

RESIDENTS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

An Activity Toolkit

HealthCap
RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE



RESIDENTS LIVING WITH dementia may require more supervision than the traditional assisted living resident. They may need to be reminded frequently to wash their hands with soap and water (this should be supervised), to stay in the common area and/or their own room/apartment (wandering can be an issue as the resident doesn't understand why they can't move about freely like every other day), they may



We are on a journey and some days are more difficult than others.

every day, participating in mealtimes, activities, etc. This may be challenging for staff especially in centers experiencing staff illness. This toolkit was developed to assist you, the caregiver, in identifying some unique activities that may assist in keeping your “busy” residents occupied and in a happy place! Remember, the resident living with dementia may not be able to tell you they are lonely, bored, sad, depressed, etc. It is up to us to identify the symptoms of loneliness and boredom and address them with enjoyable activities!

Take a look at some of the ideas in the toolkit! If you have some great ideas you

have found to work well with your residents please share them and we can add them to the toolkit! Even more fun, share pictures of your residents participating in an activity and we will share that as well! We know we are on a journey and some days are more difficult than others. Stay strong, continue the great work you are doing and have some fun with the residents, remember it takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile, conserve energy and SMILE!

It is vitally important that during these challenging times, we keep our residents on a “normal schedule”

be more curious which can result in objects being placed on their faces and in their mouths (try to discourage these behaviors as much as possible; or replace items with edible treats that have different textures, etc.). Bottom line, social distancing can be challenging because residents living with dementia do not always honor personal space let alone six feet of space!

It is vitally important that during these challenging times, we keep our residents on a “normal schedule”, waking at the same time



The Vocal Resident

THIS RESIDENT CAN BE PROBLEMATIC

if mixed with the wrong personality type!
If you can, talk slowly, calmly and quietly;
sometimes the resident will mimic your
tone.

If the resident is being disruptive to others,
try engaging in a sing-along. Sometimes,
residents may be less irritated if there is
a song being played or some sort of vocal
pattern.

Learn their background, this is a vitally
important piece of maintaining a calm
environment. If you know the history of
your residents, then setting up various
activities won't be such a challenge.

Ask this resident for their input on certain
topics frequently; they want to be heard,
hence the volume in which they are
communicating. Allow them to be heard
and validate their responses.



The Quiet Resident

Look at the resident's history/background; their likes/dislikes. If they liked to read, find some books that you could read aloud, the daily news, etc. Work one-on-one with this resident and consider puzzle type activities, crosswords, tongue twisters.



DECORATING: Request the resident's assistance with decorating the home; hang up different items or an evening "party". Serve juice and cookies (or some other snack) prepared by the residents for the residents

PHOTO TOUR: Locate pictures of each resident from various times in their lives (contact family for assistance). Place pictures in a photo collage frame or a photo book. For nonverbal residents, sit with the resident and talk about the pictures. For verbal residents, allow them to share their memories with you, that way, when they can no longer verbalize their stories, you can fill them in with the words and pictures!

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS: The resident enjoys sitting and watching, why not place painters tape on the windows and provide wipe off markers and allow the residents to color with supervision? Once they are done, remove the tape and you have a stain glass window (which can be wiped down and cleaned off with minimal effort).

BIRD WATCHING: Sit with the Resident and watch the wildlife, birds, deer, etc. Talk about the animals and what they like to eat. If supplies are available, consider making bird feeders etc. to hang outside on the property.

ACTIVITY BOXES: Place a variety of materials into a plastic tub; shiny, soft, rough, various colors and patterns etc. Provide squares of cardboard, glue, tape (various colors etc.) paper towel/toilet paper rolls, tissue paper, stickers etc. Allow the resident to decorate the boards. Place a picture of the resident on the board and hang in the hallway near their apartment. Let the resident be creative or download templates for easy craft ideas. Boxes can be themed: luau, music, sports, holidays.



The Active Resident

INDOOR CAMPFIRE: Place a large color picture of a bonfire in the common area. Encourage residents to join in the festivities. Pass out glow sticks to simulate sparklers. Provide (based on dietary restrictions) a snack of some sort and/or smores (some breakfast companies sell pastries that taste like a smore but are much cleaner). Tell funny stories, sing songs etc. (avoid scary bonfire stories).

COMPANION PETS: There are pets that look real but are not; they are weighted and

respond to touch; dogs may bark, cats will purr. These can be comforting and soothing to residents.

SCAVENGER HUNT: Hide stuffed animals or other items (purchase party favors!) around the building and show the resident a picture of the item they are searching for. Once they find it, have them hide it. This is also a great way to identify the residents' favorite hiding places, so in case items go missing, you know where to look!

GARDENING: Begin by taking a survey as to how many residents would be interested in starting their own indoor vegetable garden. Based on

the interest level, determine if small kits can be purchased or if it would be less expensive to purchase seeds, pots, soil etc. for each person. Work with each resident independently to set up their garden. Start by choosing the best place in the apartment; near a window for daylight. Set up the materials and provide step-by-step directions for each resident. Once the garden is set up, ensure that the resident waters the plants as needed. If the gardens become too much for their indoor setting, take the resident one at a time and have them transplant their garden outdoors and provide a colorful marker to distinguish between them.

SPIRIT DAYS: Whether it is a national holiday or a themed party, play it up big!

- Decorate different hallways to be themed for various

holidays. Provide a facility branded t-shirt for each resident and take photos.

- Celebrate birthday parties and invite families to participate virtually
- Beach party! Decorate the common area to be reflective of a beach. Hang festive lights, bright colored plates, cups etc. Arrange to have a BBQ meal for them. Add activity stations containing sand, small beach toys, seashells and other trinket toys for the residents to enjoy. Use a sink or basin and place small items in the bottom, fill with water and bubbles and allow residents the opportunity to submerge their hands in the water and manipulate the various objects

VIRTUAL OUTINGS: Numerous theme parks, museums, libraries and other community businesses are conducting "online" or "virtual experiences". Some of these



things may be items on someone's bucket list! Check it out and try something new

GUESS WHO? Write down one interesting fact about each resident and staff member. Each day, one person draws a name/interesting fact card and reads it aloud to each hallway. Ask the residents to guess who is being described. The person who guesses correctly, chooses the card to read the following day

TAKE A TRIP! Review the history of your residents and see where they enjoyed traveling. Hang a large colored map on the wall and mark those places. Talk to the resident as they are moving around the building; the food they ate, the drinks they drank, the romantic boat rides and pasta dinners etc.!



The Easily Agitated Resident



This resident is relaxed and content, until they are not.

DEESCALATE THE BEHAVIORS

by trying the following:

1. Remove all unnecessary persons from the immediate area.
2. Talk in a calm voice and introduce yourself.
3. Get to their level (squat or sit if needed) while maintaining distance.
4. Validate their feelings and emotions by agreeing with them; repeat their statements back to them to validate.
5. Try to engage them in a meaningful activity; a walk with just the two of you, a cooking

activity, online church services etc.

Place signs, pictures, and different texture squares at eye level in the hallways and throughout the common area. This may be enough of a distraction that they may be less likely to “wander” into another resident room.

Direct movement – place painters’ tape on the floor and/or walls that illustrate the pattern of movement. This may assist in providing a meaningful route for the resident and may be enough to maintain their calm demeanor.

