

Meaningful Activity in Care Homes During COVID and Beyond

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Any everyday activity that is adapted to a person's needs and preferences could be described as meaningful.



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Activities offered should be “meaningful to the resident and reflect their life story. Activity and meaningful engagement is recognised by all staff as an integral part of the care process”. (Care Standards for Nursing Homes www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)



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Benefits of purposeful activity

- Maximises quality of life
- Increased structure to person's day
- Sense of belonging/value/importance
- Helps to maintain balance, coordination, muscle strength
- Decreases feelings of loneliness/stress/boredom
- Can decrease risk of behaviours that challenge e.g. restlessness whereby a person's attempts to transfer unaided and falls
- Improves sleep



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Harm caused by lack of purposeful activity

- Deterioration in overall wellbeing e.g. increased confusion, less alert, low mood
- Loss of sense of self value
- Disconnection from others
- Muscle and joint weakness
- Increased falls risk as person may try to transfer unaided due to boredom



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Barriers to purposeful activity

- Unmet underlying physiological needs e.g. thirsty, hungry, need to toilet, pain.
- Does the activity bring back difficult memories.
- Person may have sight or hearing difficulties.
- Funding for activities.
- Limited staff time for activities.
- Activity is too difficult.
- Environment e.g. noisy, cluttered.



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Your Say

- Residents will want to be involved and should be encouraged to make decisions.
- Spending time with people to facilitate decision making especially the quieter residents or those with cognitive impairment.
- Support and encouragement will be needed.
- Structured questions what do/did you do after breakfast/lunch/dinner or before bed?
- Build a picture of each person
- Use of daily planners in rooms to involve everyone.



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Think about the person and the activity

- Past interests work, mother, daughter
- Use life story
- Ensure life story is accessible for all
- Activity is something they like
- Break it down



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Think communication

- **Connect** eye contact, involve others
- **Understand** the residents lives
- **Encourage** – conversation
 - - mobility
 - - daily activities



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Getting the environment right

- Lighting – ensure area is well lit
- Contrasting colours
- Decrease distractions e.g. background noise, turn off TV, go to quieter area
- Clearly display programme of activities for residents
- COVID – ensure infection control is maintained eg. avoiding sharing tools, and ensure social distancing



Environment

- Are they upright, well supported and comfortable
- Easy access to things they like and need to engage independently in activity
- Use outdoor spaces



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If you only have 5 minutes or less to spare

- Regularly stop for a chat
- Sing/hum a song
- Support resident to carry out some aspects of personal care eg. brushing hair
- Put on music resident would like



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If you have less than 15 minutes

- Read newspaper aloud with resident
- Go for a walk
- Support resident to tell relatives about news in the home
- Water plants, restock bird feeder
- Explore activity bag/box together
- Read a poem or limerick aloud



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Types of Individual and 1:1 activities



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Types of Individual and 1:1 Activities



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Types of Group Activities-while ensuring social distancing



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Types of Group Activities-while ensuring social distancing



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Get Creative

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-wales-51976372>



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Useful resources

- <https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/living-well-care-homes-2019>
- <http://napa-activities.co.uk/membership/free-resources>
- <https://www.dailysparkle.co.uk/product/free-trial>
- <https://www.insequa.co.uk/lessons-from-lockdown-in-carehomes/>
- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-activity-ideas-people-living-dementia#content-start>
- <https://www.findreviews.com/arts-and-crafts-for-people-with-alzheimers>
- <https://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk/>
- <http://www.1940sukradio.co.uk/>
- <http://www.1950sukradio.co.uk/>
- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/5-online-activity-ideas-people-living-dementia>



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