Developmental Disabilities and Dementia

Recreational/Activity Therapy Techniques

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OVERVIEW

- differences encountered when working adults with DD and dementia
- the importance of continuing to be connected to others in the community
- the value of continuing to stimulate interests and memory throughout life
- basic categories of activity
- how to adapt activities for adults with developmental disabilities and dementia

Definition: Developmental Disability

Mental Retardation
Cerebral Palsy
Epilepsy
Autism
or another neurological or other condition related to mental retardation or that requires treatment similar to that required for individuals with mental retardation.
Which:
Originated before the individual attained age eighteen;
Continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely, &
Results in substantial limitations to an individual's intellectual and/or adaptive functioning.

Common behaviors associated with dementia

- Memory loss
- Solving problems, completing several step tasks becomes difficult
- Unable to find way in familiar places
- Personal judgment is reduced, ability to reason is lessened
- For a complete list of the warning signs from the Alzheimer's Association see: www.alz.org

Focus is on functional capabilities for people with DD

- Memory is impaired in areas that used to be functioning
- Withdrawal, apathy, less responsive, longer time to respond
- Changes in personality
- Not being able to find the closet, bus stop, or red sweater
- May become distressed, confused, or short tempered

Individuals with severe developmental disabilities

- Sometimes paranoid or distrustful of familiar and new activities
- Explosive emotions may follow sudden changes in mood
- Unable to organize objects
- Unable to speak anymore
Why people choose to participate

- Socialization
- Physical well-being
- For enjoyment
- To create
- To relax
- To feel pampered

Categories of Leisure Activities

- Arts & Entertainment
- Learning Activities
- Service Activities
- Sports & Outdoor Recreation
- Hobbies & Crafts

Adaptation: changing or adjusting activity to suit different conditions/people in order to maintaining skills and compensate for decline.

For example:
- Use a color coded button on a camera shutter
- Enlarge drawing materials
- Use two hands to dribble a basketball, play toss or dig in the garden
- Use picture cards to communicate with others in the community

Ideas for Arts & Entertainment

- Classic movie afternoon
- Going to the closest library
- Dancing
- Photographs
- Art Gallery
- Music
- Arts Activities
- Pets
- Cards, bingo, simple games

Ideas for Learning Activities

- Singing
- Sing-a-longs
- Karaoke
- Drawing
- Cooking

Ideas for Sports & Outdoor Recreation Activities

- Bird watching
- Lawn bowling
- Kite flying
- Walking
- Fishing
- Table tennis
**Ideas for Hobbies & Crafts**

- Sewing
- Knitting & Crocheting
- Rag-rug making
- Wood refinishing
- Wreath making
- Gardening
- Collecting

**Ideas for Service Activities**

- Special event volunteering
- Church
- Food bank or lettuce brigade
- Office Work
- Neighborhood clean-up

**Questions?**