OFFERING RESIDENT FRIENDSHIP-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

Improvement Recommendations

1. Provide opportunities for residents to have social interaction with other residents:
   • Make activities available to facilitate social pursuits.
   • Plan recreation groups that appeal to diverse populations.
     o Celebrating ethnic, cultural, religious, and national events provide opportunities for
       residents to identify friends and also share experiences with others, thus making friends.
   • Consider offering computer classes or training to help residents stay connected with each other.
   • Provide information on recreational groups and resources available to encourage resident
     interaction.
   • Offer presentations and demonstrations on a variety of crafts or hobbies to encourage residents
     to share their talents and interests:
     o Offer opportunities for residents to teach each other.
       ✓ Computer/communication skills
       ✓ Arts and crafts
       ✓ Music
       ✓ Language
       ✓ Cooking
       ✓ Woodworking
       ✓ Card and other games

2. Provide residents the opportunity to choose with whom they are going to eat:
   • Arrange dining rooms to encourage social interaction.
   • Encourage residents to dine with old friends as well as make new friends.
   • Encourage conversation at meals.
   • Encourage resident to linger after meals to enjoy a cup of coffee and have some conversation.

3. Ensure that staff makes every effort to accommodate residents’ preferences regarding roommate
   selection.
   • As residents get to know each other, they may wish to share a room - efforts should be made to
     accommodate such requests when possible.

4. Introduce new residents to the community:
   • Introduce them to other residents at their first dining event
   • Take opportunities to introduce residents at events, councils, and through bulletin boards,
     newsletters, etc.
   • Introduce new residents to others with similar interests.
   • Get new residents involved with committees and other activities in the community.

5. Evaluate the scheduling of activities:
   • Evaluate traditional program times; adapt to accommodate the needs of the changing
     population.
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- Shift focus from large special events once a month to interesting events that occur more frequently.
- Keep a list of popular or successful programs. As the population changes, re-use successful programs.
- Offer activities in different settings that support friendships (i.e., playing cards for small groups and playing bingo in large groups.)

6. Create a homelike, resident-focused environment and culture that encourages spontaneity and close relationships between residents and gives them more choices and control over their lives (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., “Brandenburg Lane”). All neighborhood residents vote on special activities for the group, decorate the neighborhood, have neighborhood parties, and hold special celebrations (e.g., each resident’s birthday) together.

REFERENCES
http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=2621

“The significance of peer relationships to thriving in nursing homes”