

Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

July 2023

Activities are the Foundation of Adult Day Programming!

Activities are at the heart of what we do in Adult Day Centers, but it's not easy to plan and carry out an endless stream of programming every day. Engaging some participants in activities can be a challenge, given that many people who attend Adult Day Centers have different types of dementia and are at different stages. Some are chatty and alert, others are not. Some may tend to be disruptive; others' behavior will vary day to day. Staff have limited time to prepare for activity sessions and have to make do with limited financial resources. Even so, we know that you do an amazing job! This issue summarizes some information we thought might interest you, gathered from recent research articles and other professional publications. We'd also like to hear from you about what activities you find most successful in your program and about any questions and challenges you'd like us to address in future issues of our monthly newsletter.

The Benefits of Music Activities

Music is a great way to engage people, but are some music activities better than others? Some recent research examines this question.

Music activities can be receptive (just listening) or interactive (singing, clapping, moving). They can involve familiar tunes, learning new songs, or even improvising new music. Some research studies suggest that music activities have a positive effect on quality of life and mood. Music listening can help reduce agitation, but the effect of interactive musical activities is inconsistent across research studies. Interactive music activities provide the most chance for social interaction and engagement.

There may be positive changes in cognitive functioning from participating in interactive musical activities, but more studies are needed.

References

- Cheung et al. (2020). Is music-with-movement intervention better than music listening and social activities in alleviating agitation of people with moderate dementia? *Dementia*, 19(5), 1413-1425.
- Dorris et al. (2021). Effects of music participation for MCI and dementia: A systematic reviews and meta-analysis. *J of the Amer Geriatric Soc*, 69(9), 2659-2667,



Source: [University of Kentucky](#)

The Future is Here!

You may be surprised at the new research going on investigating the use of [technology](#) in activities for people with dementia. Recent studies are looking at using [video games](#), [arts activities](#), a [virtual cycling](#) program, and [virtual reality](#). Mobile devices like tablets and smart phones are new platforms to support older people living in the community, with and without dementia! Let us know if you're using technology in creative ways at your day program—we'd love to hear about it!

What Makes an Activity Successful?

Prepare ahead: Plan activities to match time of day and participant energy levels. Organize all materials beforehand.

Socializing: Design activities to encourage exchange and interaction among participants, not just passive one-way communication from group leaders to group members. Comment on similarities to promote connection, like, “Mr. J, Mr. R just said that he also likes to go fishing!”

Personalize: Include ways to help participants relate to their past roles and interests. Gather information from family members, if possible.

Repetition and challenge: Do repeat successful activities, as this can help establish routines and expectations. Some participants may improve in their skill, attention, or participation. It’s important to include ways to increase the complexity and challenge of these activities over time, so participants can be engaged more or less as their needs and capacities change.

Environment: The space where the activity is held can affect how well it goes. A noisy, hot, crowded space will be a problem. Control as many factors as you can.

Have a backup plan: Just because it worked last week, it won’t necessarily work today! It can be hard to predict how everyone will react on a particular day. Having more than one staff member in the group can make it easier to handle unexpected negative reactions.

For more tips, see our [Foundations](#) manual and related videos!

References

- Cohen, J., & Jensen, B. (2022). Barriers to the success of recreational groups for persons with dementia. *J of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neuro*, 35(1), 38-46.
- Holden et al. (2021). Community-based service providers' experiences with activities for persons with dementia. *Intl J of Aging & Human Dev*, 93(3), 881-903.

For More Information

[Activity Book for Dementia Caregivers](#): This free 55-page book was created by McGill University Occupational Therapy students. Designed for at-home care, it’s worth sharing with families and may suggest some new ideas for your program.

Care2Caregivers Website

You can find the [Adult Day Resources pages](#) on our website through the drop-down menu in the Professional Resources section.

Past newsletters are archived on our website. You may want to check out these issues:

- *August 2021* – Summer fun (with tips)
- *May 2022* – The magic of movement
- *July 2022* – The value of leisure activities

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free. Use our NEW link:

Self-Care for Professional Caregivers

<https://care2caregivers.com/professional-resources/self-care/>

Upcoming Caregiver Education 2023

Managing Your Day with Activities

July 20, 2023 1:00pm

Click [HERE](#) to register

Decisions and Decision Fatigue

August 24, 2023 1:00pm

Click [HERE](#) to register

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or call Care2Caregivers at 890-424-2494



visit our website www.care2caregivers.com for information on caregiver support groups

1-800-424-2494