of surrounding circumstances:
  - Time of behavior
  - Location of behavior
  - What is happening at the time of the behavior
  - Duration of the behavior
- After 10 entries assess for a pattern
- Identify possible triggers
- Prior to “normal” time of problematic behavior, involve individual in pleasant, meaningful activity
5 Tenets of Habilitation
Adapted from *Learning to Speak Alzheimer’s* by Joanne Koenig Coste

#1 Simplify the Environment
    Accommodate perceptual loss

#2 The emotion behind the failing words is more important than the words

#3 Focus only on remaining skills
    Value what is still there

#4 Join AD person In his/her current place and time and find joy there

#5 Create moments For SUCCESS
    Eliminate times for failure
Reading: Preserving a Preserved Habit

- Use very large font (100-group, 48-person).
- Keep it simple (Sans Serif font).
- Use appropriate background color.
- Laminate materials for extended use over time.

*Do not assume that a client is unable to read.* Instead, use a reading test, such as the Menorah Park Vision Test.
A Preview of Montessori-Based Dementia Programming

- The goal of the Montessori method is to create persons who are as independent as possible, able to make choices, and who are treated with respect and dignity.

- The activities are meaningful to clients and provide social roles.
Types of Strengths

- Determining the strengths of clients is a vital step in deciding which activities will be successful.

  Sensory Skills
  Motor Skills
  Social Skills
  Cognitive Skills
Five Classes of Montessori-Based Activities

- Activities of Daily Living
  - Flower Arrangements, Grocery Shopping
- Sensorial Experience
  - Scent Matching, Sound Matching
- Cognitive Stimulation
  - Shape Sorting, Picture Sorting
- Motor Activities
  - Treasure Hunt, Golf Ball Scoop
- Group Activities
Montessori-influenced Vision of an Activity Therapist

- Not an entertainer!
- Activity therapist is a facilitator, not a “leader” in the typical sense.
- The less we talk, the better.
- An emphasis on setup of the materials/environment allows for improved engagement and more independent work by clients.
- Delegate responsibilities to residents as much as possible; this is THEIR home!
Benefits to Sensory Stimulation

- Safe, non-threatening environment
- No expectations of participants
- Relaxing
- Improvement in the following:
  - affective state
  - cognition
  - communication
  - functional behavior
- Calming effect for participants
- Decreased Sundowning
- Decreased Agitation
- Gives opportunity for solitude
- Individualized Activity
  - 1:1
  - Multi-Sensory

Simple changes to the environment that can be:
- Soothing
- Stimulating senses without overwhelming
- Provide distraction and “time out”
- Improve communication abilities by stimulating all five senses
Sensory Stimulation Area
at Garden Park Adult Day Center
Greenwood, MS
Expressive Therapies

- Pets
- Music
- Movement
- Art
Resources

- NIA – Alzheimer’s Disease Education and Referral Center: https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/
- Caring.com: https://www.caring.com/articles/activities-for-dementia-alzheimers-patients
- Alzheimer Scotland: http://www.alzscot.org/assets/0000/0266/activities.pdf
Thank You!

Mississippi State Department of Mental Health

Division of Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementia

Dedicated to improvement of the quality of life for Mississippians affected by Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia

- Education and training for caregivers
- Information and referral
- Annual education conferences

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