

Activities for Men's Groups (Emerald Level and Some Amber Level)

Social Activities (be prepared that most Ambers will watch and may not participate much in social groups – encourage them to 'hang out' and be part of the group – give them time away from all the women, creating a Men's Space and Time, if possible.

1. Game Time – either pre-record a locally interesting game, get a copy of older but 'highlighted games' from familiar or favorite teams and sports, or have a live-time game or sport event on the big screen TV. Set out pretzels or other snack food, and have non-alcohol beer and drinks. Have sports sections of the paper lying around. Have a leader who is willing to talk about the game or sports and ask questions about the sports in question.
2. Barbershop Time – Set up a space with water as a 'Barber Shop' or use the Beauty Shop immediately after breakfast on days when the Shop is not in use. Add multiple chairs in a horseshoe or semi-circle. Bring in CD player and have big band or WWII or jazz playing on the CD at low volume. Have newspapers and magazines about cars, farming, hunting, fishing, sports. Have a RA (male if possible) provide morning shaving for men, one at a time while the others gather and sit and talk.
3. Remembering the Past Group – Get pictures from the internet and from family members, if possible about previous: jobs/careers or occupations, sport activities, colleges, clubs or organizations, hobbies or leisure time activities, military service. (If you have the capability, scan the photos into a computer and create a powerpoint slide show. If not, make copies of the photos and plan to share them around), Prepare a short presentation about the 'topic' for the day. 3-8 slides with comments and information. Combine in a few starter questions: Did you experience anything like this? How different was this than how you did things? What did you like about your _____ (work/education/sport/belonging to a club....)? What was really hard about it? What did you learn by doing that? What else did you do? What did you always wish you had done?....

Table Top Activities

1. Sorting out nuts, bolts, washers – can be simple (two distinct items) or more complex (multiple items with size differences or flat bladed versus Phillips headed slots in screws that vary in length or size.
2. Playing dominoes, checkers, Chinese Checkers, card games, or chess. It is the rhythm of the game not the accuracy of the play that matters!
3. Fold pre-folded letters, put them in envelopes
4. Put labels on envelopes or on index cards
5. Sort index cards –
 - a. Get colored index cards – sort them into color piles
 - b. Make a set of index cards with letters on them – have residents put a set of index cards with the letters of the alphabet into the 'correct order' (you might need a alphabet on the table top as a aid, and you may need to point at the letters as the person is looking for one or sorting) – You can simplify the task by having only a few letters at a time and do it as a matching task
 - c. Make a set of index cards with numbers on them – 1-20 or 1-50 – mix them up and have residents sort them out counting up....
6. Index card Matching or Index Card Games -
 - a. Create index cards with 'cut out' pictures or DRAWN pictures on them (this can take a couple of sessions to create) THEN you have cards and you can have residents sort them into categories or groups (shapes, animals, colors, tools, office furniture or equipment, farming equipment, car related items, yard work equipment, fruits, vegetables, appliances)
 - b. You can also play games – divide the piles up giving each person some items, then ask everyone to look for:

- i. Things you find in a office, on a farm, out in the yard, in a garden, in the house, in a car or on a car or tractor, or truck
 - ii. Animals that live on a farm/in a zoo, in the jungle/ in the water/ in your house
 - iii. Fruits and vegetables that are a certain color, that are favorites, that you can grow...
 - iv. Matching shapes
 - v. Matching or sorting cars, trucks, tractors
- 7. Go to the local thrift Store and buy some old 'machines that can be taken apart safely with a few tools. Bring in a set of tools to be used, screw drivers (flat blade and phillips head in a couple of sizes), pliers, crescent wrenches, needle nose pliers, small hammer. Make sure you label and account for all tools at start and end of session. Put down an older plastic tablecloth – wrong side up, so it is not slick and will 'catch' the pieces as they come off and keep the table top safe and un-scratched. Have the men take the machine apart or talk with and work with someone in the maintenance department to have that person work with the men to take the machine apart. Have pot of coffee (decaf) available and encourage breaks and chatting as you go.
- 8. Have someone make a 'Nut and Bolt Board' with holes drilled through for placing nuts (and washers on bolts thru the holes OR taking them apart. Create the board so it 'stand up' securely and can be placed directly in front of each person. You can do the same kind of thing with small predrilled holes in 2x4's and use 1-1 ¼ inch screws placed in the holes to have the residents screw them down tightly or unscrew them and put them in a container. Keep everything together. You may want to have a 'clamp to hold the boards down while they are working on them.
- 9. Shoe Shine Time – Get a bunch of 'leather' shoes from a Goodwill or Thrift Store (you may be able to bargain with them that you will bring them back and they will look better, so they may not charge you anything for them. Have everyone put on a work apron or clothing/lap protector. Have those who are more able apply the polish with a rag or an applicator. Then have the rest of the group use a rag or a brush to polish the shoes so they are glossy and shiny. Let them know they are making a difference for those who can't do this for themselves. A service project.
- 10. Making Blocks or making plaques. Buy wood (2x2" stock for blocks, 1x6" boards for plaques), borrow or purchase a small T-square and a small cross cut saw and sand paper (several grits from rough to extra fine) and sanding blocks. Work with some of the higher functioning residents to make and cut the wood into blocks or small plaques (2" in length for the blocks, or 6" for the plaques). Then using the sand paper and sanding blocks work to get all the rough surfaces SMOOTH. This process can take several sessions. When the wood is smooth then use a 'water-based' stain to color the blocks (you can find a number of colorful options. Then you can either stencil letters on them or decoupage pictures on them. Finally you have them coat the blocks a couple sides at a time with a 'water-based' clear polyurethane with 2-3 coats to protect the block and seal it. Between the coats, if you want to the residents can use a light rubbing with 000 steel wool to take off any raised places. This step is more important for the 'real woodworkers' in the group. Others will probably not care. This can be a service project to donate to kids centers, give as gifts, or provide to homeless shelters who serve families.
- 11. Look thru gardening catalogues and select favorites, cut out or tear out pictures – make a collage
- 12. Look thru tool catalogues and select favorites, cut out or tear out and make a collage

Physical Activities

- 1. Horseshoes or bean bag tosses at targets
- 2. Water the garden
- 3. Rake the yard
- 4. Pick up trash and sweep up the parking area or front area. Have residents wear orange vests and plan on a small (2-3 members) group to start with until the routine is established.

5. Gather and recycle plastic bottles and cans. Rinse out, remove lids, crush. Plastic bottles can be crushed by foot. Cans can be crushed with a floor or wall mounted hand operated can crusher. (here is one for \$19.95 plus shipping <http://recy-cal.stores.yahoo.net/ezcancrusher1.html> - they can also be found at Wal-Mart type stores, most of the time)
6. Badminton with rackets and balloons (balloons are helpful as they are slower to move and larger to see). Set up a net and have teams. You may play singles, doubles, or 4 to a side depending on available space. This is fun and if you space people well, safe. If you have 'swingers' who are not aware of those around them you may want to have them play with fewer people or have folks sit while they play to limit movement. If you think the rackets are too long-handled, you can take a wire clothes hanger, round up the opening, fold the hook end into a loop, cover the loop with duct tape and put a 'knee high' over the round end and use that racket.
7. Balloon volley ball – set up a net in a larger space and hit the balloon back and forth over the net. You can do this seated or standing, depending on skills sets.
8. Carnival Games – This can take TWO different routes –
 - a. You can have the men create and make these games for a 'kids day' – practice and make sure everything works well
 - b. OR You can have them create this for themselves and the ladies on the unit or throughout the building. The amount of decoration and 'finishing' may vary based on which you are going for.
 - c. The games are the ones you would find at a FAIR or Carnival - set up toss and throw challenges in a target area either on a table top or on the floor. Put a barrier up and a back sheet to block wild throws. You can use nerf or soft foam balls, waffle balls, plastic rings (found in the pool/water games sections), sling shots with golf ball ammunition, or tennis balls. Targets can be:
 - i. Plastic water bottles that have been emptied, dried and re-filled part way with sand or rice (a several day project) – stacked on cardboard slats to form a pyramid
 - ii. Empty, cleaned, partially filled soda cans with a duct tape cover for the hole on top
 - iii. Plastic water or soda bottles spaced out and partially filled for weight for a ring toss over their necks
 - iv. Small buckets or margarine containers hot-glued down to a piece of cardboard. Highlight a few in the middle as 'worth' more
 - v. Sling shot targets can be bottles that are color coded with additional weight making it harder to knock them over.
 - vi. A Golf putter and golf balls can also be used with a cardboard run down 2-5 holes to aim for.
 - vii. Add your own ideas
9. Bocce is a great game that involves lots of movement and encourages interaction and teamwork.
10. Car wash – clear some space in the parking lot, take out chairs. Get a hose with a sprayer, a vacuum cleaner, a bucket, car soap, window cleaner, lots of washing and drying towel and cloths. Get a volunteer car (the car may not get cleaned perfectly). The group can spend time looking under the hood, checking oil, talking about cars, helping to clean out or just watch, they can help wet the car, wash the car, dry the car, and enjoy the look. Take a picture of everyone around the car at the beginning and the end... A great photo op.