

Participant Handout

“Activities From Dawn To Dusk”

Learning Objectives

- **Introduce participants to the idea that staying active is important for the individual with memory loss**
- **Introduce the participant to the philosophy that activities must be “failure free”.**
- **Define person centered care**
- **Explain the importance of knowing the individual when planning activities**
- **List the steps to choosing or creating activities for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia**
- **Explain the process to change or modify activities to fit the stage of dementia of the person with the disease.**

“Activities From Dawn To Dusk” WV Alzheimer’s Association ,

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Definitions:

- Activities – The things we do.
- Ability – What an individual can do
- Failure-free activity – An activity that cannot be done incorrectly. The purpose is to have fun, socialize, and be involved in the process.
- Person centered – focusing on the person, their needs, skills, history and preferences

The Alzheimer's Association Activity Philosophy:

The activities that make up a person's daily experience should reflect as much as possible that person's preferred individual lifestyle, while enabling a sense of usefulness, pleasure, and success at as normal a level of functioning as possible. (*Alzheimer's Association Activity Based Alzheimer's Care: Building a Therapeutic Program*).

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are strongly encouraging the surveyors to be on the lookout to make sure that "person-centered" activities are dominating the activities program.

Basically, there are three areas of strong emphasis in the new guidelines:

- Activities will be required to be person-centered and specifically developed for each and every elder, according to each person's own interests and health conditions. Group activities involving residents with different stages of cognition, differing interests, and so on, are discouraged under this new "person-centered" emphasis.
- In addition, activities are also required to be developed as "interventions" for various health-oriented problems, with special emphasis on those dealing with Alzheimer's disease, including activities that will help improve cognition function, and improve various behavioral problems such as aggressiveness, wandering, sleep deprivation and so on.
- Activity directors are also directed by the CMS to ensure that nursing home staffers have supplied their elders with adequate equipment aids, such as proper eyeglasses, hearing aids, good lighting, required equipment for any disabilities and so on.

To establish a working knowledge base of person centered care, the following information must be known:

- **Current function**
- **Personality of the individual**
- **Capabilities of caregivers**
- **Are there others that offer support or assist in caring for the person?**
- **Histories of the individual and/or caregivers**

You will also need to make sure you do the following:

Assess the success of the activity

Recognize and anticipate change over time

Activities should bridge the past, present and future

Maintains dignity and preserves sense of self

All activities should also reinforce Core Psychological needs:

Love

Comfort

Attachment

Identity

Occupation

Inclusion

How do we help people with dementia feel included?

- ***Introduce ourselves with every interaction***
- ***Make introductions for residents to help them feel secure and included with others***
- ***Know enough about their life history to share a bit as a cue for them***
- ***Be willing to share some of yourself to help put the person at ease***

Under normal circumstances, people choose to do things:

- **Over which they have control**
- **They feel good about**
- **They can do well**
- **They do voluntarily**
- **Provide security, inclusion, and affection**

Things to consider when planning activities:

- It should be free of distractions and safe, with no dangerous objects.
- Is the activity realistic for the individuals participating?
- Consider the physical requirements. Can this be accomplished by the individual, is this failure free?
- Does the activity provide social stimulation or an appropriate level?
- Does the activity provide the familiar spiritual and/or cultural background of the individual involved?
- People need to be able to hear and see both the leader and each other.
- Assure the staff/participant ratio is appropriate.
- Make alternate activities available to accommodate for all participants.

- Minimize distractions that might frighten or confuse and adapt the surroundings, if necessary, to encourage participation.
- Approach-remember to be flexible and realistic. Provide the individual with short, clear, step by step directions before starting an activity.
- Timing and location- time of day, location of activity to be held, and size of group.

Also from The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care is the following list of types of activities that the authors have found to be successful :

- **Performing personal care**
 - *Taking a bath can become a bubble bath – with laughter and blowing bubbles*
 - *Dressing can be a fashion show*
 - *Brushing teeth can become a taste test for new toothpaste.*
 - *Combing hair can be combined with a quiet sing-along.*
 - *Toileting can be a time to provide extra reassurance.*
 - *Applying makeup can be a time to make funny faces in the mirror.*
 - *Giving a manicure can be a time to compliment the person. (If you have emery boards handy, ask participants to pair up and decide who will give the “mini-manicure” and who will be the recipient. Then ask those who received to tell you how it made them feel. It's likely that some found it relaxing and enjoyable, while it may make others uncomfortable.)*
 - *Eating a meal can be a time for conversation or to ask an opinion.*
- **Doing chores**
 - *Gardening can become a fun activity when someone is squirted with water from the hose.*
 - *Polishing the furniture can make someone feel useful.*
 - *Folding clothes can keep hand-eye coordination intact.*
 - *Drying dishes can bring back early family memories.*
 - *Raking leaves can be good exercise.*
 - *Cooking can be a chance to smell strong spices.*
 - *Shelling peanuts can evoke the skill of counting.*
- **Being with pets** (Zoo video available from Alzheimer's Association office)
 - *Birds singing can provide an impromptu concert.*
 - *Brushing a dog's fur can be an opportunity to give and receive love.*
 - *Petting a friendly cat results in its soothing purr.*
 - *Feeding ducks can be a highlight of a relaxing, sunny afternoon in the park.*
 - *Giving a person some responsibility for pet care can make him or her feel needed and can build self-esteem.*
- **Using the magic of music** (Sing-a-long video available from the Alzheimer's Association office)
 - *Attending a church choral concert can be a chance to dress up in fancy clothes.*

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 - *Putting on a favorite song can be a wonderful distraction if the person is about to become angry.*

- *Tapping fingers and/or toes to a pronounced rhythm can provide the person with exercise.*
 - *Dancing cheek-to-cheek can be romantic.*
 - *Holding a whistling contest can make everyone laugh. (If you have time, you can get a few volunteers and try this.)*
 - *Singing familiar songs can reduce anxiety.*
- **Reminiscing – it is a basic human need to think about the past and reminisce. You can encourage it with any of the following:**
 - *A bottle of perfume, which may bring back memories of a high school prom*
 - *Advertisements in a 1950's Life magazine (if the person is an “early onset” individual, you might want to find a magazine from the 60's or 70's)*
 - *Old household implements such as a washing board, apple peeler, or flat iron, which may lead to humorous comparisons between then and now*
 - *Antique farm implements, which may lead to stories about farm life*
 - *Honking the horn of a vintage car, which may bring back memories of a first date or first vehicle*
 - **Utilize the book “Sensory Stimulation through Imagination Vacation” by Gary Grimm and Associates (available from the Alzheimer’s Association office lending library)**
 - **Remembering old sayings, clichés, or rhymes**
 - *Flashcards of old sayings could be prepared in a fill-in-the-blank format, creating a game. Example: “Necessity is the mother of _____.”*
 - *Rhyming words, such as glad and sad or post and toast, can be an activity that may distract a person while he/she is being bathed.*
 - *Classic poems can be read for enjoyment, and some persons might surprise you by recalling them as well.*
 - *Similes relating to animals, such as “loose as a goose” or “naked as a jaybird,” can bring laughter to even the most serious person.*
 - **Playing word games**
 - *Naming opposites, such as up and down, top and bottom, or right and left, can be played during potentially stressful times (doctor’s visit, on a trip, etc.).*
 - *Listing words related to a certain color, such as Red Sea, red sky, red flag, may allow individuals with Alzheimer’s disease to participate in group activities.*

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- *Composing a get-well card together can fulfill the need to help others.*
- *Using Scrabble letters to spell out key words from the person’s past can be a way to honor the person’s life story and touch on past achievements.*
- *Naming state capitals can be a pleasurable memory game.*

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- **Doing activities with children**
 - *Making a Halloween mask together can involve both individuals in a fulfilling art project.*
 - *Reading stories aloud to one another may be an opportunity for praise.*
 - *Walking together can provide exercise and a chance to “smell the roses” or pick wildflowers.*
 - *Blowing out candles, exchanging presents, singing “Happy Birthday”, and eating birthday cake can make everyone smile and laugh.*
 - *Being with children can make it acceptable for adults to play childlike games and work simple puzzles.*
 - *Getting hugs and kisses that children give so freely makes the person feel loved.*

- **Enjoying quiet time**
 - *Starting a new tradition of afternoon “high tea” and cookies can build a daily ritual.*
 - *Taking a daily walk focuses the person on a single task and can be equally enjoyed by the caregiver.*
 - *Taking a drive down a country road is another chance to be outdoors.*
 - *Watching hummingbirds can help the person connect with nature.*

- **Performing spiritual activities**
 - *Reading aloud from the Bible or other religious texts can be reassuring.*
 - *Listening to organ music or gospel music can evoke past memories of church activities.*
 - *Praying remains a powerful, meaningful act for many people with dementia.*
 - *Celebrating religious holidays and continuing to attend religious services can help a person feel connected.*
 - *Seeing a beautiful sunrise or sunset can lift a person’s spirit and make him/her feel more attuned to the universe.*

- **Recognizing old skills might include the following:**
 - *Whistling or singing*
 - *Dancing or clogging*
 - *Reciting a memorized speech or poem*
 - *Playing marbles (with a child)*

 - *Carving a corn cob pipe*
 - *Cooking a special dish*
 - *Signing one’s name with a fountain pen*

- **Creating arts and crafts provides a wonderful opportunity for persons to utilize their remaining strengths and abilities:**
 - *Drawing or painting a memory from childhood, such as a house, school, creek, or forest*
 - *Recognizing familiar paintings in an oversized art book*
 - *Using clay to sculpt an animal*
 - *Assembling a mobile from objects gathered on an impromptu scavenger hunt (pinecones, leaves, feathers, etc.)*
 - *Creating suncatchers for the windows*
 - *Filling oranges with dried cloves to give as gifts*
 - *Designing and/or making decorations for a holiday party*

Additionally, exercise is good for everyone, whether you have Alzheimer's or not.

Conclusion: “Certainly, there are many more activities that can be done with almost no materials or money and on the spur of the moment. The authors encourage the reader to take on the challenge of doing activities with knack...Remember that the Best Friends philosophy is that *the secret is not necessarily in what you do – it is the doing. Life is an activity!*” The person with Alzheimer's is still ALIVE!