OFFERING MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS

Improvement Recommendations

1. Determine the wishes and needs of your residents for meaningful activities:
   - Assess the types of activities which provide meaning for each resident.
     - While the MDS is a good start for this assessment, it is recommended to obtain additional information regarding how the resident spent their days prior to admission and what they would enjoy now that they have assistance.
   - Determine wishes for both group and individual activities.
     - Match activities offered at the facility to the residents’ needs and wishes for both group and individual activities
       - Exercises
       - Games
       - Intellectually stimulating events:
         - Current events
         - Recalling history
         - Guest lecturers from local colleges
         - Travel experiences
         “Turning Seniors into Globetrotters”
         www.ltlmagazine.com/article/turning-seniors-online-globetrotters
         - Music, art, dance and drama
       - Gardening
       - Cooking
       - Woodworking
       - Sports
       - Religious and spiritual
         “Pentecostal Moments in Long-Term Care”
         http://www.ltlmagazine.com/article/pentecostal-moments-long-term-care
   - Make activity materials available 24/7 to facilitate independent leisure pursuits.
     - Be aware of residents who enjoy late evening and night activities and plan to make things they will enjoy available (e.g., TV, movies and documentaries, reading materials, cards.)
     - Books and magazines in large print or audio books/tapes for those needing help with reading small print.
   - Plan recreation groups that appeal to the population.
     - This will be related to the population living in the home and will vary by the culture of the home and those who live there (e.g., a home with religious affiliation, a Veteran's Home, a home on the campus of a college etc.)
   - When appropriate, consider including “workshop” programs that explore new or adapted leisure skills targeted at involving residents in the community.
   - Consider offering computer classes or training for those with limited experience to help them keep in touch with families and current events.
     - Offer classes on using new technology (e.g., cell phone, iPad, Kindle).
   - Provide information on group activities and resources available in the facility for recreation and leisure.
Offer presentations of demonstrations and classes on a variety of crafts or hobbies to expand a resident’s leisure interest options.

Provide opportunities for residents to contribute within the home as well as the outside neighboring community.

“Happiness is Helping Others”
http://www.ltlmagazine.com/article/happiness-helping-others

Engaging residents in activities related to selection of caregivers.

“Can Residents Recruit Their Own Caregivers”
http://www.ltlmagazine.com/article/can-residents-recruit-their-own-caregivers

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., intergenerational, veterans, pet therapy.)
   - Utilize current staff and family expertise and interests to conduct trainings 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 outside (e.g., gardening, relaxing.)

3. Involve residents and families in planning activities:
   - Solicit feedback from residents on both the kinds of activities and the scheduling of activities.
   - Keep a list of popular or successful programs.
     - As the population changes, re-use past successful programs.

4. Create a homelike, resident-focused environment and culture that encourages spontaneity and close relationships between staff and residents and gives residents more choices and control over their activities (Beene, et al, 2009.):
   - 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”). All neighborhood residents vote on special activities for the group, decorate the neighborhood, have neighborhood parties, and hold special celebrations (e.g., resident birthdays) together.
     - This way of participation normalizes the day and automatically creates “activities” which become the way of life.
   - Permanently assign staff to neighborhoods:
     - Rather than being rotated, staff members are permanently assigned to a neighborhood and therefore work with the same residents consistently. This enables staff and residents to develop ongoing, comfortable relationships and helps staff to better satisfy individual resident needs.
     - Often such staff are universal insofar as they provide care as well as engage the residents in the daily activities of the neighborhood.

   - Offer greater flexibility in routines:
Staff members take ownership of daily routines and processes, rather than adhering to an institutional rule for daily patterns. Specifically, staff can make simple but meaningful variations in daily activities, such as eating and bathing patterns, based on individual resident preferences. Changes can be made spontaneously to meet resident needs or wishes. This approach allows residents to be treated as individual people rather than as a group.

REFERENCES