

Module 2: Environmental Cues to Encourage Activity

Now that you've taken a closer look at your facility's environment using the environmental assessment tool, it's time to think about how to enhance the environment in ways that will encourage physical activity among your residents.

Module 2 contains several "Function Focused Care Tidbits" with ideas on how to do this. The first one addresses ways to get residents (and staff!) dancing. Dancing is something everyone can do—even if just a little bit—and doesn't cost a thing, with the exception of some music. Find out how a few simple changes to your environment can have people moving their feet in no time.

Next is more information on how to create opportunities for physical activity based on findings from earlier research in this area. You'll learn why the halls shouldn't be dull, and dressing them up can be a fun activity for residents, family and staff.

The last piece in this module is a shopping list with ideas on items to buy for your site. It is also handy to share with family and friends of residents who aren't sure what to get them as gifts.

Environmental Cues to Get People *Dancing*

Website to check out...

If you or your residents need some extra inspiration to dance, take a look at this link on YouTube of “Dancing Granny”:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=>

Here is an environmental opportunity to think about. I was reminded to raise this type of use of the environment based on an experience I had yesterday in my clinical site. It was hot, it was grey and we danced our hearts away!

What environment cues were needed to make dance happen? What do we need to make a dance floor? How can we do that with limited space?

It takes a couple of minutes, but clearing away tables where meals are served is usually the best option. Voila! There it is! Dance floors are simple and easy as they are essentially open space.

The next need is enticing music to set the environmental mood. Variety is the best bet, as residents vary in age cohorts, cultures and life experiences. Oldies, Big Band music, show tunes and Motown music are usually popular. Songs can be downloaded from the Internet inexpensively, or ask staff to bring in CDs to share for the day. It is well worth the effort to see the residents move to the beat, smile and dance.

The next step is to make dance a daily event. Facilities often have dance activities intermittently. They may do a proms once a year or have a musician come in every once in awhile. Like every other physical activity...if you do it regularly you get in shape for it and can do it better and easier. Daily dance sessions can be a cheap and very effective way to increase physical activity and honestly.....have fun!

Create Opportunities for Physical Activity

It can be difficult to know precisely which environmental changes will be effective when it comes to promoting activity among your residents. Below are some thoughts based on prior findings from work done in assisted living facilities to help guide you in deciding what changes are worth making.

I. Corridors

Residents describe the use of corridors for: 1. walking to destination; 2. walking for exercise; and 3. walking for interaction.

Residents' perception of corridor "walkability" was related to safety, comfort/convenience, and aesthetics.

Qualities of design elements that residents used to judge corridor "walkability" included a continuous walking space and ability to grasp handrails, availability of seating (for resting), appropriate size of the corridor (i.e., width and length) and the elevator, appropriate locations of activity spaces and restrooms, and presence of artwork, window views, and plants. Bottom line...it is important that the corridor look pleasant.

II. Build it and they will come

There is an association between having visible physical activity opportunities (e.g, shuffleboard, pools, exercise rooms etc) and the amount of physical activity residents do. Make it accessible and visible if you have it!

Outdoor areas are used for physical activity if: there is easy accessibility, there are clear indoor-outdoor connections, safe paving, good maintenance, round-trip walkways and a choice of comfortable sitting areas with appealing views.

III. The physical environment does influence residents with regard to overall quality of life as well as impacting staff stress and resident safety .

IV. Simple tricks

1. Pick an accessible corridor--one of your best and brightest. Dress it up for walking with pictures, pathways and chairs. See if it gets popular!
 2. Use the "ambulation record" (see form in Module 3) to record residents' walking progress over the course of a month
 3. Consider having a contest to see if staff/ families can bring in the prettiest corridor walking decoration!
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Free Posters for Physical Activity

<http://www.infinitewellnessolutions.com/mmposters.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/physical/localized.htm>

Shopping List to Help Residents Stay Fit

As you work to build into your environments more opportunities for physical activity for residents, you may consider purchasing some items for your facility to help with this mission. Below are some items you might like to buy, or encourage your residents' loved ones to purchase as gifts for them.

Websites to check out...

Dave Reynolds & Associates produces exercise videos for older adults:

www.draFitness.com

Nasco Senior Activities offers a large variety of items:

www.eNasco.com/senioractivities

One thing of certain value is a good exercise CD. Often, these can be too fast-moving for our resident population and simply too hard to hear, see, or follow. This one is an exception, as it is lead by a male physical therapist with a loud, low, slow voice. The exercises are done slowly and many of the participants are sitting. A staff member could easily sit in front of the residents as well and lead along. The tape is called: "Your Body is Meant to Move", by Dave Reynolds. You can view a "trailer" of this CD by going to the web site www.draFitness.com.

Other options that sites have found helpful are the Wii, exercise games such as ring toss, and age appropriate weights, stretch bands, ergometers (used for cycling of the feet or arms) and positive reinforcers like pedometers, which can help residents set goals for steps per day and keep track of their progress. Several facilities have started walking programs, so purchasing bulletin boards that can be used to display artwork or encouraging messages along the walking routes is another idea. If your site needs a resting spot for walkers, perhaps an indoor or outdoor bench is needed.

Depending on your setting and residents, you might want to consider something like a Merriwalker. This could be used for short periods for different residents who have a hard time walking alone safely but like to be on the move! We sure don't want to discourage that activity.

If your facility has a significant number of residents with dementia or other cognitive issues, music for dancing and a CD player is a good option. Also, rhythmic musical instruments like tambourines, egg shakers and maracas are a great way to get them involved and moving.

Age-Friendly Checklist

STRENGTH TRAINING EQUIPMENT

FEATURES TO LOOK FOR:

- user-friendly (non-intimidating) appearance and function
- lowest possible load or impact (momentum factor)
- non-obstructed entry and exit, suitable for individuals with a variety of functional abilities and disabilities
- clear instructions where to sit and where to place hands and feet
- adjustments that allow individuals of various body sizes and functional limitations to be in the proper positions while exercising (so joints are not compromised)
- hand, seat and pad positions and adjustments that are clear and simple to locate and operate
- ability to change resistance from a seated position
- ideally, resistance that increases in increments of 1 pound or less
- instructional placards with simple diagrams, easy-to-read text and print, and correct-usage information
- low starting resistance (under 5 pounds)
- range-of-motion adjustments to accommodate joint dysfunction
- pins with large knobs, suitable for those with gripping issues (e.g. arthritis, stroke, etc.)
- as few moving parts as possible, for safety and ease of use
- space-efficient design, "small footprint" (takes up less space, offering more area around the equipment for entry and exit, especially with a walker or wheelchair)
- solid warranty; low maintenance required
- a quality product in all respects (manufacturer, workmanship, service and training)

TREADMILLS

FEATURES TO LOOK FOR:

- commercial grade (Home-use grade equipment has smaller decks and lower-quality components.)
- display panel with large buttons and letters, making it easier to read and use
- simple adjustment features that are easy to understand: up/down, elevation and speed
- starting speed at 0.5 miles per hour
- shock-absorbing deck
- emergency lanyard with belt clip (must shut off automatically if someone falls)
- low deck threshold
- low motor housing/casing to help maintain full view of a client, especially one with disabilities or balance issues
- medical handrails for those with balance issues

STEPPERS, RECUMBENT BIKES

FEATURES TO LOOK FOR:

- commercial grade (Home-use models have lower-quality components and smaller seats.)
- open or low shroud entrance and exit
- control panel that is simple to set, read and use; large buttons and type
- a keypad within reach
- minimal preprogrammed workouts
- clear, accessible adjustment features for seats and arm rests—the higher off the floor, the better
- wide and comfortable seats with arm rests
- swivel seats for easy entrance and exit

Outside "play" equipment for older adults

http://playworldsystems.com/products/playsystem_gallery/lifetrail

Theraband equipment:

http://www.yogadirect.com/Thera-Bands_c_12.html?gclid=CMf0kLOH1aoCFYLD4AodIheZ8A

Foam balls for squeezing (good for at dining room tables!)

<http://www.bizrate.com/exercise-balls/foam/>