



Participation=Communication + Motivation

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Engagement, participation and involvement are words that the activity professional knows very well. An overriding goal of most activity programs is to have each resident participate in the life of the community to the highest extent possible. This sounds simple, but in reality, it is often a challenging task. One of the biggest surprises for the new activity professional is the realization that scheduling an event on the “calendar” is not an instant recipe for success. Participation is the result of effective communication and positive approaches for motivation. This involves working with and through others.

Activity management is “working with and through others” to accomplish the goals of the life enrichment program. Perhaps the most important management responsibility is to implement systems to invite, to encourage, and to assist a resident to participate in their preferred lifestyle pursuits. The key people that we must work with and through are the direct care partners. The support of the resident aide or nursing assistant is imperative. Management staff, families and volunteers are important, but the care partner is pivotal for involvement to occur.

The first step is to educate “others” about the many positive psychosocial outcomes that can be derived from “coming to the activity.” An explanation of group dynamics and leadership practices that are implemented during an activity is vital. It must be understood that the activity “leader” or volunteer is the **catalyst** for interactions. In most cases, social engagement with others does not just happen; it is the result of specific actions of the group leader. For example:

- Introducing a resident to others with similar interests or background creates bonds and feelings of connectedness
- Reinforcing their likes or dislikes helps a resident continue to have identity or individuality
- Listening and acting upon a resident’s opinion during a discussion increases their feelings of independence
- Triggering pleasant memories through music, art, reminiscing also contributes to positive emotions
- Enabling a resident to give advice, share wisdom and take on an “adult capable” role increases their sense of worth
- Voicing positive traits, patterns, and past accomplishments with admiration increases self-esteem
- Validating good choices, caring actions, strength of character, hard work, relationships with others, positive attitude or a sense of humor promote worth in the face of declining health
- Sharing nurturing relationships increase a person’s ability to cope and improves mood



The second step is to demonstrate techniques to invite, encourage and assist a resident to an activity. These approaches can be integrated into the daily care routines of the direct care staff. Consider the following:

1. Use an individualized approach that validates the strengths of the resident. For example:
 - Mr. Jones, it is important to you to learn new things, the brain-fit program will help challenge you!
 - Mr. B. your help is needed with the project today. Your ideas are always innovative.
 - Mrs. A your friendly attitude is so appreciated. We can really use it today.
 - Joe, you make good decisions, we need you today.
 - Mrs. D. you make friends so easily, come meet a few new friends today.
 - Anne, your sense of humor makes us smile. Come have a laugh with us.
2. Avoid using a “generic approach” such as C’mon it will be fun! Many times fun is seen as unproductive for a person who values hard work and purpose.
3. Use a positive tone of voice but not a sing-song childish tone.
4. Listen intently to the resident’s feelings. Do not discount them.
5. Remove task and social demands: many residents lack confidence. “Let’s walk down and watch”
6. Assist the resident with appropriate clothing and accessories. They are “going out.”

The third step is to create awareness and excitement for the scheduled activities each month. The calendar looks the same to “others” outside of the life enrichment department. Give each month a FOCUS. To do this:

- Examine the holidays, themed events, seasonal activities and special recognition days that you wish to celebrate.
- Write them on a flip chart.
- Determine an underlying thread that ties them together. How do these events reinforce purpose and meaning in the lives of the residents? How can they promote relationships between staff and residents?

Here is my example for June. Flag Day, Father’s Day, CNA week, longest day of the year, National Dairy Month.

Focus of the month: The World of Work and the People that Make a Difference

Summary of the month: June is a time to reflect on the people of our nation and **the work** they do. During “Fathers Week” we will honor fathers, and the **valuable contribution** they make and the important lessons they teach. We will say “thank-you” to the many career nursing assistants who **make a difference** and assist us in our daily lives during CNA Week. We will stop to **recognize** the foundations of our country and the work of so many to keep our ideals alive. Flag Day is a day to keep our flag traditions alive. We will also pay **tribute** to astronomers at our **LONGEST DAY (June 21)** of the



year celebration. And, thanks to farmers, dairymen, milkmen and the ice cream truck driver for bringing us the Best celebration of all National Dairy Month. Look for cheese, frozen yogurt, pudding and ICE CREAM SUNDAES this month.

Special Events that reinforce the theme and promote staff and family relationships:

- 1 CNA Day Picnic, Nursing Assistant Week
- 2 Flag Day Lemonade Stand
- 3 Father's Day Cook Out
- 4 Take me Out to the Ball Game Afternoon
- 5 Men's Dine-Out "IN"
- 6 Juneteenth Observance 19
- 7 Longest Day of the YEAR celebration: pancake breakfast and evening concert under the stars
- 8 Trip to Dairy Queen
- 9 Barbershop Memories

Birthday Theme: The community birthday celebration will utilize the June flower, the ROSE. The music will feature songs with the word ROSE in the title or lyrics. Decorations will include red, yellow and white roses.

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- 1 The Rose by Bette Midler
- 2 Yellow Rose of Texas
- 3 Red Roses for a Blue Lady
- 4 Bread and Roses
- 5 Days of Wine and Roses
- 6 Eighteen Yellow Roses

Everyone attending the Resident Council Meeting will receive a flag pin in recognition of Flag Day

The Special Bingo this month will be FAMILY AND FRIEND BINGO.

The members of **SERVE** (seniors engaging, renewing, validating empowering) will be sponsoring a penny drive to help with flags at the graves at the national cemetery.

Following these 3 steps for communication and motivation will result in participation!

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