



Social Work Resources

Meaningful activities and activities of **daily living** Staff handbook



Points to remember!

The lack of purposeful, meaningful, valuable activity has serious consequences on health – mentally and physically – no matter their age, illness or disability.

The more active an individual remains – mentally and physically – the more skills they are likely to retain for longer, the more independent they can remain, and consequently the better the quality of life they are likely to enjoy.

The aim should be to provide an effective group activity programme that meets the needs of the service user.

*It is not simply about filling time, nor is simply about providing entertainment – **We are not Butlins Red Coats** – it is about providing well thought out and effective stimulations, meeting needs and bringing benefits to the service user to retain a sense purpose, value, identity and meaning.*



Each activity should have a benefit

There are 10 areas of needs that should be included within the activity programme. That is not to suggest that activities from each of the 10 activities are to be provided every day / week. The frequency that each area of need is offered depends on the needs of the group, but all area should be considered to give a holistic approach to providing meaningful and purposeful activities.



The 10 areas of needs

1. Physical needs

To encourage movement; to encourage exercise; to retain levels of physical ability; to reduce stiffness; to promote circulation.

2. Intellectual needs

To provide cognitive stimulation: to keep the mind active; the brain ticking over.

3. Creative needs

To provide an opportunity for self-expression; to promote creativity; to facilitate giving.

4. Social needs

To promote social engagement, spending time with others, developing friendships and meaningful relationships.

5. Sensory needs

To maintain sensory awareness and ability; to encourage communication and self expression.

6. Self esteem needs

To promote a sense of self worth, a sense of value, a sense of importance, a sense of feeling cared for and caring for.

7. Spiritual needs

To address spiritual and religious beliefs.

8. Cultural needs

To address cultural interests and positive understanding; to retain contact with local culture and customs; to retain personal identities.

9. Emotional needs

To address the emotional aspects of the individual; to facilitate a sense of well being; to encourage communication and satisfaction.

10. Educational needs

To facilitate continued learning and development; to encourage role satisfaction and identity; to create a sense of value and purposefulness.





When planning activities for the week, please consider the following 10 areas of needs and incorporate them into the weekly planner.

Physical activities

- Walks
- Sports
- Balloon games
- Ball games
- Floor games
- Movement to music
- Carpet bowls
- Darts
- Skittles
- Trips to leisure centres
- Exercise

Cognitive activities

- Discussions
- TV
- Life history
- Magazines
- Reminiscence
- Card games
- Debates
- Quizzes
- Radio
- Memory games
- Jigsaws
- Board games
- Words games
- Crosswords
- Newspaper
- Library
- Talks
- Dominoes

Creative activities

- Craft sessions
- Drama
- Photography
- Collage Work
- Tapestry
- Sewing
- Art sessions
- Gardening
- Clay
- Knitting
- Rug Making
- Needle Crafts
- Flower arranging
- Basket weaving
- Drawing
- Music
- Woodcrafts
- Jewellery making

Social activities

- Video/DVD
- Visitors
- Cinema trips
- Tea dances
- Flower shows
- Sporting links
- Shopping trips
- Parties
- Beetle drive
- Pat dog visits
- Musical events
- Reminiscence
- Charades
- Barbeques
- Outings
- Links with youth clubs
- Themed Events
- Links with local clubs
- Treasure hunt
- In-house shopping
- Links with schools
- Entertainment

Sensory activities

- Rummage box
- Music
- Smell quizzes
- Hand massage
- Feely bags
- Flowers
- Feel
- Taste quizzes
- Food based activities
- Fabric and textures
- Seasonal foods



Esteem activities

- Beauty care
- Foot Spa
- Hand massage
- Hairdressing
- Manicure
- Pedicure
- Biographies
- Foot massage
- Charity work
- Life stories
- Family tree tracing

Spiritual activities

- Bible readings
- Hymn singing
- Services
- Visits to church
- Visits from the clergy

Cultural activities

- Themed events
- Museum visits
- Holidays and high days
- Theatre visits
- Cultural talks
- Provide for individual cultural needs
- Exhibitions
- Cultural visits

Emotional activities

- Advocacy
- Pat Dogs
- Access to local support groups
- Befriending
- Relaxation Time
- Understanding

Educational activities

- Newsletter
- Local colleges
- Local library links
- Talking books
- Speakers
- Domestic chores
- Club magazine

This is not to suggest that activities from each of the 10 areas of need should be provided every day, every week, every month. They should be determined by service users' needs, likes and dislikes. The activities can be included from each of the 10 areas within the activity planner on a needs/likes/dislikes basis, then many Service Users needs will be met.

Physical activities



Depending upon the group, service users' abilities vary from physically very able to physically disabled. It is important that, whatever level of ability is present, the activities provided enable service users', as a minimum, to retain that level of ability. We use the slogan "use it or lose it". It can be difficult to retain physical abilities; particularly in daycare environments, when sometimes time is limited. Using wheelchairs to transport Service user's, even when they are capable of walking the distance required, albeit slowly. This can make Service users' reliant on staff – or de-skill them. A physical programme in the activity planner is important to meet their physical needs.

Focussing on physical activities can alleviate reasonably high rates of energy levels and may address unsettled behaviour, as well as providing the opportunity to retain mobility, strength and stability.

Be aware as some Service user's may find traditional exercise, armchair exercise and others may find certain activities child-like such as target mats etc. The wishes and expectations should be paramount in choosing the direction to take.

Activity: Traditional exercise

Benefits: Good all round exercise session, works upper and lower limbs, improving and maintaining range of movement, balance and co-ordination, as well as being fun.

Ensure everyone can see and hear. Introduce each exercise describing and demonstrating clearly what they should do. Include movements such as shrugging shoulders, lifting arms, clapping, seated marching, straightening and lifting legs, pointing toes. Include a warm-up session and a cool down, taking deep breaths. Good catalogues like Speechmark (01869 244644) and Nottingham Rehab (0845 606 0911) have exercise books and cards.

Activity: Balloon handball

Benefits: Helps with co-ordination, general exercise, upper limb movement and balance, as well as encouraging a sense of achievement and fun. Ideal for those concerned about being hit by a ball. (Beware of service users' who do not like balloons).

Sit in a circle close enough to others so that the balloon can reach them. Put on music and encourage service users' to move the balloon backwards and forwards to staff member, or to other Service user's, by use of hand, foot or head or by any means which is comfortable to them. Make it a team game, if possible, develop a level of competition. Provide a net; perhaps, the balloon can be tapped across – like tennis.

Activity: Target game

Benefits: Improves hand-eye co-ordination: upper limb strength, concentration and attention span. If the service user is able to stand, then it is good for balance and stability. This can also encourage number skills, by service users' to count and add up their scores.

Set up at a reasonable length. Ask and encourage the service user to throw the bean bag on to the floor target, or the ball into the basket. Encourage scoring where competition is acceptable, with a prize for the winner. This is a one-to-one activity centred within a group. service users' with a short attention span maybe come dis-interested if the group is too large.

Activity: Skittles and carpet Bowls

Benefits: Good for upper limb movement, hand-eye co-ordination, upper limb strength, number skills.

Try forming service users' into group and generate team scores rather than individual scores. This can be an on-going activity with weekly winners advertised on a notice board, or a cup for the monthly winning team. Make sure skittles are sturdy, but light enough to be knocked down easily, to ensure success for those with limited upper limb strength. For Service users' with visual impairment use brightly coloured skittles and balls and a voice as a possible guide.

Activity: Darts

Benefits: Good for upper limb movement, hand-eye co-ordination, upper limb strength, concentration and number skills. If able to stand, can also aid balance and stability.

As with skittles, encourage team playing. Keep running score total, have weekly/monthly champion. This activity can be one-to-one/individual. It could also generate enough interest for other Service users' to come along and join in. This can be a good activity for men, but should not be aimed at men alone!

Activity: Outdoor activities

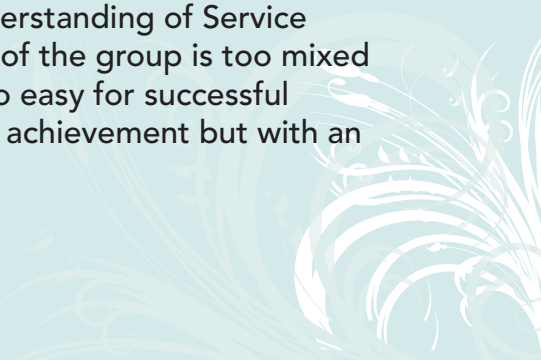
Benefits: Provide general exercise combined with benefits of fresh air and sensory stimulation offered by being outside.

Ensure service user's are appropriately dressed i.e. sun screen, sun hats, sensible footwear, coats, hats, scarves as required. Ensure drinks are handy if weather is warm – to avoid dehydration. Outdoor activities should be done on level ground.

Garden walks – excellent general exercise, can include those unable to walk by use of a wheelchair. This can be enhanced by general discussion, reminiscence and sensory activity – looking at and smelling flowers etc. Lawn croquet, golf, putting and dog walking.

Cognitive activities

As with physical skills, the more service users' make use of their cognitive skills, the more alert and aware they will remain. The key to this is having an understanding of Service users' likes and dislikes and their ability levels. If the ability level of the group is too mixed this can lead to frustration and poor self-worth. If too hard or too easy for successful cognitive activities, there needs to be an overwhelming sense of achievement but with an underpinning degree of a challenge.





Activity: Jigsaws

Benefits: Mental stimulation, memory, concentration and attention good for eye-hand co-ordination, requires a degree of strength and dexterity.

Leave a jigsaw out in a central place to encourage service users' to have a go whenever passing. Service users' can work independently or with help from staff – have a varied selection of jigsaws – larger/smaller pieces, larger/smaller amounts of pieces etc for all abilities. This can also aid anxiety / stress.

Activity: Reminiscence – discussion

Benefits: Mental stimulation, concentration, attention, orientation and communication skills. Awareness, sense of self-worth and an opportunity to share.

Topics that could be used: child-care, school days, games, toys, holidays, weddings, household chores, transport, cooking, clothing, fashion, theatre, film stars, music, entertainers, comedians etc.

Activity: Memory tray

Benefits: Great for mental stimulation, memory, concentration and attention span.

A tray of 5-7 objects (familiar items such as spoon, pen, photo-frame, glasses etc) and cover the objects with a large cloth. Tell the Service users' that the cloth will be removed for a few minutes, and ask them to try and memorise the objects on the tray, replace the cover and ask the Service user to recall the items on the tray. This can be done as a group or individual activity. Alternatively, let the service user study the tray, remove one item(s) and see who can identify the missing item(s). For service user's with communication barriers – items could be written on a board or pictures. The service user could then point to items they thought there were on the tray.

Activity: News group

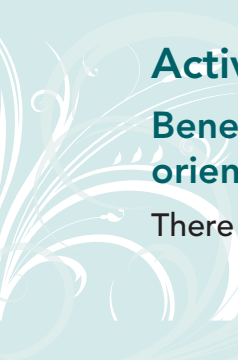
Benefits: Mental stimulation, memory, concentration, attention, orientation and communication.


Sitting with an individual or group, read through the headlines, encourage discussion on different topics, cover local papers, horoscope. This activity can be used as a warm-up activity before starting a main session. It is particularly useful if service user's are joining a group in dribs and drabs, engaging and stimulating those present, yet not being disrupted by others joining the group. This can be a good activity just before lunch, prompting conversation between service users' in the dining room.

Activity: Word game and quizzes

Benefits: Mental stimulation, memory, concentration, attention, orientation and communication.

There are so many different word games and quizzes, and a number or different





approaches to running a quiz session: Service user working individually, writing down answers, competing against each other, or Service user working in teams against each other, get team names etc. To make it fun (ladies-v-gents) and group quiz where staff member is the quizmaster to the whole group. Crosswords, anagrams, theme quizzes, word searches, alphabet games, hangman, smell quizzes, tactile quizzes, music quizzes etc. Keep a file of all quizzes and word games that have been used and rotate regularly to avoid repetition. Again, knowing your service user is key – too hard or too easy – can leave a feeling of being inadequate, or being dis-interested. For success, there needs to be an overwhelming sense of achievement, but with an underpinning degree of a challenge!

Activity: Discussions

Benefits: Mental stimulation, memory, concentration, orientation and communication skills. Also can aid reminiscence and information sharing – good for finding out more about Service user.

Identify a topic of interest to the service user, and then encourage discussion either with an individual or with a small group. Make sure people can hear what is said and can follow the discussion and contribute. Invite speakers – use slide shows – do presentations – speakers could be the Service User, family members, and staff. Contact organisations i.e. age concern, women's institute, community organisations, colleges, countryside talks with a picture show, flower arranging demonstrations, complementary therapy talks and demonstrations, health and beauty companies, wildlife sanctuaries, charitable organisations, guide dogs for the blind, hearing dog for the deaf, fire brigade, police force, collectors etc.

Activity: Table games

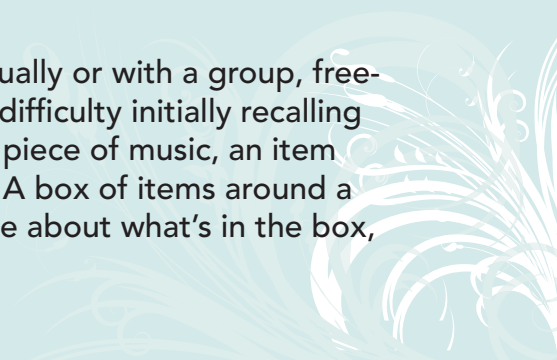
Benefits: Mental stimulation, attention, concentration, number skills requires a degree of dexterity to manipulate pieces.


The size of the group depends on the number of players needed for the same. Try a 'table game' afternoon with a range of activities on offer that Service user could choose from. Whatever game is being played check that the players are playing to the same rules, even if the rules are different from traditional rules. The aim is to engage, therefore must go with the flow. Some of the games played may be based on children's games, which can be beneficial if in bright colours, larger pieces, and therefore easier for the service user, but try and store them out of their original boxes, which have references to children on them to avoid any risk of offences.

Activity: Reminiscence

Benefits: Mental stimulation, concentration, communication, increased sense of self-worth, opportunity to share, increased awareness and knowledge of the service user.

Reminiscence sessions can be run in a number of ways – individually or with a group, free-slowng, or focussed around a theme. For those who may have difficulty initially recalling memories, a trigger may be required – photographs, objects, a piece of music, an item of food or a piece of poetry – may provide a focus for thought. A box of items around a theme should provide a focus, as well as offer additional intrigue about what's in the box,





i.e. a box containing nappies (disposable/terries), nappy cream, talc, nappy bins, a potty, etc, etc would be useful in developing thoughts and shared experiences around children/child care. You could develop a cook book through shared recipes etc. Ideas like child care, holidays, games, toys, wedding, work, household chores, transport, cooking, clothes, fashion, theatre, film stars, music, and entertainers.

Activity: Pairs game

Benefits: Mental stimulation, concentration.

Place 20 pictures/photos of meaning and relevance to the group. Ensure the pictures are large enough to see. Number the pictures on the back 1-20. Prompt the Service user to pick 2 numbers, turn the picture over; if the 2 pictures match then the Service User wins a point. If not, the 2 pictures are turned back over and another service user makes a number selection. The aim is for the service user to remember where the photo/pictures are, and to find matching pairs. The photo/pictures should be simple in style, and the content familiar. This could be offered as a team game or as a group.

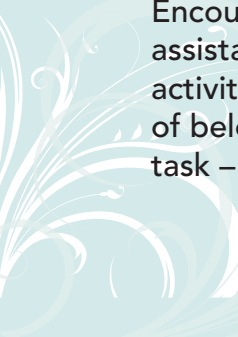
Creative activities

Creative activities offers the opportunity for self-expression and may provide an opportunity for continuing with familiar, established activities, it can also provide an opportunity for sharing and giving. Creativity does not have to be about an outcome, nor necessarily about doing i.e. watching a flower-arranging demonstration offers an opportunity to admire work of art without the pressure of having to produce something. As long as the individuals concerned have engaged in the activity in a way that is satisfying to them, the activity has been a success. Service user's who have a creative side, however, their participation in creative activities may be directly affected by their perception of their ability levels. An effective session is when staff can encourage the individual to participate to a level they are comfortable with – from simply watching to making choices; from working independently to working with assistance. The important factor is that the individual works at a level that they find acceptable.

Activity: Handicrafts

Benefits: These are generally familiar activities, with well established skills – hand-eye co-ordination, sense of achievement and offering an opportunity for giving.

Knitting, sewing, tapestry, embroidery, lace-making and macramé. Where possible, use equipment appropriate to skill level, such as large hole tapestry, large eyed needles, needle threaders, one-handed knitting needles, ready prepared items that simply need finishing off. Where possible, give value to work – knit for charity, make gifts for families. Encourage the service user to undertake the activity as much as they can, offering assistance as required. Remember, the outcome is only to participate in handicraft activities in whichever ways they choose. Being part of a knitting group provides a sense of belonging, and an opportunity to encourage socialising and conversation over a shared task – even if the task is never completed.



Activity: Salt dough

Benefits: Provide opportunity for self-expression, easy to manipulate and mould.

Make Christmas decorations, wall hangings, picture frames, bowls, name-plates. New clay can also be used which is air drying, but can be a bit messier. Use moulds, rolling pin, cutters, cocktail sticks for making markings, food dye or paint. Access to an oven (for salt dough) alternatively, it can be dried out in a warm place (airing cupboard).

Recipe:

2 parts flour to 1 part salt, with a little cooking oil. Add small amounts of water to the mixture until it becomes firm dough. Add food dye to mixture for an all over colouring, or wait until fully dry and then paint.

Activity: Food Based Activities

Benefits: Familiar activities, sensory-based, self expression and self-worth, skills maintenance, enables giving.

Equipment that could be used; ingredients, mixing bowls, weighing scales, measuring jugs, spoons, cooking trays, aprons etc. Access to microwaves, oven and hobs.

Ideas such as baking cakes, making sweets, making tea and toast, baking biscuits, can stimulate skills and memories of their past, giving a sense of achievement and self-worth.

The key concern with this activity is health and safety. For this reason not all service user's could undertake this task. Alternatives could be to make an arrangement with kitchen staff as to times that would be agreeable for cooking items that have been prepared at day care, or making items that need no cooking i.e. crispy cakes. There can be risks implications for the service user but it is generally accepted that taking informed risks is good for psychological health and well being. Taking informed risks can reinforce people's abilities, boost self-esteem, meeting needs and bring many benefits.

Alternatives could be involvement in food-based activities such as laying the table, folding napkins, pouring the tea etc, to prevent familiar skills slipping away. If a service user is a "doer" continues to enjoy doing this can have huge benefits in having their value through assisting with an activity i.e. pouring tea, handing out cakes, calling the bingo numbers, asking questions in the quiz etc. Those who prefer to be "done for" can sit back and allow the other to support them.

Good assessment should not be about **preventing** things from happening, but anticipating the risk and taking the necessary steps to avoid harm or injury i.e.

Evelyn wants to pour the tea, that may carry a high risk, however, passing the biscuits, collecting cups or helping staff, carries less risk, whilst allowing Evelyn to retain a sense of being useful and helpful.....

Activity: Arts 'n' crafts

Benefits: Generally familiar activities, with established skills – good hand-eye co-ordination, sense of achievement. Offering an opportunity for giving.



Knitting needles, large hole tapestry, large-eyed needles. This can also be a socialising event.

Activity: Art clubs

Benefits: Same as above. Self-expression and communication.

Paper, pens, paints, card-making, painting, colouring, clay pots, glass, Christmas decorations. Try and display completed work.

Activity: Flower art

Benefits: Attention, co-ordination, sense of achievement, self-expression. Good for hand-eye co-ordination, colour recognition.

Used dried or fresh flowers; contact local florists for unwanted flowers. Dried and silk flowers can be used to decorate hand-made cards, laminated bookmarks, decorative boxes, picture frames.

Activity: Gardening

Benefits: Self-expression, on-going projects, sense of achievement, sensory based activity.

Raised flower beds, plant pots, vegetables, hanging baskets, growing from seeds. Make contact with local community groups, gardening clubs, SLC to work alongside the service user to develop a garden club. Grow houseplants for fund-raising, gifts for family and own home.

Activity: Woodcraft

Benefits: Familiar activity, sensory nature, good hand-eye co-ordination, upper limb strength, self-expression and creative.

Footstools, bird boxes, wood based models, wood-based models, picture frames. Purchase kits according to ability and safety. Items could be given as gifts to family, fund-raising etc.

Activity: Photography

Benefits: Attention, concentration, self-expression. An excellent method of encouraging sharing for those whom communicating may be difficult.

Encourage the service user to select photos they like to take, try to have photos developed ASAP to aid memory and activity. Have projects/focus for taking photos – collage of favourite things, places, people, a seasonal project: Christmas, spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Social activities

Social activities should be about fun and laughter. They offer a chance for developing and reinforcing social relationships between the service user and staff. They should provide an



opportunity for sharing experiences, generating memories and reinforcing natural everyday events.

Social activities should offer the opening for the service user to get to know one another in a non-threatening way. By their very nature social activities will generally be passive in style – activities which service user's can experience and participate in without the need for great physical activities or skill.

Activity: Animals

Benefits: Reduced anxiety, triggers memories of previous pets.

P.A.T. (Pets as Therapy) is a Scottish Charity who currently has 4,500 P.A.T. dogs and 108 cats. Over 130,000 people used pets as therapies last year. Initial visits are set up with a P.A.T. co-ordinator and the process is fully explained by the Placement Officer (Phone: 020858925). All animals are required to pass an assessment by accredited assessors and vets.

Alternatives: pet shops putting on displays for service user's, bringing in a range of animals for them to see and pet, where appropriate. Contact Wildlife Centres, Urban Centres, Open Farms. Could also include visits with animals such as owls, snakes, rabbits, guinea pigs etc.

Activity: Bingo

Benefits: Hand-eye co-ordination, concentration, attention, memory, number recognition, upper limb movement.

Traditional bingo games include numbers 1-90. This can be adapted to have a lower range of numbers to increase speed of the game (if attention span is lower) and increase the speed of checking boards. Try musical bingo, reminiscence bingo, picture bingo etc for variety. Involve the service user – could they be bingo caller, card checker etc – promotes self-worth and identity (see esteem).

Activity: Sing-along

Benefits: Can help memory (of familiar songs) fun, communication.

Give out song sheets where possible, have a range of music to hand and ask service users their favourite songs – play the introduction – get Service users to guess the song and prompt a sing-song. Karaoke can be popular – if music choice is relevant.

This can involve everyone, with different needs and abilities, including those with poor speech are often able to sing. Also outside entertainer are also very popular. Can staff play instruments or sing – tap into resources on your doorstep.

Activity: Dancing

Benefits: Space to move, exercise, memory (of familiar song/dance) social contact.

Encourage service users to move and dance, even those who are sitting and in wheelchairs. Encourage service users to dance together. Try a tea-dance. Collect old favourite pieces of music. Plan ahead. Encourage service users to dress-up. Announce the next dance, encouraging people to take partners.





Activity: Musical Instruments

Benefits: Co-ordination, communication and self-expression.

Provide a range of instruments and good music. Place instruments within reach and put on music. Encourage service user's to select an instrument or select one able for them. Encourage to respond to music.

Activity: Cinema show

Benefits: Social event, can aid attention span and concentration and reminiscence.

Encourage Service users to select a film to watch. Always have the room set up **Before** service user's arrive. Make it fun with a break for refreshments/ice-cream and a chat.

Activity: Outings

Benefits: Provides the opportunity to access community facilities and resources: offers opportunity for more everyday activities.

Can present organisational challenges, but worth preparing beforehand – checking accessibility etc.

Activity: Entertainment and parties

Benefits: Opportunity for social contact, passive-type activity, therefore accessible to all.

Advertise events, consider refreshments. Use volunteers for full participation. Prepare in plenty of time, plan decorations / seating arrangements etc in advance

Sensory activities

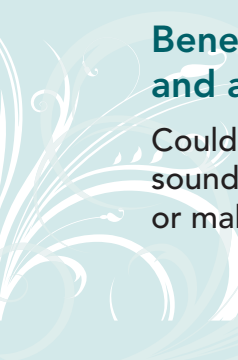
Verbal communication can be difficult for some service users, and can lead to people becoming withdrawn and out of contact with their environment and surroundings – particularly those with a cognitive impairment. Sensory activities are one way of trying to engage people who are withdrawn, and it can open up communication routes. It is generally understood that sensory activities can be used for relaxation, but they can equally be effective in making contact and engaging people.


Sensory activities address the main range of senses – **sight – sound – smell – touch – taste**. Sensory sessions should be limited to one or two senses at a time, to avoid over stimulation.

Activity: Rummage box

Benefits: Sensory experience to aid communication, engagement, contact and awareness.

Could be a plastic storage box containing a variety of 'sensory' pieces incorporating sounds, colour, texture, smell i.e. fabric, coloured paper, buttons, shells, 'toy' that vibrate or make a noise, pine cones, lavender, bags, feathers etc. Depending on ability invite





the service user to rummage, offer single items to individuals to handle: or actively enable the service user to experience the sensation by placing objects in their hands, or passing a feather under their chin for example. It could also open a discussion group about an object – the experience and memories it may trigger.

Activity: Fruit tasting

Benefits: Sensory input, communication route. Suitable for all ability levels. May aid reminiscence. Potential benefit for those with a limited appetite.

A variety of fruits – some complete, some chopped and prepared into small pieces for eating. Invite service user's to handle complete pieces of fruit and guess what they are (could be blind-folded), could discuss where the fruit comes from, where they came from, fruit they had available to them, favourite fruits to be tasted – guess what it is? Discuss likes and dislikes, tastes and the points above. Note: (please be aware of any swallowing difficulties, diabetes or special diet / food intolerances).

This activity is not limited to fruit, a range of other foods and drinks could be used, using the same format i.e. crisps, cheeses, breads, cakes, jams, spreads. Tea, coffees, fruit juices can also be used.

Activity: Hand massage

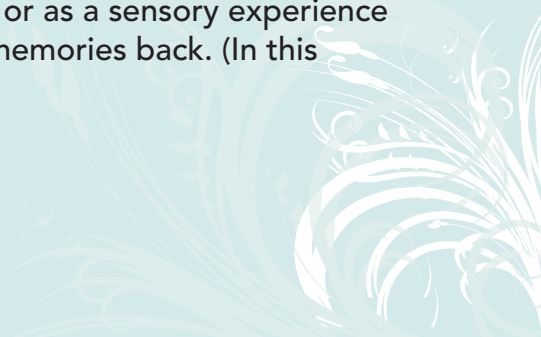
Benefits: Communication route, reduces anxiety and agitation. Improves skin condition and circulation. Relieves stiffness and arthritic pain (be aware of sensitive skin i.e. paralysis following a stroke).

Support the service user's arm with a pillow/cushion. Using oil, cream and / or talc hold the service user's hand palm down and begin gently stroking the hand. Massage the wrist bones, then back of the hand, then each finger. Turn the hand over and massage the palm. Turn the hand over again and continue to massage the back of the hand. Circle the wrist to increase movement. Gently stroke the hand to finish. Do not rush this activity. Do not use aromatherapy oils unless trained to do so. Encourage the service user to smell the creams which can enhance the sensory element of the session.

Activity: Smell quiz

Benefits: Mental stimulation – to work out identity of smell. Can open up discussions, communication, reminiscence and fun!

Everyday ingredients with a strong smell, preferably recognisable coffee, curry powder, lavender, peppermint essence. Use jars for holding the ingredients – bowls or plated could be used, but the more open, the less intense the smell which can make it more difficult, particularly for those with a diminished sense of smell. Invite the Service user to have a go sniffing the jar to see if they can identify the ingredient through smell. The colour and texture may give additional clues if needed. You could make it a competition to see how many ingredients are guessed correctly, or as a sensory experience with open discussion as to whether it is a nice smell, if it brings memories back. (In this case correct identification is not important – communication is).





Activity: Feely bags

Benefits: Sensory stimulation, mental stimulation, object recognition, communication and fun!

Plastic bags, cardboard boxes, large ice-cream tubs – things that are not see through that Service user's can put their hands in comfortably. Invite service user's to take turns in feeling the container and try to identify the object without looking at it. Examples; cotton wool, feathers, rice, dried pulses, shredded paper. You could also fill the container with packing material such as shredded paper/polystyrene pieces, and place 5-7 familiar objects in the container among the packing material. Again invite Service user's to take turns feeling in the container to identify objects without looking.

Activity: Music

Benefits: Sensory stimulation, self-expression, communication – suitable for all Service user's.

Live or recorded music, musical instruments. There are a number of different ways of using music within the activity programme i.e.:

Music relaxation: use music in the background to enhance the mood for relaxation.

Music appreciation: Take a theme i.e. jazz, classical, modern, country, war years and present a compilation of music based on that theme. Encourage service user's to select a theme – gather background information on the theme of music, style, artists etc to offer to Service user's alongside playing the music.

Music quiz: Compile a selection of recognisable songs, play the opening bars of each track, and see if service user's can identify the song. Encourage a sing-song and memories the songs trigger - reminiscence. Avoid making assumptions about individuals taste in music – often Service user's like to hear more recent music – 1960's onwards and some may enjoy hearing current music, in order to converse with younger grand-children perhaps.

Activity: Complementary therapies


Benefits: Sensory stimulation, relaxation, reported health benefits - reduces stiffness, pain, anxiety and stress. Can aid sleep, circulation.

This activity should be taken up by someone with a professional qualification such as massage, head, feet etc. Aromatherapy, reflexology – These therapies can be expensive, but link in with colleges, adult education centres etc who may be willing to come to the centre as students but with professional, qualified guidance on hand. This can be free of charge and gives the students more training.

Activity: Multi-sensory environments

Benefits: Sensory stimulation for relaxation or stimulation

Having an established room is beneficial. Knowledge of the service user is vital, with staff showing an awareness of the service users' likes and dislikes, and awareness of both good and adverse reactions. Staff should also be aware of service users' likes and dislikes regarding music and touch. Providing a sensory environment can enhance relaxation classes considerably, creating the correct atmosphere is essential to the success. Projectors, lighting effects, water features are just a few items that can be used.



Esteem activities

Activities of esteem are offered specifically to boost individual's sense of well-being and self-esteem. The more involved a service user is, who feels occupied and engaged, the greater the sense of well being. This is good for a service user who may have been unwell and in need of a boost. Also include new service users' who are feeling unsettled / anxious and service users' who may have little or no contact with family or friends. This is usually a 'failure-free' activity.

Activity: Health and beauty (make-up)

Benefits: Self awareness, self esteem, maintenance of personal care standards.

Encourage service user's to select make-up that they would wear and how they would wear it. If possible, enable the service user to apply make-up by themself. Link with local colleges who may offer this service for free.

Activity: Health and beauty (hair)

Benefits: Self-awareness, self-esteem, maintenance of personal care standards.

Great activity for ladies and gents. Forge links with a hairdresser to make regular visits / appointments. Period of time between appointments, staff could set rollers, tong or hot-brush the service user's hair.

Activity: Health and beauty (nails)

Benefits: Self-awareness, self-esteem, maintenance of personal care standards.

Activity: Roles

Benefits: Self-esteem, self-awareness, self-worth, self-identity.

A risk assessment should consider the potential risks, the likelihood of each potential risk occurring, and then all actions taken to minimise/eliminate the risk. Service user's who are "doers" and express a desire to have a 'role', and responsibility (see creative activities – food based). A 'role' could include, domestic chores, drawer tidying, setting tables, plant care, producing a newsletter, serving cakes / refreshments are examples. Bingo caller, quiz master, guest speakers – many service user's have interesting experiences they could share.

Activity: Inter-generational activities

Benefits: Self-awareness, self-esteem, self-worth, self-value

Link in with willing youngsters from local schools, colleges, youth groups etc. Many service user's will feel valued and respected if they have an opportunity to share their skills / experiences with the younger generation. They could share their experience of rationing, war etc with local schools doing a WW2 project. Listening service – service user's could work with younger children acting as "listeners" for children to practice their reading skills.

Regular visits from youngsters can promote 'grandparent' relationships. Keeping skills within the community of both generations – building respect! Schools could sing carols at Christmas / Easter. School plays/competitions etc.

Spiritual activities

The service user's spiritual needs will be extremely varied. For some spirituality may have place an important role in their lives – one that they are keen to continue. For others, religion and spirituality may have become important only recently, and for others, religion and spirituality will hold no interest at all.

The key, as always, to providing spiritually-based activities, is to know the interests, desires and needs of the service user. The frequency of spiritual activities will also be dictated by them. For some, a recognition of holy days such as Easter, Christmas or Passover will be enough. For others, a monthly service will meet their needs, for some there may be a request for individual worship. It should be important to ascertain religious faith/needs on admission.

Activity: Visits

Benefits: Remain in contact with spiritual interests and needs.

Volunteers / faith leaders may be willing to offer individual input and arrange a regular visit day. This kind of activity is best undertaken in private.

Activity: Hymn singing

Benefits: Remain in contact with spiritual interests and needs.

Many service user's have a good memory for hymns. Ask them to select their favourite ones. Provide song sheets to help those who may need assistance. Some service users may enjoy hymn singing as a specific activity, others will prefer it to be part of a larger activity. Encourage members of local congregations who will always be happy to come in on a regular basis with musical instruments, which can add greatly to the atmosphere. A service user may play the organ. At Christmas time local schools and churches will often provide access to a choir. Hymns do not have to be restricted to worship activities or hymn singing sessions, often service user's will request favourite hymns during a general sing-song.


Activity: Services

Benefits: Remain in contact with spiritual interests and needs.

Some services may include singing and keyboards. Local clergy can often be busy, some faiths will have lay preachers who are willing to come and run services on a regular basis, if required. services could be arranged for special days around the high days and holidays of each faith.

Activity: Bible readings and prayers

Benefits: Remain in contact with spiritual interests and needs.



If providing this activity for a group, be sure that all individuals within earshot are happy to listen to the readings. It may be necessary and advisable to hold this kind of activity in the quiet lounge or individually. Members of particular faiths from the local community may be willing to hold Bible-reading sessions. Some service user's will enjoy this as an activity in their own right; others may prefer it as a larger activity along with hymn-singing and prayers as well.

Activity: Religious discussion groups

Benefits: Remain in contact with spiritual interests and needs, opportunity to explore belief issues with others.

Visiting volunteers or members of religious group may like to take the chance to run religious discussion groups for and with service user's. There may be local groups in the community who meet on a regular basis to discuss beliefs and issues relevant to their faith. These groups could be invited to hold discussions. Another possibility would be for Service user's to have a group of their own. It is important that the discussion group leader is informed of values and beliefs of the faith being discussed, in order for the session to be done in an informative and considerate way.

Cultural activities

Understanding the cultural, religious and social background and histories of the service user is important, in order to retain links with local communities, and be able to provide traditional, long standing, familiar activities. Consider the lifestyles and recreating past-times of the service user. This could be theatres, dining out, charity work, their careers, pubs, clubs etc. As a picture develops the service users' cultural and traditional needs become clearer. Service user's interests and tastes can, and do change, and they may well appreciate the opportunity to find out about and experience different cultural and traditional kinds of activities.

Activity: Themed events


Benefits: Links into community events, fun, recognises family and community traditions.

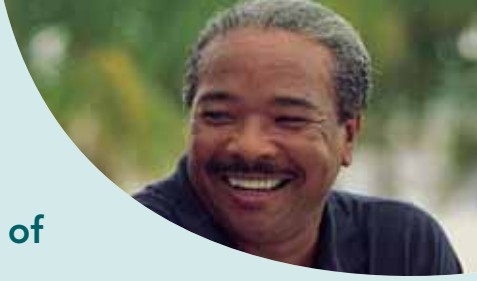
Identify a calendar of events based around themes of interest and discuss with service user's methods of celebrating i.e. a celebration of a certain period of time: 1950's night, 1920's day, a Victorian event. Local traditions like ceilidhs. Use an event as a theme like Royal Ascot, Wimbledon. National Days – St Andrew's, St Patrick's, etc. Chinese New Year, colour theme, black and white theme, theatre, horror, films, nursery rhymes.

Activity: High days and holidays

Benefits: Link into community events, fun, recognises family and community traditions, encourages reminiscence.

Identify calendar days. Discuss with service user's the days they would like to recognise and celebrate. Decorate the centre accordingly. Plan in advance. Burn's night, Valentines day, Easter, May days, Glasgow Fair, Passover, Chinese New Year, Jewish New Year, Halloween, Bonfire Night, Christmas, New Year etc.





Activity: Cultural events

Benefits: Addresses the artistic and creative interests of service user's.

Arts and crafts exhibition: Service user's could display their own art and craft work. Maybe a local library would display their work. Invite family and friends to see.

Theatre trips: link in with local theatres/amateur dramatic groups and get a programme of events.

Museum and gallery visits: recitals, again link with local groups and programmes. This could also be our own recital groups i.e. Robert Burns poems or readings.

Activity: Introduction to cultures

Benefits: Retain and reinforce cultural identity, encourages information on different cultures, encourage reminiscence, social interaction, and fun!

Identify different cultures represented by staff and service user's as a starting point – or – through discussion groups, news groups etc. Identify cultures that residents have had experience of, would like to know more about or do not understand. Invite staff, service user's or outside contacts who are representative and knowledgeable of the different cultures. Perhaps try local costumes, local traditional food or drink to try. Arrange for traditional entertainment/music. Encourage questions from service user's. Have photos/slide shows etc to lead discussion. Try and link this kind of activity to a day relevant to a particular culture i.e. Irish event on St Patrick's Day – a Chinese Event on the Chinese New Year – with food flavour for the main meal, followed by a slide show of places to visit and sights to see of the country you are representing.

Activity: Round-the-world trip

Benefits: Social interaction, increases awareness of different cultures, encourages reminiscence.

Depends on how seriously this session is taken. You could set up a room as the inside of an aircraft. Staff could dress up as pilots/stewards. Display maps, food and drink etc. The 'aircraft' could set off, stopping at different destinations. You could have local music playing to create and add to the atmosphere. When 'landed', encourage service user's to share their experiences of visits to the country i.e. holiday, war, and living. When everyone has shared their experiences, you could take off again to another country. Attempt to find out travel experiences of the service user's prior to the session, so that countries of relevance can be planned and included.

Activities to meet emotional needs

Service user's can experience a huge range of emotions when entering day care/residential settings – ranging from positive, negative, sadness, fear, anxiety. General activities can go a long way to alleviating some of the negative emotions. Enabling and encouraging service user's to becoming involved may allay fears and anxieties. Enabling service user's to continue with hobbies and interests which may provide familiarity and comfort. On occasion, however, some activities are required to focus specifically on reducing negative emotions where possible. These activities, as with those that boost self-esteem, are likely to be offered on an individual basis, although they should not be

excluded as ideas for group activities as well. It should be remembered that more serious negative emotions i.e. depression, may well require input from professionals, doctors, CPNs, counsellors.



Activity: Support groups

Benefits: Provides opportunity for information – and idea sharing, brings together individuals with common concerns, can provide emotional support.

Support groups are normally formed around a common theme, perhaps a condition or a circumstance. If the purpose of a support group meeting is to aid knowledge and information sharing, the groups primary focus is support for its members, and then more support will be gained if relationships can develop. This can also be beneficial to carers and in turn benefit the service user.

Activity: Individual activities

Benefits: Increases self-worth, improves self-esteem, addresses specific needs of the individual.

This can be time and staff restrictive, however, there will be a very real part of the service user's for individual, tailor-made activity input. Talking, whether about personal issues or generally, is the most obvious input. Finding the service user's needs and interests are key to this: playing cards, dominos, writing letters, hand massage, manicures, hair/beauty sessions, listening to music, outings to gardens, museums, places of familiarity, painting, card-making etc.

Activity: Relaxation

Benefits: Can reduce stress, and anxiety, generate increased feelings of well-being: promotes sleep and improved concentration.

A quiet area, which will be undisturbed, ensure everyone is comfortable, and can hear. Ensure the service user understand the purpose and nature of the session. A routine can be based around breathing exercises, physical movement or psychological imagery and meditation. A routine could include bits of each of the 3 styles. Music is also beneficial to enhance the effect, however, be aware of different tastes in music. What one person finds relaxing to listen to, other may not. Multi-sensory sessions i.e. projectors, water features, lights can also aid the relaxation effect.

Activity: Pets as Therapy (P.A.T.)

Benefits: Petting animals has been showing to aid relaxation and bring about emotional comfort. Encourages well-being through familiarity, can aid reminiscence and communication.

See 'Social' activities – animals

Activity: Befriending

Benefits: A form of support that would benefit service user's outwith day care, or who have limited community support from family and friends.



Make contact with volunteer organisations i.e. hands on project, Red Cross volunteers, C.S.V. Make sure any groups used are able to provide disclosures.



Educational and employment

Many service user's express a desire to continue to learn and continue with employment-type activities – those that they perceive to be of a work nature. This may be out of desire to continue to be worthwhile, as it encourages a sense of self-identity, and a feeling of being useful, and promotes feelings of self-worth. Obviously, opportunities for most services to work are very limited, but work-type activities can be offered. These may be provided on an individual or group basis, and as and when the service user wishes to do it. Good risk assessment should ensure that the activity could be provided once all reasonable steps have been taken to reduce the level of risk. All activities have the potential to be educational – learning to knit, learning a new card game. Educational activities can be used specifically as an educational tool.

Activity: Domestic chores

Benefits: Many service user's miss the very familiar chores that will have played a large part in their lives, and they may appreciate the opportunity to have a role in understanding this kind of 'activity' again. Such a role can enhance self-esteem, reinforce self-identity and generate feelings of well-being and satisfaction.

Setting tables, dusting, drawer tidying, plant care – see 'Esteem'

Activity: Hospitality


Benefits: Increased sense of self-worth and esteem encourages relationship building, particularly with new service users. This offers the opportunity for new service user's or visitors to hear about day care/ residential care directly from those who use it.

Day care can be busy places. More able service users could take on responsibility for meeting, greeting and making welcome certain visitors. This could be new service users, families, potential service user's, visitors. A staff member may be on hand to answer specific questions.

Activity: Newsletter

Benefits: Provides opportunity for communication, both with peers and outside. For those taking an active role, there is cognitive stimulation, an increased sense of self-worth and value, and an opportunity to be part of a finished outcome.

Encourage contributions from service user's, staff and families. Developing a newsletter can be difficult to sustain. Recruit Service user's to take on roles i.e. provider of crosswords/word games. Provider or horoscopes: Provider of local interest stories: Proof reader: Copier: Distributor etc.



Service users may not be able to take an active role in the production but they will always be a source of information and news stories, celebrations of birthdays/anniversaries, reminiscence materials and memories.

Activity: Lifelong learning

Benefits: Cognitive stimulation, concentration, memory, communication, sharing skills and knowledge, learning new skills and knowledge.

There are many organisations looking at lifelong learning and ways of encouraging older people to take up new learning and development for themselves, or to participate in the learning and development of others. Contacts such as:

University of Third Age (0207 737 2541), The Dark Horse Venture (0151 729 0092), Age Exchange (0208 318 9105), Age Resource as well as Local Adult Education Colleges, youth groups, schools or colleges often have learning opportunities that older people can assist with – acting as a ‘listener’ for people learning to read, ‘local historian’ for those studying past events etc.

Activity: Speakers

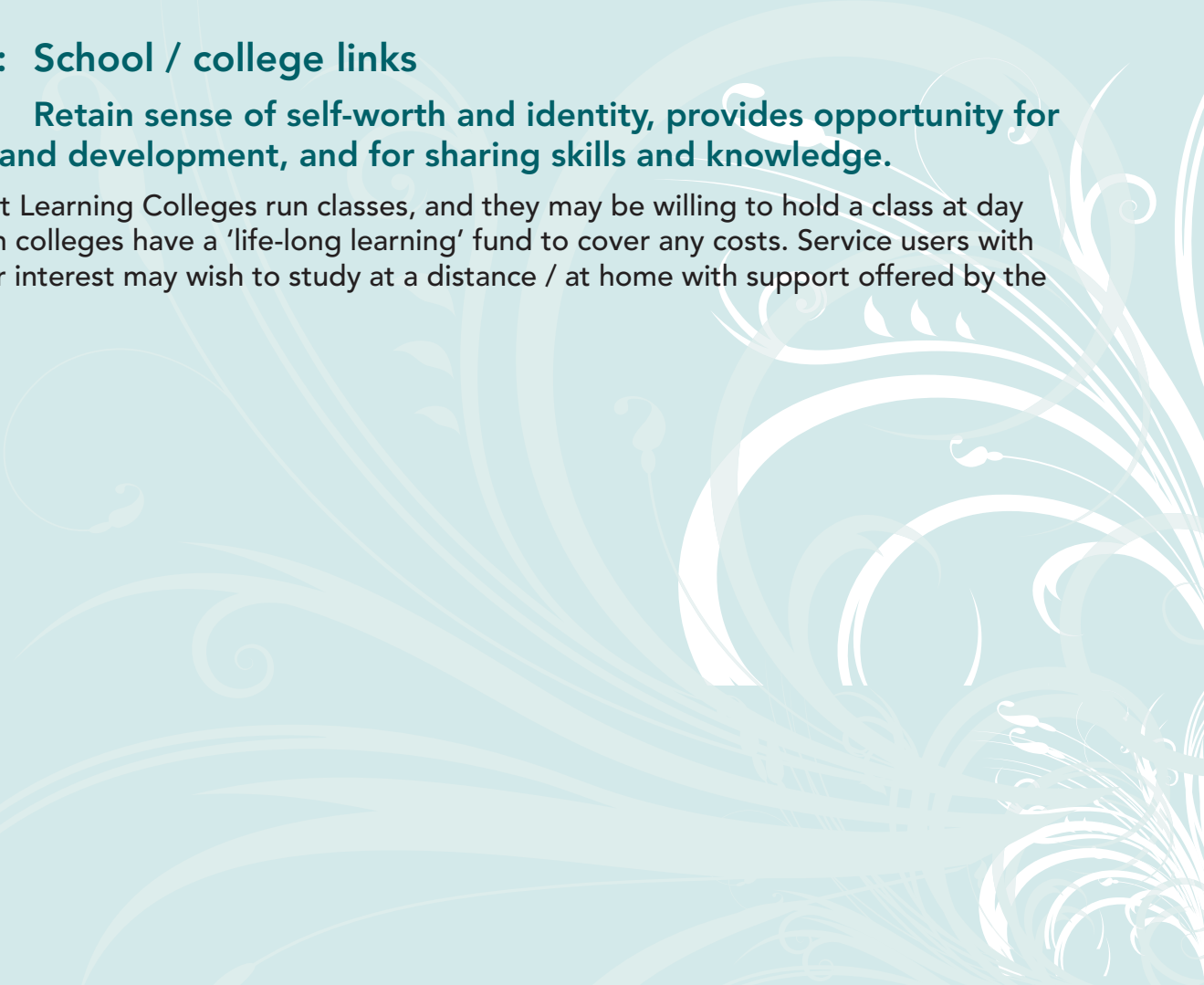
Benefits: Cognitive stimulation, opportunity for learning, communication and discussion: opportunity for learning and development.


Identify with group the kind of speaker and the kind of topic they would find of interest: staff, family, friends, local organisation for speakers – ensure the speaker can tailor make the talk in length and style. Organisations could be Women’s Institute, local interest groups, welfare organisations, animal welfare, local mayor, someone with an interesting hobby.

Activity: School / college links

Benefits: Retain sense of self-worth and identity, provides opportunity for learning and development, and for sharing skills and knowledge.

Many Adult Learning Colleges run classes, and they may be willing to hold a class at day care. Often colleges have a ‘life-long learning’ fund to cover any costs. Service users with a particular interest may wish to study at a distance / at home with support offered by the college.





For more information or if you want this information in a different format or language, please phone 01698 453930 or email strategic_services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk
www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk