

## IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

## Meaningful Activities

Meaning and purpose are fundamental to human beings. Providing meaningful activities and opportunities for residents to spend time in enjoyable pursuits will contribute to maintaining and improving well-being and feeling recognized as a unique person.

### Improvement Recommendations

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#### 1. Determine the wishes, needs and interests of each individual resident.

- Assess the types of activities which provide meaning for each resident and what limitations or needs the resident may have.
- Activities can include social, physical, creative, mental, and spiritual and should be opportunities for both group and individual participation.
- Social – Ice cream socials, happy hour, birthday celebrations, book club, holiday celebrations, religious services, movie night, cards, or games etc.
- Physical – group or individual exercise- yoga, tai-chi, stretching, walking dance etc.
- Creative – crafting/sewing, painting, cooking, woodworking, drama
- Mental/Spiritual – music, current events, books, magazines puzzles, guest speakers, volunteering, community involvement, computers or technology, religious services, cultural events.
- Provide information on group activities and resources available in the facility for recreation and leisure related to the population and cultures of those living in the center.
- Provide access to materials to facilitate independent leisure pursuits.
- Build and maintain a 24/7 community Library- Books, Magazines, games and puzzles etc.
- Make activities available for those residents who enjoy late evenings such as movies, TV shows sports programs etc.
- Consider including “workshop” programs that explore new or adapted leisure skills or technical skills targeted at involving residents in the community.
- Computer, iPad, cooking, gardening classes etc.
- Engage residents in volunteering within the center such as serving on resident council, include them in the selection of their caregivers or teaching skills to other residents or in the outside community. Offer volunteer opportunities outside of the center for those who are able or interested.

- Offer presentations, demonstrations, classes, crafts, or hobbies to expand a resident's leisure interest options.
2. Evaluate the scheduling of activities:
- Evaluate traditional program times being mindful of weekends and evenings.
  - Adapt schedules to accommodate the needs of the changing population. (e.g., short stay residents who attend rehab programs.)
  - Shift focus from large special events once a month to interesting events that occur more frequently.
  - Schedule activities that appeal to groups with varied cognitive abilities.
  - Invite community participation in nursing home activities (e.g., music programs, religious and cultural celebrations, intergenerational, veterans, pet therapy.)
  - Utilize current staff and family expertise and interests to conduct training and informational presentations (e.g., musical group, cooking demonstration, craft program, woodworking.)
  - Plan activities outside the facility (e.g., field trips, shopping, church, picnics, fishing.)
  - Provide opportunities to be outdoors (e.g., gardening, walking, bird watching, relaxing.)
3. Involve residents and families in planning activities:
- Solicit feedback from residents on both the kinds of activities and the scheduling of activities.
  - As the population changes, adjust, change or re-use past successful programs.
4. Leverage technology for activities – provide Wi-Fi or internet access.
- Virtual opportunities to connect with others including family using virtual music therapy, send art supplies to families to do projects together remotely. visits with family remotely etc., Virtual field trips to museums, zoos etc.
  - Community computers or tablet that can be accessed by residents.
  - Consider investing in interactive games or games consoles.
  - Social Media platforms such as Facebook and senior focused websites.
5. Create a homelike, resident-focused environment and culture.
- Create “neighborhoods” within the facility. A "neighborhood" concept encourages companionship and camaraderie between residents and staff. Rooms located near each other (e.g., along a hallway) constitute a neighborhood and are given a name (e.g., "Sycamore Lane"). Neighborhood residents vote on special activities for the group, decorate the neighborhood, have neighborhood specific celebrations etc. These activities become part of the culture and way of life within the neighborhood.

## Guided Discussion Topics

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Conducting a guided discussion with a focus group or panel of employees, family members, and residents promotes collaboration, diverse viewpoints, problem-solving, engagement, clarity, alignment, and knowledge sharing—all of which contribute to the development of more effective and well-rounded action plans.

The questions below will assist in a guided discussion to help drill down to the root issues that may be impacting residents and family members based on the facility's most recent survey results. NRC Health recommends conducting guided discussions post survey on topics that the facility wishes to address for improvement.

## **STAFF ENGAGEMENT**

1. How can staff effectively assess the needs and interests of each resident to provide meaningful activities?
2. How can staff ensure that activities offered encompass a balanced mix of social, physical, creative, mental, and spiritual elements?
3. What strategies can be employed to cater to both group and individual participation in these activities?

## **RESIDENT INDEPENDENCE**

4. How can staff provide access to resources and materials that facilitate independent activities for residents?
5. How can staff ensure that residents have access to materials and tools related to their specific activity interests, such as craft supplies or reading materials in the community library?
6. In what ways can staff support residents who prefer late evening activities, such as providing options for watching movies, TV shows, or sports programs?

## **RESIDENT ENRICHMENT**

7. What approaches can be taken to incorporate workshop programs and volunteering opportunities into the activities offered?
8. How can staff identify and develop workshop opportunities that align with resident's interest and provide opportunities for learning a new craft or skill?
9. How can staff collaborate with external organizations or communities to provide volunteer opportunities outside of the senior living community?

## **FAMILY AND RESIDENT FEEDBACK**

10. How can staff ensure that the scheduling of activities is well-evaluated and adjusted to meet residents' needs?
11. Is community leadership easily accessible to families and residents to voice their concerns, and what additional channels can be used for quick access to leadership?
12. How does leadership monitor the effectiveness of the facility's approach to addressing suggestions and concerns, and what steps are taken to improve this process?

## **FAMILY PARTICIPATION**

13. What strategies can be implemented to involve residents and their families in the planning of activities?
14. What methods can be employed to promote a collaborative and inclusive approach, ensuring residents and their families feel heard and involved in the planning process?
15. How can staff gather regular feedback from residents regarding the types and scheduling of activities, events, and gatherings ensuring that their voices are heard and considered?

## UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY

16. How can technology be effectively leveraged to enhance resident activities?
17. What steps have been taken to provide Wi-Fi or internet access within the community to enable activities like virtual family connections, remote art projects, and virtual field trips?
18. How can staff utilize social media platforms and senior-focused websites to promote social interaction, engagement, and connection among residents on campus or between campuses?

## ACCESSIBILITY

19. How can staff design and adapt activities to ensure inclusivity and engagement for those residents with limited mobility or impairments?
20. What modifications can be made to existing activities to accommodate residents with limited mobility, such as seated exercise options or incorporating adaptive equipment?
21. How can staff work together with occupational or physical therapists to incorporate therapeutic elements into activities for residents with limited mobility?

## REFERENCES

Drageset, J., Haugan, G. & Tranvåg, O. Crucial aspects promoting meaning and purpose in life: perceptions of nursing home residents. *BMC Geriatr* **17**, 254 (2017).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-017-0650-x>