3-125 Activities for cognitively impaired

TIPS Question:

Where can we go to look for activities for the cognitively impaired? I'm looking for activities that are inexpensive and ones that we can use for residents who are unable to leave the nursing home and/or are in a wheelchair etc.

Response:

Providing meaningful activities in Long-Term care for persons with cognitive impairment can certainly be a challenge given the resource limitations in some facilities related to the environment, the financial and staff resources and the numbers and diversity of your residents.

First of all I must commend you for recognizing that some expressions of behaviour are due to boredom and not just a symptom of the disease. Understanding the behaviour in the context of the whole person (P.I.E.C.E.S.) by working through the six question template will help you to provide individuals with activity that is meaningful to them.

Providing meaningful activity for persons with cognitive impairment will help to improve the quality of life for those living/coping with a dementing illness. The activity need not be elaborate or expensive to be meaningful. The main objective is for the resident(s) to derive enjoyment / fulfilment from the activity.

I would suggest that you contact your local Alzheimer Society or visit their Resource Centre for books and literature on this topic.

A couple of resources that I am familiar with and that you may find useful:

1.Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program (MAREP)
Malott, O.W., editor.
Alzheimer Resource Manual, 2000
Chapter 4- Maintaining Well Being
Waterloo: University of Waterloo
ISBN 0-9687040-0-X

You may also find the MAREP website helpful. You can access their newsletter / publication, *Innovations: Enhancing Ability In Dementia Care* by clicking on the issue on the left of your screen. You will find some interesting articles about activities for persons with cognitive impairment. Web site: http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca/

2. Dowling, James. R.
Keeping Busy…A Handbook of Activities for Persons with Dementia
Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press
ISBN 0-8018-5059-2

Another source of helpful information that you have access to is your colleagues. If you have a P.I.E.C.E.S Resource Network in your area, there may be an opportunity for you to ask this same question at a network meeting. It is amazing how a network of individuals working in the same field can spark such rich discussions and together you could generate some new and innovative ideas.

I appreciate the fact that rather than asking me to identify the activities, you have shown great initiative in asking for sources of information that you will be able to use to enhance the lives of your residents now and in the future.

Please note: *TIPS information should be used similar to the way you would use information from a text book! TIPS is not intended to serve as an individual consultation service! P.I.E.C.E.S. participants should use this information in*

context and always work closely with the family physician involved in the care of the resident or client and with other Partners In Care to find solutions to individual resident/client issues.