LIVING WELL THROUGH ACTIVITY IN CARE HOMES: THE TOOLKIT

Developed by the College of Occupational Therapists
UNDER PINNING PHILOSOPHY

Humans are intrinsically active and creative, needing to engage in a balanced range of activities in their daily lives in order to maintain health and wellbeing.
DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOLKIT

• Original Source:

• Survey

• Context

  What can we produce that is accessible, influences culture and is flexible to meet the needs of different audiences?
ACCESSIBILITY

Read on a screen- computer/tablet or phone

Print off and used in a range of ways- poster, training handout.

Language is appropriate for each audience.
1. **Assumptions** of the staff – unconscious beliefs that shape their thinking and behaviour.

2. **Values** - conscious judgements regarding right and wrong behaviour

3. **Artefacts** - procedural and environmental factors, such as staffing rotas and layout of rooms.

WHO ARE WE TARGETING THE TOOLKIT AT?

• Residents
• Family and friends
• Occupational therapists- working within and in reach.
• Care home staff
• Care home owners and managers
• Care home inspectors and commissioners.
WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

• Draws on occupational therapy expertise.

• Free ideas and materials to equip care homes to provide a service focused on residents’ needs, preferences and activity choices.

• Free materials for training.

• Free materials to support and sustain a positive change in culture.

• Free tools to review and evidence aspects of care such as personalisation, supporting dignity and wellbeing, and integration into the community.
KEY STEPS

1. External reference group.

2. Access to existing resource.

3. Pilot in care homes.

4. Sharing with Age UK

5. Final proof read and conversion into electronic format.

6. Previews and launch with key organisations.
Living Well through Activity in Care Homes: The guide for residents, their family and friends

This guide is written for people living in a care home but we hope it will be helpful for family, friends, visitors and volunteers too.

- Are you making the most of living in a care home?
- Why is being active important to me?
- What are the key elements to ensure a good home life?
- For family and friends
- Life history
- Useful resources

Main menu
Living well through activity in care homes: the guide for residents, their family and friends

Why is being active important to me?

Activity is defined as everything we ‘do’. To be emotionally and physically well we need to actively participate in daily life. This is not an added bonus of good care but an essential requirement. When we sit for most of the day with little movement or stimulation it harms our physical and mental wellbeing.

What happens when someone stops being active?

- Their muscles and bones weaken and their joints stiffen
- They may experience loss of appetite and trouble digesting food
- They are more likely to have urinary infections, which can lead to incontinence
- They may feel less alert and have difficulty concentrating
- Their sleep pattern becomes poor
- They are more likely to have breathing difficulties and chest infections
- Their blood pressure increases and their heart weakens
- They risk having pressure sores
- They may feel bored, short tempered, irritable or anxious
- They may lose confidence and skills, which can lead to confusion and disorientation
Living well through activity in care homes:
the guide for residents, their family and friends

Comfort
As your relative or friend may not be able to tell you if they are in pain or discomfort when you visit you can check they are comfortable by:

- Noticing the atmosphere: the temperature, noise levels and smells. Look for signs of discomfort or stress. Can you or care staff make adjustments to make them more comfortable? Is there a quiet space they can spend time in?
- Seating and positioning: are they sitting comfortably, are they well supported in their chair or the bed?
- Clothing or footwear: do they fit comfortably on the body? Check for tightness or rubbing.
- Drinking and eating: checking and assisting to ensure regular habits.

Ideas for your visits
Sensory level of ability
People at the sensory level of ability are mainly concerned with sensation and responding to those sensations. Use touch and be warm and reassuring. When talking keep language simple, use short sentences and demonstrate actions to reinforce what you mean.

- Singing, clapping, dancing, rocking to music.
- Activities that involve single step movements – sweeping, polishing, folding, winding wool.
- Walking together.
- Encourage holding and turning pages of a book, magazine or newspaper.
- Stroking the back of the hand or arm or cheek. Using moisturising lotion to massage.
- Stroking a pet or, if appropriate, a toy pet.
- Listening to music they enjoy.
Living well through activity in care homes: 
the guide for residents, their family and friends

- Watching favourite television programmes.
- Looking at pictures, photographs, postcards.
- Holding and feeling different objects. Using activity or memory boxes in the home. Wrap up objects in tissue paper and place in a box. Encourage your relative to unwrap, explore and rewrap.
- Smelling herbs, plants and flowers.
- Sharing favourite food snacks or drinks.

Reflex level of ability

- Make direct eye contact, use touch and give single word directions. For example, to support the person to drink, place their hands around the cup, laying your hands over the top of theirs and guide the cup to their mouth saying “Drink”.
- Reassure through smiles and nodding.
- Stroke the back of the hand, arm or cheek. Keep pressure gentle but firm.
- Try singing, swaying, clapping, rocking to music.
- Stroking a pet or, if appropriate, a toy pet.
- Gently fan their face.
- Play music that they know they like.
- Holding and feeling objects of different colours, shapes, weight, textures and size.
- Eating and drinking; for example, sharing pieces of fruit, sweets, and cheeses.

Reference
Living well through Activity in Care Homes: The Toolkit

Care Home Staff Resources

WHERE DO I START? IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES
WHAT IS ACTIVITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
HOW DO I MOTIVATE RESIDENTS TO TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES?
COMMUNICATION
BALANCING RISK AND CHOICE
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LEAFLETS
FURTHER RESOURCES

MAIN MENU
Fact: People who work in care homes are busy!

You have very many jobs to do every day. It can seem like an impossible task to find time to fit in the things that can make the difference to residents' lives. This section has ideas that can be introduced whether you have no time or an hour to fill. Small changes can make a big difference, no matter how little time you have.

I HAVE NO SPARE TIME

I HAVE LESS THAN 5 MINUTES

I HAVE LESS THAN 15 MINUTES

I HAVE AN HOUR OR MORE
Ensuring success

✓ Know the key points of each resident’s biography, interests and preferences.
✓ Use a person’s preferred name and some physical touch for affirmation.
✓ Get ideas from the residents, their visitors and all staff.
   Regularly review what you are doing – what works, what doesn’t and why?
✓ Don’t try to fit residents to the activity or event.
✓ Make activities failure free by simplifying and breaking them down into smaller tasks.
✓ Stimulate the senses – smell, movement, touch, vision, hearing and taste.
✓ Use familiar or routine activities.
✓ Speak clearly, explaining your actions simply, and introducing one task at a time.
✓ Do everything together and provide an actual example or picture, rather than just using instructions.
✓ Make sure that equipment and materials are safe and appropriate for the resident.
✓ Avoid over-stimulation.
✓ Remember that the process is more important than the end product.
✓ Encourage spontaneity. Have fun, adopt a ‘playful’ approach.
Exercise and physical activities

It has been shown that regular physical exercise has many benefits, including strengthening bones, preventing falls and promoting mental wellbeing. To many people the word ‘exercise’ conjures up images of ‘keep fit’ and jogging. However, there are many activities that can be used for residents who have limited mobility and strength – ball games, darts, skittles, and the list goes on.

See the checklist for physical activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the activity can do for the residents</th>
<th>What do you need?</th>
<th>What to be aware of</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong> – sitting; standing; walking; bending; stretching; balance and coordination; improve mobility and strength; help prevent falls.</td>
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<td><strong>Sensory</strong> – seeing and hearing instructions; body awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional</strong> – ease tension and aid relaxation; opportunity to compete; increase confidence; brighten mood by the release of endorphins (natural substances released by the body during exercise).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong> – understanding and following instructions and ‘rules’ of the game; sequence; memory.</td>
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<td><strong>Social</strong> – having fun; interacting with others.</td>
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<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Space with a selection of equipment (for ideas see Physical Activities Checklist, p.38.)</td>
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<td><strong>Staff/skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>You can run simple physical activities such as skittles. However, you will need training for specific exercise programmes.</td>
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You need to be aware of residents’ medical conditions and how these may affect their ability to exercise. If a resident is feeling pain or discomfort then stop.

A number of organisations run training courses that you or other staff members could attend. Alternatively, the care home could consider employing somebody on a sessional basis to provide this type of activity; for example, Tai Chi.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Chief Medical Officers for the UK recommend 30 minutes of physical activity a day on 5 or more days a week (The 30 minutes can be broken down into 10-minute bursts.)

Think of the residents in your service. What would you need to do to try this activity?
Living well through Activity in Care Homes: The Toolkit

Care Home Owners’ & Managers’ Resources

WHERE DO I START? IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES
WHAT IS ACTIVITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
HOW DO I MOTIVATE SOMEONE TO TAKE PART IN ACTIVITIES?
COMMUNICATIONS
BALANCING RISK AND CHOICE
HOW DO WE MEASURE QUALITY?
WHAT IS THE BUSINESS CASE?
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LEAFLETS
FURTHER RESOURCES

MAIN MENU
## Living well through activity in care homes: care home owners & managers

### Enabling everyday activities audit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity culture</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>Not</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Commitment to the activity culture is demonstrated within the home's policies, processes, training and leadership.</td>
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<td>2. Participating in day-to-day activities takes place at any time of day and night and is flexible to residents’ needs, wishes and personal routines.</td>
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<td>3. All staff communicate effectively with residents to ensure they are included in activity planning on a regular and ongoing basis.</td>
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<td>4. Residents can be seen interacting with each other.</td>
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<td>5. All staff can describe how all activities and tasks can be seen as an opportunity to build relationships and enhance the residents’ living experience.</td>
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<td>6. All staff can demonstrate or describe how facilitating activity is everyone’s responsibility.</td>
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<td>7. Residents report friendly and social communication with all staff at all times and feel included in the community of the home.</td>
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<td>8. Residents report that they are free to pursue a range of personal or social activities of their choice.</td>
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<td>9. Residents report that all staff respect their ‘quiet’ time i.e. time for a person to be private and enjoy quiet reflection.</td>
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<td>10. People are freely able to go outside into safe areas without needing doors unlocked.</td>
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### Subtotal:

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<th>Name:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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Living Well through Activity in Care Homes:  
Care Home Owners & Managers

It is important to recruit staff who believe that it is everyone’s responsibility to support residents to make choices, to ‘do’ and be fully involved in the life of the home.

• Examples of interview questions to explore attitudes:

• What do you think makes a good home life for residents?  
  Ideally in the answer there should be reference to:
  - Good relationships between staff and residents; residents having choices and making decisions; residents being supported to do, getting help when they need it.
  - Eating food they enjoy, having company when they would like it.
  - Having visitors.
  - Feeling part of the community.

• What would you do to achieve this good home life?  
  Ideally in the answer there should be reference to:
  - Making time to listen and talk to residents.
  - Getting to know the residents.
  - Helping residents to make choices.
  - Making visitors welcome.
  - Supporting residents to do what they are interested in.

• How would you try to get to know a resident?  
  Ideally in the answer there should be reference to:
  - Talking to the resident, family and friends.
  - Life histories.
  - Doing activities together to learn what they can do and what they need help with.
Integration

The aim of integration is to improve quality of life for people who need to access services, particularly those who have complex needs.

We take a deeper look at integration and offer you the opportunity to share your experiences.

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Occupational therapy - helping you to live life your way

But the fun things in life - meeting friends, going to the pub, playing football. They’re great. So when we can’t do them - it’s a drag. Now think of the everyday things - getting out of bed, getting washed, preparing meals, going to work or school. When we struggle with these things, that’s far worse. That’s a major problem. And that’s where occupational therapy comes in. Occupational therapists can help - not just so that we can cope with the basic necessities - but so that we can get the most from life.
Living well in care homes

We believe that everyone has a fundamental right to shape their daily life regardless of age and health needs. The College of Occupational Therapists is leading a project to support older people in care homes to experience a good home life.

Occupational therapists (OTs) are skilled at helping people take part in day to day activities and supporting care home staff to enable this. We will be working with our partners in the health and social care community to champion activity in care homes in the UK and commit to Taking the CUE. This means to:

- Connect with
- Understand and
- Encourage residents

New toolkit: Living Well Through Activity in Care Homes

In September 2013 we are launching the 'Living Well Through Activity in Care Homes Toolkit' to the wider public. The Toolkit is a free, practical resource full of ideas of how to support residents in care homes to live their life doing the day to day activities that are important to them. We want the Toolkit to be available to every care home in the UK.

It includes free training materials and audit tools to review and evidence aspects of care such as personalisation. It also promotes dignity, mental and physical wellbeing and integration into the community.

This vital resource will be exclusively previewed to BAOT members at the College of Occupational Therapists’ Annual Conference on Wednesday 19 June 2013.
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