

Handout

Information on Recreation Departments Responsibilities in Long Term Care Facilities

Recreation Staff endeavor to fill the leisure time that is available after life's necessities are attended to. Recreation's purpose is not to "kill" time but to make time live. Participating in chosen activities charges our clients batteries. It is part of their lives that they look forward to.

Recreation programs meet physical, social, intellectual, spiritual and emotional needs with programs that are meaningful to the clients in which we serve. These programs provide socialization, nurturing, fun, self-expression, self-esteem, sensory communication, laughter, reminiscing and learning new things. It also allows recreation staff the opportunity to be client advocates. Physical programs promote health, help maintain residents' independence, assist with maintaining residents strength and balance, raise energy levels and promotes better sleep through exercise programs.

Our social goals for our clients include offering companionship to them through such programs as meal groups, teas and holiday parties.

For our clients intellectual stimulation, we use games such as trivia, crosswords and old fashioned spelling bees.

Our therapeutic goals help to relieve the clients boredom and stress as well as helping maintain social skills, helping to maintain communication skills, helps to fulfill sense of community, provides opportunities to share with others, increases quality of life, helps prevent challenging behaviors, maintains life interests, encourages family participation and an opportunity to celebrate familiar holidays and traditions.

Music is used in various programs. It reaches all levels of our beings and does wonders for our spirits. There are many types of music available for our residents which pertain to their generation.

Our spirituality-based programs - hymn-sings, church, devotions and communion - allow our clients an opportunity to practice their faiths and maintain their worship traditions in community with others.

Client/Family Council usually meet once a month. It gives both our clients and family members a direct voice in their care and programs that are offered.

Recreation Staff are also responsible for personal shopping for our clients who request this service and that their "special" needs, be they chocolates or a special soap, a magazine, a personal drink, cigarettes etc.

Recreation Professionals modify programs to allow clients who have various disabilities the opportunity take part in programs offered. Such items as wooden card holders are available for stroke patients, a bowling ramp for more frail seniors, large bingo cards and a video magnifying machine for the visually impaired.

Large programs, those with twenty-plus participants, include programs such as devotions, church, entertainment and special events such as Mardi Gras, Pizza Day and Valentine's Parties.

Small programs, those with six-12 participants, include programs such as meal groups, trivia, community news, poetry reading, bowling and manicures.

Individual activities include programs such as Snoezelen Room (sensory stimulation), hand wax, hand therapy, video magnifier assistance, chats and walks.

Normalization activities answer our clients need to help and feel needed. Our clients may fold laundry, peel vegetables, make play dough for our nursery school visitors and so on.

Usually three-or-more programs are scheduled for each day, as well as one-on-one interactions.

Other examples of programs are exercises, bowling, walks, darts, parachute, bingo and crafts. Props like balls, music, bowling pins and balls, exercise tubing and weights are used to accomplish goals for our clients.

Recreation staff varies in each facility.

Most facilities have wonderful volunteers who give of their time and energies to help improve our clients quality of life.

A Pastoral Care Coordinator's role is to coordinate the various church services that are held in the facility and to ensure that community clergy, who volunteer for these services, are notified of the appropriate day and time.

The Volunteer Coordinator's role is to recruit, train and supervise our many dedicated volunteers. Volunteers help to keep our residents/clients connected with the world around them, one-to-one unhurried time through activities as visits, music, playing cards and going for walks. Many times Pastoral Care and Volunteer services is a role of the Recreation Director.

For facilities that are fortunate enough to have a Pastoral Care Coordinator and a Volunteer Coordinator, they usually operate under the umbrella of The Recreation and Volunteer Services Manager.

