

Sample Job Duties of an Activity Professional **What does the job look like?**

The tasks assigned to the activity/life enrichment professional will differ between levels of care. Duties in a Memory Care community will be different than those in a skilled nursing facility or an independent living community. The job duties will typically fall into the following six categories.

1. Planning and operations
2. Documentation and record keeping
3. Volunteer management
4. Community and staff support
5. Professional development
6. Activity service delivery
 - a. General goal directed programs
 - b. Specialized therapeutic groups
 - c. Independent or self-directed endeavors
 - d. Resident led or leadership opportunities
 - e. Specialized activity services for individuals 1-1
 - f. Environmental enrichment and engagement support

1. Planning and Operations

- Adhering to Federal and State regulations-compliance
 - Resident Council, mail delivery, voting, self-determination, rights
- Controlling for health and safety, including infection control
- Developing policy and procedures
- Developing and designing the calendar of events
- Managing the Activity Department-communication and reports
- Preparing strategic plans for the activity department
- Attending meetings-department head, ethics, QA, care plan
- Allocating resources-budget
- Participating in quality assurance/QAPI
- Participating in surveys or reviews

2. Documentation and Record keeping

The requirements for different types of facilities vary. Nursing facility requirements are the most stringent. These include:

- Completing individualized activity assessments
- Completing the comprehensive assessment MDS 3.0 (assigned sections-F)
- Developing individualized care plans
- Maintaining precautions lists
- Writing participation response and attendance notes
- Writing progress notes
- Completing Quarterly reviews or change of condition
- Participating in discharge planning

3. Volunteer management

- Identifying program needs

- Developing a recruitment plan for qualified volunteers
- Developing or revising volunteer job descriptions
- Providing orientation and training for volunteers (service learning, episodic, virtual, routine)
- Writing a volunteer manual
- Supervising the tasks and outcomes of volunteer jobs
- Recognizing the contributions and impact of volunteer work

4. Community and Staff Support

- Networking to identify program resources
- Communicating the value of the program for support from all stakeholders
- Developing relationships with community, staff and families

5. Professional Development

- Attending in-service education sessions
- Attending continuing education seminars
- Participating in professional organizations for networking and support
- Completing the requirements for NCCAP certification
- Writing or presenting to professional or community groups

6. Activity Service Delivery-Integrating technology throughout each area

***General goal directed**

- Coordinate resident's birthday celebrations, individual and group
- Develop resources for entertainment
- Coordinate obtaining and showing movies, videos, slide programs, you tube
- Facilitate Bingo and other games
- Plan and implement holiday celebrations/events
- Plan and implement social functions, parties, teas, special meals
- Plan and implement mental activities, (trivia, Wheel of Fortune, Price is Right, word games, language classes, brain health classes, memory classes)
- Plan and implement trips and outings into the community
- Plan and coordinate Resident Council
- Lead, implement music programs (sing-a-longs, listening, performing, dinner/background, hymns, music games, music trivia)
- Plan and coordinate Special Events (Family Nights, Sr. Olympics, Annual Bazaar, Community Carnivals, Easter Egg Hunts, Vacation Get-Aways)
- Coordinate worship and religious activities (services, bible study, practices)
- Implement movement and exercise programs (eurythmics, sittercize, walking, action games and sports, yoga, tai chi)
- Coordinate and lead discussion groups (current topics, reminiscing, panel discussion, community groups, lecture series)
- Plan and coordinate intergenerational programs
- Plan and implement cooking and food preparation activities

***Specialized Therapeutic Groups**

- Plan and implement structured activities for dementia residents
- Plan and lead a sensory enrichment group
- Coordinate support groups for stroke, diabetes, low vision
- Facilitate a "young-adult" program

Plan and implement passive groups for “low endurance” residents
Coordinate Veteran’s groups
Plan and implement gardening group programs
Plan and lead remotivation or resocialization groups
Plan and implement newcomer’s group activities

***Independent/Self-Directed**

Arrange and facilitate puzzles, cards, games
Obtain supplies for resident independent use
Secure adaptive equipment (talking books, radio for the blind, Braille bingo cards)
Provide assistance for computer access, IPADS, Video chats
Coordinate library, large print books, book cart
Facilitate “coffee and social hours”
Facilitate correspondence/ pen pal programs
Coordinate voting

***Resident Role/Leadership Opportunities**

Supervise resident volunteers

- Calendars
- Mail
- *Visitation*
- Committees

Resident stores/sales
Service Projects (recycle, can drives, collections)

***Specialized Activity Services (Individual-One-to One)**

Identify, plan and implement an individualized activity pursuit program for appropriate residents, utilizing families, volunteers or staff
Provide favorite snack programs
Read to me programs
Outside/nature walks
Word games
Environment enrichment activities
Provide pet visits
Facilitate music/instruments
Scrapbooks and memory activities
Religious and prayer opportunities

***Environment (enrichment and supportive)**

Arrange bird feeders
Coordinate aquariums
Display pictures to promote activity participation
Decorate the facility for all holidays
Coordinate exhibits and displays
Coordinate art shows
Display pictures, artwork in social spaces
Coordinate music in the environment
Coordinate “carts” (news/magazine, cookie, juice, tea)

Program Development Strategies

The Activity Professional is continually figuring out ways to meet the individual needs of ALL the residents who live at a specific community. Interest inventories and population assessments are vital.

The activity program that is developed is a combination of all the different types of activities that are designed to meet these individual needs and preferences.

The Activity Professional will plan and implement groups of different sizes and will deliver activity services on an individual basis to others.

The majority of activities are designed for a group of people (12-25) and include the more traditional activities such as exercise, discussions, games, worship, leisure and social events and parties.

For residents who do not benefit from these groups because of cognitive, physical or emotional barriers, small groups (3-6) or individual activity visits may be implemented.

As a program is developed, it is important to offer a wide range of activities. The following list and grid can be used as an audit tool to review the types of programs that have been offered. Within each category the possibilities are endless.

For each level of care along the continuum, from independent to Alzheimer's or skilled nursing the categories of activities from which we choose are the same: the adaptations and the way it is implemented will be different.

Every activity and idea that you will read or see, will need to be adapted to the setting in which you work. Technology can bring these programs to the residents virtually as well.

Categories to consider as you develop and review the program include:

Art	Humor
Audiovisual programs	Intergenerational
Cooking and baking	Lectures
Crafts	Literature
Current events/news	Music
Dance	Outdoor
Discussions	Pets and animals
Drama	Parties and socials
Educational	Outings/Trips
Entertainment	Sports
Exercise	Special Events
Exhibits	Visitation
Games	Worship

LIFE ACTIVITY AREAS-ideas, ideas, ideas

Art	Audiovisual Presentation	Cooking and Baking	Crafts
Current Events and Citizenship	Dance	Discussion Groups	Drama
Educational Classes	Entertainment	Exercise	Exhibits
Games	Intergenerational	Lectures	Literature
Music	Nature and Outdoor	Pets and Animals	Parties and Socials
Outings and Trips	Service Projects	Sports	Visitation
Worship	Special Events		

Establishing the Framework-The Calendar of Events

1. As a calendar of activities is developed the following points should be considered.

Will ALL events be listed on the master calendar?

All daily, routine activities (exercise, morning talk)

Individual room visits (One-to-one visits)

Specific activities for different levels (Low cognitive groups)

Just highlighted “special” or “social” events

Spontaneous or independent activities (cards and games available or family visits)

Will the type (dimension of wellness) of activity be noted on the calendar, perhaps color-coded?

Will there be a separate “spiritual calendar” or “night owl calendar?”

Will there be a calendar for virtual programming, live streaming, or in-house broadcasting?

If each weekday is basically the same (as in memory care) will there be a weekly calendar with more room for explanation?

Will the calendar be a marketing tool?

Will each resident receive a copy for their rooms?

Will a calendar software program be used to communicate events digitally, using monitors/IPADS?

2. Calendar frameworks should be planned 3-6 months in advance. Special events should be planned in January for the year.
3. The entertainment for large special events should be arranged and the date of the event planned around this availability.
4. Choose names that are adult appropriate and reflect the goal of the program.
5. Be creative with a new “series” (a specific start and end)
6. Plan events at high visitation times, offer activities that can be done together, help make visits positive.
7. The font type is very important, the spacing between entries is crucial . The more space between entries the easier it is to read.

EXPERIMENT and ASK the Residents !!

8. Will you print in color?

9. Will you use pictures?

10. What color paper will you use?

Many activity professionals print on colored paper for a special effect.

DON'T.....it is very difficult for the older eye to see black print on dark paper. Research indicates the best choice is a cream or light yellow with black print. However, n my experience, residents have chosen light pastel blue or green with black print. In many cases a bright white will cause glare for some residents.

Continually obtain the feedback from the residents.

11. Each facility will have one or more calendars mounted on the wall of the community in a prominent place. These range in size from 22x34 to 36x60. These are usually colorful, and in some cases, must adhere to certain standards. For instance, the border must be in 3-D or it must use at least 3 colors. This is dependent on company policies. These wall calendars can be ordered locally through copy stores or

ordered online from the many calendar companies. **TIP: Place an arrow or cut out “window” on the correct date to help residents read the correct daily schedule.**

12. If using digital calendars, where will the displays be located? Will you need a hard copy as well? Will you print a daily schedule as well as monthly, or will you print a weekly schedule?
13. Will you use an email “contact” system to provide continual communication and reminders about events to the residents and families?

Be Prepared for Special Events

All activities are not created equal! The time required for planning, preparation and implementation of a special event is not the same as an ice cream social. Routine activities, such as exercise, music, news, daily devotions or worship, and occupational ADLs require minimal advanced planning. Special interest activities such as garden groups, pet visits, intergenerational activities, projects and community service, classes, clubs and study groups require increased planning time. Events and celebration activities such as holiday celebrations, themed events, live events such as birthdays and anniversaries or trips require a major commitment of time. **Special events are a crucial component of a successful activity program.** Their role is to build relationships between residents, staff and the community, provide an escape from daily routines and promote anticipation of the future. The ideas for events are endless. **The challenge for activity professionals is in scheduling the time, gaining support from staff and families, and securing the resources (both human and supplies) to implement the event.**

As you develop special events, consider these questions and discuss with staff, residents and families:

How many special events can realistically be implemented quarterly?

Looking at the year in quarters tends to show peak “busy” times. Events require 2-3 months advanced planning. Schedule special event time on your working calendar. Make this part of your week.

What are the favorite “themed” days of residents? Of the staff?

Involve the staff in planning. Make it easy and convenient for the staff to participate. Provide time for them to “make” a costume or prop or supply a trunk of accessories. The employees generally do not have the time or resources to do this on their own. Suggest that each department sponsor a themed event.

What events can be planned using the experiences of individual residents? Is there a place a resident has always wanted to visit?

Susan Richards, activity director in Montana, took the residents to the Grand Canyon to fulfill a resident wish. I just planned “Gold Rush Days” in Texas for a resident longing for his days in Colorado. This promotes person centered care and gains support from families.

What events are considered “traditions” at your specific facility?

Each facility is unique. Create your niche by implementing one or more special traditional events. (annual crawfish boil, dinner at the Ritz, Senior Prom or strawberry fest). Share resources with others in your company, use materials that can be used each year to cut costs.

What events in your community can be integrated into your activity program?

Use the events in your community to “piggy back.” For residents that cannot attend, bring it to them in style! In Texas, the annual State Fair is a customary routine for many residents. Parades, festivals, a taste of the town, or art fairs can be used as resources: flowers, decorations and promotional materials.

What holidays, celebrations or themes can be combined?

Combining events in busy months can save time and money. Use the holiday or theme for a birthday party or family affair. Mardi Gras becomes the birthday theme, not a separate party.

What will you do before this event to increase anticipation and what will you do after to promote reflection?

Preparatory activities are a vital part of programming. Anticipation of an event is sometimes more meaningful than the event itself. Don't rush into the next activity, take time to reflect and hear resident stories. Schedule "work crew" as the resident activity to help.

How will you expand the event in other activities throughout the month?

As you plan the event, use a Program Expansion Tool. A form that enables you to create the following activities based on the event topic: an intergenerational activity, a community group to come in, a trip or outing, an exhibit, a class or demonstration, a game or competitive event, a craft, cooking or food preparation, staff opportunity for involvement. This again is a budget friendly idea.

How will you implement the event as a "multi-level" event, meeting the diverse functioning levels of the group?

A resident "planning and decoration committee" is important. All tasks and roles that can be performed by a resident should be assigned. Identify residents to serve as greeters, overseeing a guest book, or presenting portions of the program. A technique I call "the anatomy of an event." helps to illustrate the outcomes that the one event will provide. It is a diagram or mind map of all the opportunities for resident leadership, accomplishment, socialization, creativity, and staff-resident-family relationships that are provided by this one event. It is a great tool for validation of the time commitment for an event and will help the staff understand the magnitude of your event planning duties.

Planning is a process. Planning is done in advance. Planning effectively can save time and money.