

Activity Toolkit for Seniors

Staying Engaged, Staying Safe During COVID-19

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Activity Toolkit for Seniors – What’s It All About?

The Activity Toolkit for Seniors has been developed for seniors who are impacted by COVID-19 - those who live independently at home, with family at home, in a retirement home or long-term care home in North Simcoe Muskoka.

COVID-19 poses a large range of challenges for individuals and their families. We are all facing changes to our regular routines and our daily comforts. We know staying engaged in life is important, but so is physical distancing and isolation at this time.

The first part of the toolkit is designed to help individualize activities that support a person’s physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual well-being. This section is for individuals who are at home on their own or with a loved one. Activities are designed to meet the needs of all individuals to “Stay Engaged, Stay Safe”. It is the goal to have activities designed that the majority of the supplies or equipment can be found in the person’s home.

A Person-Centre Interest Inventory is included that will provide a snapshot of an individual’s past and present activity and interest levels. It is hoped that activities outlined in this toolkit will provide opportunities for seniors to remain engaged and active during the COVID-19 pandemic. Included in each activity plan are ways on how to customize the activity to meet the needs of everyone. It will also include tips and tools on how to make the activities accessible for all.

The Toolkit also includes resources of websites highlighting videos of activities being done around the world, and in our community. Take a moment go through the Toolkit and find something you would enjoy doing, or learning.

Activities are great for:

- Improving quality of life
- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Acquiring new skills
- Building confidence & self-esteem
- Connecting with friends
- Creating a sense of purpose
- Increasing motivation
- Maintaining productivity
- Elevating emotional well-being
- Strengthening mental well-being
- Building a family legacy
- Developing cognitive skills
- Decreasing isolation
- Increasing independence
- Improving life satisfaction
- Increasing socialization with technology
- Increasing physical conditioning

Making Activities Accessible

It is important to modify activities to match the abilities of an individual. The person planning the activity should take time to consider the individual's level of abilities, medical history, endurance and usual activity levels. Before we talk about specific activities, let's take a look at some broad tips that are helpful to consider for a range of issues seniors may face.

Reduced Vision

- ✓ describe the surrounding environment
- ✓ demonstrate the activity by touch, taste, smell
- ✓ minimize hazards prior to starting the activity
- ✓ ensure adequate lighting
- ✓ speak in a normal tone
- ✓ use thick black markers with large writing on white paper

Reduced Hearing

- ✓ maintaining eye contact is key
- ✓ speak clearly, concisely and slowly
- ✓ use demonstrations or illustrations with instructions
- ✓ move to a well-lit area when communicating
- ✓ minimize background noise
- ✓ keep your hands away from your face when talking
- ✓ don't shout

Reduced Physical Abilities

- ✓ find the most comfortable position (sitting, standing)
- ✓ ensure proper positioning to minimize discomfort
- ✓ use demonstration or illustration with instructions
- ✓ participate for shorter periods but more often if endurance is an issue
- ✓ leave extra room for gait aids, equipment

Reduced Cognitive Abilities (i.e. Dementia)

- ✓ repeat instructions to aid memory
- ✓ provide simple, clear directions
- ✓ present information or instructions one step at a time
- ✓ demonstrate what you would like the person to do before trying it
- ✓ gently redirect person if attention is short
- ✓ remain calm and reassuring if person become restless
- ✓ use non-verbal communication such as a soft touch or smile to create an environment free of mental or emotional distress
- ✓ provide hand-over-hand assistance when needed
- ✓ prevent sensory overload by simplifying environmental space, noise and clutter during activities

Leisure Inventory

If we stop to think about the opportunities we are given to make a difference in our own life or someone else's life, especially during this time of physical distancing and isolation, let's choose to stay engaged and stay safe.

We do this by getting to know who we are, and that special person in our lives. We can do this by filling out the Leisure Inventory on the following page. You will find a baseline of interests, past activities and individual needs. From there you can choose an activity plan that will give you the opportunity to explore innovative and fun ways you can spend time during physical distancing and isolation.

Completing the Inventory

1. For each activity in the inventory, select the frequency for which you participate in the activity – frequently (Often), infrequently (Rare) or not at all (No).
2. Then select whether you are currently involved in these activities (Do you now?) or if you would like to participate in any of these activities going forward (Or in the future?).

Leisure Inventory

Activities	In the past ten years?			In the past one year?			Do you now?		Or in the future?	
	Often	Rare	No	Often	Rare	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bird Watching										
Board Games										
Bowling										
Card Playing										
Collecting										
Cooking/Baking										
Dancing										
Exercising										
Gardening										
Golf										
History/Politics										
Home Decorating										
Home Repairs										
Journaling										
Knitting/Sewing										
Model Building										
Movie										
Music										
Outdoors										
Painting										
Photography										
Poetry										
Puzzles										
Reading										
Shopping										
Singing										
Spiritual Services										
Sports										
Television										
Travel										
Visiting										
Walking										
Woodworking										
Walking										
Writing										

The Five Domains of Recreation Therapy and Activities

Physical

How your physical body feels has a large impact on your overall well-being. Completing the Leisure Inventory can help determine what physical activities you enjoy and can modify to participate in.

The benefits of concentrating on activities that support our physical health are:

1. Increased mobility
2. Improved strength
3. Increased endurance
4. Reduced tension
5. Improved restful sleep

Emotional

With all the unknowns attached to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to maintain and improve our emotional health.

The benefits of concentrating on activities that support our emotional health are:

1. Increase emotion regulation
2. Feelings of autonomy
3. A sense of meaning
4. Improved self-determination
5. Increase optimism

Cognitive

Participating in past leisure and work activities, can help improve and/or maintain cognitive abilities.

The benefits of concentrating on activities that support our cognitive health are:

1. Increased ability to attend
2. Improved memory
3. Better concentration
4. Ability to follow directions
5. Enhance problem solving

Social

The feeling of isolation, disconnection and loneliness due to physical distancing and isolation, impacts our understanding of meaningful relationships.

The benefits of concentrating on activities that support our social health are:

1. Improved communication skills
2. Developed interpersonal skills
3. Increased social confidence
4. Process through your feelings of self-identity
5. Ability to participate in social norms and make friends
6. Improved restful sleep

Spiritual

Feeling a connection to religion and prayer, means also having strong, coherent beliefs about the higher purpose. With the development of spiritual health, we become resilient when dealing with life circumstances.

The benefits of concentrating on activities that support our spiritual health are:

1. Increased feeling of balance and stability
2. Improved ability to be Introspective
3. Decreased feelings of isolation and loneliness
4. Ability to identify purpose and meaning in life
5. Ability to feel calm

Activity Plan Domains

In the bottom right corner of each activity plan a small box will identify which domains of recreation therapy and activities, are being addressed by each particular activity.

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

A. Activity Plans

The Activity Plans developed in this section were developed keeping in mind we want everyone to “stay engaged, stay safe”. The resources and supplies in the plans are items that can be found in or around the house. There should be no need to leave the house and go shopping!

Review the supplies needed for an activity plan. Is it an activity that you have all the items for? Is it a plan that you can use with a few adaptations? If not, please keep looking through the activity plans for one that meets your needs.

Activity Plan Themes

The following are descriptions of the themes for activity plans. The icon identified for a theme will appear in the bottom left corner of each activity plan that relates to that particular theme. For example, Plant Cutting will display the Horticulture icon in the bottom left corner.



Arts and Crafts

We all need to express ourselves. Arts and crafts provide that opportunity along with feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment. Participating in arts and crafts creates a sense of purpose and meaning. Many people are surprised by their renewed artistic skills that often have been forgotten or set aside.



Cooking

Cooking is an activity that people either love or hate but almost everyone enjoys the end result. Why not try to explore the creative outlets of cooking, baking or canning. These activities allow a person to benefit physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. It will give those who love it an opportunity to accomplish a task and share it with others. Make it simple and easy. Try it – you'll like it!



Brain Teasers – Cards, Games, Puzzles

Cards and games are a great way to fill free time with the added bonus of the three Cs:

1. Challenge
2. Competition
3. Cognitive push-ups



It's an enjoyable way to spend time with a friend or time alone to brush up on those Solitaire skills. Games and cards are a great way to meet physical, intellectual and social needs.

To some individuals, a puzzle is a way to relax and escape from it all. It brings challenges and requires determination. It can be a great social activity. You can spend 10 minutes or 60 minutes on it...start it, leave it, and come back to it. Puzzles are full of words, numbers, shapes and colours. They come in a variety of skill levels and sizes.

Horticulture

Smelling, touching and seeing objects from the garden can refresh and rekindle a person's feeling of being close to nature. It is also an opportunity for an individual to share their expertise in gardening and nurturing plants, giving them the feeling of accomplishment and purpose. For those who rely on others for much of their personal care, this is an important and valuable activity that allows them to care for something else. Horticultural activities are particularly beneficial for social, emotional, and physical needs.



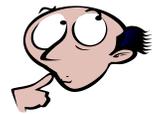
Spiritual

In the area of spirituality, we need to support individuals in a variety of ways. It is hoped that the programs included can allow individuals the opportunity to express and practice their faith and spirituality in a manner that comforts them.



Reminiscence

Reminiscing is an opportunity for individuals to reflect on, review, and share their life experiences. Activities can include building a family photo album, a memory box, watching travel slide shows or pictures, and finding scents that bring back pleasant memories. At times, reminiscence can create strong emotions. Be prepared for tears of sadness or tears of laughter. Always have tissues on hand.



Sensory Stimulation

How well we interact with our surroundings greatly depends on our ability to receive information and respond to what's happening around us. In order to do this, we rely on each of our five senses. Sensory stimulation activities are valuable to those who may be experiencing changes in their senses. We've suggested a few activities that are designed to provide familiarity, to promote a sense of security and to enhance a person's experience within their own environment.



Painting Ceramics or Wooden Projects

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who likes hands-on activities
- ✓ Sense of mastery
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Self-expression



Supplies:

- Bisque ceramic pieces
- Wooden project
- Paint brushes
- Folk art paints
- Glaze or matte finishes
- Tablecloth or newspaper for table

Instructions:

1. Set up comfortable spot at table for activity
2. Protect table with newspaper or tablecloth
3. Spread out paint colours on table
4. Ask person to choose paint colours
5. Create puddles of paint for each chosen colour
6. Apply two coats of paint to ceramic piece
7. Let dry
8. Brush on matte or glaze finish

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Purchase larger pieces of bisque that may only require one colour and are easily handled
- ✓ Use a non-skid surface mat to work on
- ✓ Build up the paint brush handle with masking tape to allow for a looser grip



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
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Wooden Tray Collage

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys working with paper
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Sharing meaningful pictures with others



Supplies:

- Catalogues, magazines or family photos
- Wooden serving tray
- Scissors
- Glue
- Craft sealant
- Paint brush

Instructions:

1. Ask person to look through catalogues magazines or family photos to find meaningful pictures
2. Cut pictures out and arrange on wooden tray
3. Glue pictures in place and let dry
4. Apply sealant with paint brush to entire surface
5. Let dry

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Describe photos or pictures to person if vision is poor
- ✓ If using scissors is a challenge, tear pictures and create a textured look



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- ✓ Physical
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- ✓ Spiritual

Fragrant Cards

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys giving cards
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Aromatherapy
- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Creativity



Supplies:

- Construction paper
- Used greeting cards
- Pinking shears
- Thick craft glue
- Facial tissue
- Scented oil, powder or perfume
- Hat pin or large needle

Instructions:

1. Cut out pictures from used cards with pinking shears (oval and rectangular shapes work best)
2. Cut out an appropriate verse for the card
3. With pinking shears, cut construction paper to same size and shape as picture
4. Glue verse to one side of construction paper or leave blank to write personal message
5. Apply scent to one facial tissue and fold it to fit between picture and construction paper
6. Place the tissue between the cut-out picture and the construction paper containing the verse (make sure the verse is to the outside)
7. Glue together at edges, pressing firmly
8. Poke small holes in card with pin or needle to release fragrance when card is held

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Assist with cutting construction paper and gluing
- ✓ Help find or write appropriate verse for card



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Ice Cream Sundae

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Satisfying a sweet tooth
- ✓ Childhood reminiscence
- ✓ Creativity



Supplies:

- Dish and spoon
- Ice cream scoop
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt
- Fruit (strawberries, bananas)
- Nuts
- Chocolate or caramel sauce
- Whipped cream
- Napkins

Instructions:

1. Place all ingredients on a surface that's easy to reach
2. Let person decide which ingredients to use
3. Prepare sundaes with desired toppings
4. Sit down together and enjoy
5. Take this time to ask about childhood memories

Examples:

“Did you like ice cream as a child?”

“What do you remember about having ice cream as a child?”

“What's your favourite flavour?”

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Open containers ahead of time
- ✓ Heat ice cream scoop with hot tap water
- ✓ Pre-cut fruit into a dish
- ✓ If preferred, go out for ice cream!



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- Spiritual

Make Your Own Pizza

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Lunch and activity combined
- ✓ Preparing and sharing lunch with others
- ✓ Using cooking skills
- ✓ Practicing safety
- ✓ Coordination
- ✓ Decision making



Supplies:

- Oven or toaster oven
- Prepared crust
- Pizza sauce
- Toppings like:
 - pepperoni
 - cheese
 - mushrooms
 - onions
 - peppers

Instructions:

1. Place the crust on the table
2. Decide which ingredients will go on the pizza
3. Start with the pizza sauce and then add all the other ingredients and top with cheese
4. Bake at 400°F for 12 to 15 minutes
5. Cool and enjoy!

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Assist with cutting ingredients
- ✓ Assist with placing pizza in and out of oven
- ✓ If unable to directly help, ask the person to join you in the kitchen to share the experience and enjoy the aroma



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- ✓ Physical
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Baking

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who likes spending time in the kitchen
- ✓ Feelings of independence
- ✓ Sense of accomplishment
- ✓ Creating tangible outcomes

Supplies:

- Baking pan / muffin tin / cookie sheet
- Easy to follow recipe with common ingredients
- Mixing tools (e.g. wooden spoons, electric mixer)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing bowls



Instructions:

1. Pick something that's enjoyable to make
2. Find an easy to follow recipe
3. Arrange all supplies and equipment on a table or counter that's accessible
4. Preheat oven
5. Read the recipe instructions out loud and follow one step at a time
6. Mix batter, fill pan, place in oven, turn on timer, remove, let cool & enjoy

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Use lightweight mixing bowls, measuring cups and wooden spoons to make lifting easier
- ✓ Build up handles on utensils for better grip
- ✓ Use non-skid surface or rubber-bottom bowls for mixing
- ✓ Buy packaged muffin, cookie, or brownie mix
- ✓ Buy pre-mixed icing
- ✓ Minimize clutter on table if person is overwhelmed or unsure what to do next



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Strawberry Freezer Jam

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys being in the kitchen, making preserves, working with food
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Enjoying a tangible outcome
- ✓ Sense of accomplishment



Supplies:

- Table
- Tablecloth
- Stock pot
- Potato masher
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing bowls
- Strawberries (8 cups hulled)
- Pectin crystals (1 box)
- Sugar (3-1/4 cups)
- 6-8 small canning jars

Instructions:

1. Crush strawberries in large bowl, 1 cup at a time to make 4 cups
2. In small bowl, whisk pectin crystals with 1/4 cup of the sugar
3. Add to strawberries and stir to combine
4. Let stand for 30 minutes
5. Add remaining sugar and stir until sugar dissolves, about 3 minutes
6. Pour into six 1-cup airtight containers, leaving 1/4-inch headspace
7. Cover with lids
8. Let stand undisturbed at room temperature until set, about 24 hours
9. Refrigerate up to 3 weeks or freeze up to 8 months

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Crush strawberries in advance
- ✓ Pre-measure sugar
- ✓ Sterilize jars before starting activity



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Product Slogans

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves word games or trivia
- ✓ Memory
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Reminiscing

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pen
- Pictures of products



Instructions:

We often identify products with the slogans used to advertise them. Read each slogan aloud and ask the person to name the corresponding product.

Slogans:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. It floats | Ivory soap |
| 2. The breakfast of champions | Wheaties |
| 3. You can be sure if it's | Westinghouse |
| 4. The flavor lasts | Wrigley Gum |
| 5. It keeps on ticking | Timex |
| 6. 57 varieties | Heinz |
| 7. Mm-Mm good | Campbell's soup |
| 8. Mountain grown | Folgers coffee |
| 9. Plop-plop, fizz-fizz | Alka Seltzer |
| 10. Good to the last drop | Maxwell House |

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Write objects down for person to read
- ✓ Ask person to point to product label or picture instead of naming



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- ✓ Physical
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- ✓ Spiritual

Cards (Concentration)

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves to play cards
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Concentration
- ✓ Sense of challenge
- ✓ Sense of achievement



Supplies:

- Table
- Deck of cards
- Comfortable chair

Instructions:

1. On table, place 52 cards face-down
2. Ask person to flip one card over and then a second one, looking for a match
3. If not a match, flip both cards over again
4. Your turn – flip one card over and then a second one, looking for a match
5. Remember the cards that have been flipped over
6. Take turns until someone finds a pair (place pairs to the side and take another turn)
7. Game is over when all cards are paired

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Use large-print deck of cards
- ✓ Use fewer cards on the table (e.g. face cards only)
- ✓ If flipping cards is physically too difficult, ask person to point to the card and you can flip it for them



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- ✓ Physical
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Jigsaw Puzzles

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves using their hands
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Concentration
- ✓ Sense of achievement



Supplies:

- Table or surface that can be left untouched
- Jigsaw puzzle
 - less than 500 pieces
 - adult theme (e.g. flowers, scenic landscape, maps)
 - comfortable seating
 - puzzle mat (optional)

Instructions:

1. Empty puzzle pieces on table
2. Place puzzle box cover on table for reference
3. Ask person to help you flip puzzle pieces with picture facing up
4. Find flat-edge pieces and put aside
5. Begin by piecing frame of puzzle together before attempting the centre

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ To increase independence, place puzzle where person can access it in your absence
- ✓ Make activity easier by completing the outside frame of puzzle in advance
- ✓ Use larger size puzzle pieces
- ✓ Use puzzles with fewer puzzle pieces
- ✓ Choose a puzzle with less detail



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Analogies

Great activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys word puzzles
- ✓ Problem solving skills
- ✓ Concentration skills



Supplies:

- Comfortable seating
- Paper
- Pen

Instructions:

1. Read one analogy at a time out loud from this list, omitting the last word
2. Ask the person to say or write down the answer as you go through the list

Analogy Examples:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| a. Father is to son as mother is to | daughter |
| b. Foot is to shoe as hand is to | glove |
| c. Dog is to pup as bear is to | cub |
| d. Cow is to calf as doe is to | fawn |
| e. Sheep is to lamb as frog is to | pollywog |
| f. Scissors is to cloth as razor is to | whiskers |
| g. Sailboat is to sail as canoe is to | paddle |
| h. Bow is to arrow as shotgun is to | shell |
| i. Baseball is to bat as tennis ball is to | racket |
| j. Pen is to ink as brush is to | paint |

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Write analogies down allowing person to read them
- ✓ Create analogies that reflect person's own beliefs, values and lifestyle
- ✓ Read each item at a slow pace



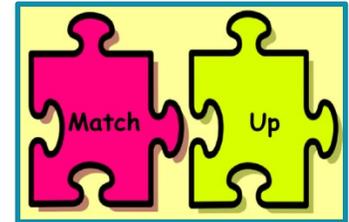
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- | |
|-------------|
| Physical |
| ✓ Cognitive |
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| ✓ Social |
| Spiritual |

Match Up

Great activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves to play cards
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Sense of challenge
- ✓ Sense of achievement
- ✓ Range of motion
- ✓ Recognition of different playing cards



Supplies:

- Table
- Deck of cards with cards cut in half
- Comfortable chair
- Good lighting

Instructions:

1. Take an old deck of playing cards and cut all the cards in half.
2. On a table, place the top half of the cards face up.
3. Place the bottom half of the cards in a stack on the table in front of you.
4. Take one card at a time off the stack.
5. Match the card taken from the stack with the corresponding card from those face up on the table.
6. Take the matching cards and set them to the side.
7. Take the next card in the stack and find the matching card that is face up on the table.
8. Continue to match the top and bottom of the cards until all are matched.

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ If available in your home, use large print playing cards
- ✓ Fewer cards laid out on the table (just face cards?)
- ✓ If reaching the cards is too physically difficult, ask the person to point the card they would like to match



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- ✓ Physical
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Bird Feeder

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who appreciates nature
- ✓ A quick, simple task
- ✓ Providing for other living things
- ✓ Sense of satisfaction and achievement
- ✓ Creating something tangible
- ✓ Enjoyment that lasts beyond the activity



Supplies:

- Bowl
- Wooden spoon
- Birdseed
- Peanut butter
- Pinecones
- String or thread

Instructions:

In a bowl, combine:

1 cup peanut butter

1 cup birdseed

Stuff the mixture into the pinecone between its petals

Tie a string around the top of the pinecone

Hang pinecone outside (ideally in front of a window)

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Place the mixture on wax paper and tightly roll the pinecone into it
- ✓ Provide hand-over-hand assistance if is needed



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- ✓ Physical
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- ✓ Spiritual

Forcing Bulbs

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys plants and horticulture
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Providing for other living things
- ✓ Sense of accomplishment

Supplies:

- Table
- Tablecloth
- Newspaper
- Plastic pot
- Watering jug
- Soil mixture
- Plant bulbs

Instructions:

1. Place newspaper or tablecloth on table
2. Fill plastic pot with soil mixture
3. Dig a small hole in centre of soil mixture in pot
4. Place bulb in centre of pot with rounded root end facing down
5. Encourage person to water every couple of days
6. Watch it grow!

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Purchase a potted bulb and use this to start a conversation about gardening
- ✓ Reminisce about gardens and flowers



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Plant Cutting

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys plants and horticulture
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Providing for other living things

Supplies:

- Styrofoam cups
- Plant
- Plant mixture
- Scissors
- Plastic bag
- Rubber bands



Instructions:

1. Place cup, plant, soil mixture, plastic bag, and rubber band on table
2. Clip the cutting four inches from the leaf end of the plant stalk
3. Remove at least two layers of leaves from the cut end
4. Place the cut end in a cup of planting soil
5. Put a plastic bag over the top with a rubber band around the cup to hold the bag in place
6. Encourage person to water the plant occasionally and remove the bag after one or two weeks
7. Transplant the rooted plant into a larger pot

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Purchase plant cutting in advance
- ✓ If person is unable to participate in all steps, encourage involvement in simpler tasks e.g. watering, packing soil



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
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- ✓ Spiritual

Sacred Music

Great Activity for:

- ✓ The love of music
- ✓ Participated or attended in a faith-based organization
- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Reminiscing

Supplies:

- A quiet place
- CD player, I-pod, cassette
- Selection of Hymns, Gospel Music, etc.
- Headphones

Instructions:

1. Ask the person what kind of Spiritual music they love
2. Set up person with the appropriate equipment CD player, etc.
3. Ensure the person is in a comfortable position
4. Ensure the music is at an appropriate volume level
5. At the end of the music experience ensure the person is able to share their experience

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ If it's difficult to have a conversation, you may want to reminisce through listening to the music or watching something on television
- ✓ If the person has difficulty hearing, you can support person by setting up headphones



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- Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
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- ✓ Spiritual

TV Devotions / Services

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who is missing Religious or Faith-based services
- ✓ A feeling of belonging
- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Reminiscing



Supplies:

- I-Pad, television, or computer
- WIFI connection
- Table or flat surface to hold technology
- Someone to help with the set up

Instructions:

1. Start with a discussion on what religious or denomination the person would like to view
2. Set up equipment with a designated time when the service will over
3. You may need to stay with the person to debrief and discuss how the person is feeling after viewing the service
4. Set a time for the next time the person would like to book equipment

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ If it's difficult to have a conversation, you may want to reminisce through listening to the music or watching something on television
- ✓ If the person has difficulty hearing, you can support person by setting up headphones



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- ✓ Physical
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- ✓ Spiritual

Reading Poems / Passages

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who is feeling disconnected
- ✓ Seeking for words of wisdom from their past
- ✓ Known to improve mood
- ✓ Self-expression
- ✓ Reminiscing



Supplies:

- Quiet space
- Appropriate lighting
- Reading material (chosen by person you are reading to)
- Bookmark
- Comfortable seating/positioning

Instructions:

1. Ask person to choose a poem or passage
2. Determine who will read the book out loud
3. Follow the person lead may have a passage or two

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Read short poems and passages for person who has difficulty with memory
- ✓ Choose large print books
- ✓ Borrow an audio the books from the public library



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
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- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Armchair Travelling

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves to travel
- ✓ Sharing past travel experiences and knowledge
- ✓ Learning about places of interest

Supplies:

- Travel books
- Family photo albums
- Videos
DVD/VHS player
- Television



Instructions:

1. Choose several different travel books (you can find resources through online travel agencies, libraries or book stores)
2. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit and relax
3. Make sure you have good lighting
4. Prepare a list of questions relating to the person's travel experience

Examples:

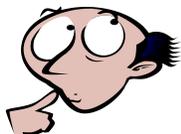
"Tell me about one of your favourite trips..."

"What was it like being in Mexico?"

"What have you learned from travelling?"

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Use family photo album to aid memory and meaning
- ✓ Watch a video about travel and different countries



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Music Biography

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Music lovers
- ✓ Reminiscence
- ✓ Sensory stimulation



Supplies:

Tapes or CD player
Television and DVD/VHS player
Online music downloads
Books about musicians

Instructions:

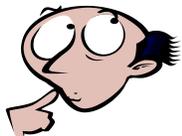
1. Start a discussion about the person's favourite type of music
2. Ask if there are any records / tapes / CDs
3. Play chosen music
4. To promote conversation, ask reminiscing questions

Examples:

- “What do you like about this music?”
- “What memories does it bring back?”
- “Have you ever played an instrument?”

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ If it's difficult to have a conversation, you may want to reminisce through watching a musical
- ✓ If a person has difficulty hearing, you can look online for biography's to initiate conversation and reminiscence



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| ✓ Emotional |
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| ✓ Spiritual |

Reading a Book

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves to read or hear stories
- ✓ Intellectual stimulation
- ✓ Reminiscing
- ✓ Learning



Supplies:

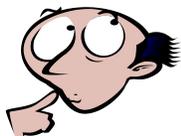
- Quiet space
- Appropriate lighting
- Reading material (chosen by person you are reading to)
- Bookmark
- Comfortable seating / positioning

Instructions:

1. Ask person to choose a book
2. Determine who will read the book out loud
3. This one's easy- start on page one!

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Read short stories for person who has difficulty with memory (e.g. Reader's Digest)
- ✓ Choose large print books
- ✓ Borrow an audio book from an online public library
- ✓ After reading book, plan to watch the movie together



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Sharing Collections

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who has a collection (e.g. stamp, coin, autographs, baseball cards)
- ✓ Intellectual stimulation
- ✓ Reminiscing
- ✓ Sense of pride
- ✓ Value of ownership



Supplies:

- Collectable (coins, stamps, ornaments) memorabilia
- Books about the collection
- Table or comfortable seating
- Adequate lighting

Instructions:

1. Ask permission to see person's collection
2. View collectables one piece at a time
3. Look through books to learn more about items
4. Ask reminiscent questions

Examples:

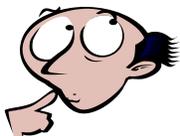
“How long have you had your collection?”

“Did someone start it for you?”

“What does this collection mean to you?”

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ If visually impaired, describe detail of items to person
- ✓ Use sense of touch when item is detailed
- ✓ If collection was stored away, ask person how to make it more accessible to them in your absence



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
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- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Family Photo Album

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Enjoying photos
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Conversation and reminiscence
- ✓ Memory recall

Supplies:

- Tablecloth
- Photos
- New photo album
- Paper
- Pens
- Glue
- Scissors
- Craft supplies



Instructions:

1. Protect table with a tablecloth
2. Place all activity supplies on table
3. Arrange family photos with person
4. Ask person for the story behind each photo as it is placed in the album

Examples:

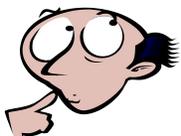
“Who is this lady?”

“What do you remember about this picture?”

“What were you doing in this picture?”

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Reminisce using a family album that's already complete
- ✓ Shorten the task by updating a family album with new pictures
- ✓ Offer hands-on support when gluing



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Moment in Time

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Some one who like to share and talk about the past
- ✓ Reminiscence
- ✓ Concentration



Supplies:

- List of topics the person interested in (trains, cars, flowers)
- Develop a series of questions on preferred topic

Instructions:

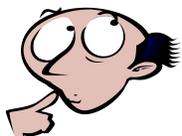
1. Have the person sit in a comfortable chair.
2. Read one of the lists of questions, one at a time.
3. Allow time for the person to answer.
4. Ask the person to expand on the answer (without being intrusive).

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Have the questions written down, allowing the person to read the questions.
- ✓ Create questions to be answered by yes and no.

Example: My life in my twenties:

1. My best friend
2. My favorite food
3. My favorite colour
4. My favorite movie
5. My favorite place to visit
6. My favorite sport
7. My favorite animal
8. My favorite song
9. My favorite book



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Spiritual

Pet Grooming

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Pet owners
- ✓ Caring for a pet
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Connecting to another living being
- ✓ Relaxation

Supplies:

- Brush or comb
- Towel
- Treats (for the pet)

Instructions:

1. Protect person's lap with a towel
2. Place pet on top of the towel
3. Brush pet
4. Enjoy the relaxation
5. Don't forget the treat!

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Use a stuffed animal to avoid allergy issues



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Sensory Stimulation

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Sensory stimulation

Supplies:

- Tray
- Canvas or vinyl bag
- Small containers



Instructions:

Touch: Place items in a bag. Ask person to reach in and try to identify one object at a time.

Sight: Place items on a tray. Show tray for one minute. Remove tray and ask person to name as many items as they remember.

Smell: Fill bottles with different scented items. Hold container under person's nose and ask to identify smell.

Possible Items for Each Sense:

- a. **Touch** – Sandpaper, velvet, wood, cotton, paper clip, a pin, measuring spoon, whistle, bell
- b. **Sight** – Oak leaf, pine cone, toothpick, pencil, eraser, screwdriver, wool, flashlight, tea cup
- c. **Smell** – Mustard, lemon, vinegar, toothpaste, onion, mint, cinnamon, vanilla, cedar chips

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Start out with a few items for each sense to promote success and prevent over-stimulation
- ✓ Use only one activity and ask reminiscent questions



- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

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Spa Day

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who loves to be pampered
- ✓ Relaxation

Supplies:

- Large basin
- Scented soaps
- Scented hand lotion
- Nail polish remover
- Nail polish
- Cotton balls



Instructions:

1. Fill basin with warm water and a dash of scented soap
2. Soak hands for 2 to 3 minutes (one hand at a time)
3. Dry hands
4. Rub scented hand lotion into hands massaging gently
5. Ask person to choose a favourite colour of nail polish
6. Paint nails and have a great conversation throughout the activity

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Skip to painting the person's nails (the hand massage may be too painful for someone with arthritis)



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- ✓ Physical
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Music and Movement

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Music lover
- ✓ People who like to move
- ✓ People who are physically active

Supplies:

- Music - CD player, I-pod, downloaded music
- Research the type person enjoys (Country, Motown, Big Band)
- Space to move without obstacles



Instructions:

1. Start a discussion about the person's favorite type of music.
2. Determine format for music.
3. Play chosen music.
4. Start slowly by swaying, and gradually pick up the pace.
5. Continually monitor the person's breathing, balance and emotions through the activity.
6. Movements are to be spontaneous and creative (go with the music).

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Do all movement sitting in a chair
- ✓ If the person has difficulty hearing adjust the volume
- ✓ Have the person feel the vibration through their hands
- ✓ If it 's difficult for them clap their hands, tap their feet and sway to the music



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
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- ✓ Spiritual

Pair and Toss Socks

Great Activity for:

- ✓ To help people increase range of motion
- ✓ To help people increase coordination
- ✓ To help people increase concentration
- ✓ Sense of accomplishment

Supplies:

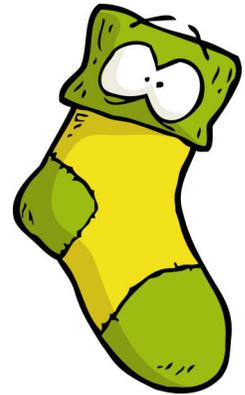
- 10 pairs of clean socks
- 2 laundry baskets or table and 1 basket

Instructions:

1. Place single socks out on a table or in a laundry basket.
2. On the table or in a basket, match each sock to its pair or match.
3. Fold the socks together into a ball.
4. Once all the socks are folded into a ball you are ready to toss.
5. Have a laundry basket approximately 5 feet away.
6. Take one pair of socks at time and toss them into the laundry basket.
7. Once all the pairs of socks have been tossed into the basket you have completed the activity.

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Have all 10 pairs of socks match (all white sweat socks or all grey work socks)
- ✓ Start with only 4 pairs on table at the start
- ✓ Support person to gold or roll socks together
- ✓ Move basket closer to the person when throwing to start
- ✓ Have the socks already folded ready to toss into the basket



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- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
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- Social
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B. Virtual Resources

1. Activities – Online

Games

Colouring pages

- openculture.com
- mondaymandala.com

Crossword puzzles

- boatloadpuzzles.com
- games.readersdigest.ca

Hidden object picture puzzles

- [Spruce Crafts](https://sprucecrafts.com)

How to make a Word Search game

- thewordsearch.com

Jigsaw puzzles

- jigidi.com

Printable games for seniors

- [Google](https://www.google.com)

Exercise

Activities for seniors with limited mobility

- [Dailycaring.com](https://www.dailycaring.com)

“It’s Your Choice” Exercise Program

- Warm-Up
- Strength, Balance and Aerobic

- [UHN - Warm-Up](https://www.uhn.ca)
- [UHN - Strength, Balance, Aerobic](https://www.uhn.ca)

Osteoporosis

- Managing osteoporosis through exercise
- Prevent falls or fractures

- [Managing osteoporosis](https://www.osteoporosis.ca)
- [Prevent falls or fractures](https://www.osteoporosis.ca)

Physical activity in older adults

- [RGP Toronto - Senior Friendly Care](https://www.rgp-toronto.com)

SLoT – Sit, Lift or Tap Exercises

- [RGPs of Ontario](https://www.rgpo.org)

Tai Chi for Seniors: Warmup in Chair

- [YouTube - Tai Chi Warmup](https://www.youtube.com)

VON Simcoe County SMART Exercise Program

- [Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together](https://www.von.ca)

1. Activities – Online (cont'd)

Music

CBC Listen – On-Demand
Discovering and rediscovering great music
Music hall
“Sing Along with Susie”

- [CBC](#)
- [Johnny Radio](#)
- [bbcrewind.co.uk](#)
- [Sweet Memories](#)

Various

Church resources – various
Learn a new language
Spiritual activities for people with Alzheimers
Things for seniors to do during COVID-19

- [Bing](#)
- [duolingo.com](#)
- [goldencarers.com](#)
- [Presbyterian Senior Living](#)

2. Education (COVID-19) – Online

5 Innovative solutions for combatting social isolation for seniors during COVID-19

- [Centre for Aging and Brain Health](#)

13 Engagement ideas while practicing social distancing

- [TeepaSnow.com](#)

Activities for individuals with dementia

- [Kindly Care](#)

Creating calm – stress relief

- [javagr.com](#)

Mobility and social distancing

- [Regional Geriatric Practitioners of Ontario](#)

3. Virtual Tours – Online

How to set up virtual online programs

- [Ontario Caregivers](#)

4. Virtual Tours – Online (cont'd)

Variety of virtual sites including museums, national parks, zoos, amusement parks, Broadway and much more

Animal live cams

Panda cam

Canadian and world museum tours

“Frozen” ride – Disney World

Great Wall of China

Museum Tours

Sea World Orlando

U. S. National Parks

- [Boredom busters in long-term care homes](#)
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)
- [San Diego Zoo](#)
- [Atlanta Zoo](#)
- [To Do Canada](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [The China Guide](#)
- [Vatican](#)
- [Variety](#)
- [Visit Orlando](#)
- [Google Arts & Culture](#)

C. Social Isolation in Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes

During this unprecedented time of COVID -19, long-term care homes and retirement homes are given many opportunities to engage residents differently. We all know that isolation can be detrimental to our physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual well-being.

How homes engage their residents stems from the policies and procedures that are mandated by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, Regional Government and Corporate Offices. The following activity plans, ideas and resources can assist homes in meeting the goal of keeping residents engaged and safe.

Special thanks go out to our retirement and long-term care home partners for their contributions to this section.

Roving Carts

A roving cart is an activity cart that moves freely through long-term care and retirement homes, supporting residents who are isolated in their rooms. This cart provides residents with stimulation and an opportunity to do different activities during this time. The cart is created, stocked and managed by each home's recreation and activity staff.

To begin building a roving cart, you need to develop some themes and ideas. Having a cart in your long-term care or retirement home could decrease fear, loneliness, disconnection, and boredom that residents may be feeling during physical distancing and isolation.

It's a great time to look in those cabinets, storage rooms and craft cupboards. You will likely find supplies you have forgotten about, and those you never knew you had. It's important to remember when building your cart, that whatever goes into a resident's room needs to either be thrown out or safely sterilized.

Please find attached the following activity plans for roving carts:

- Connecting with Friends and Family Cart
- A Little Bit of Everything Cart
- Comfort Food Cart

Other suggestions would be:

- Fresh Baked Goods Cart
- Gardening Cart
- Spiritual Cart
- Horticulture Cart
- Music Cart
- Exercise Cart
- Special Themed Cart "Spring is Here!" Or "Dickie Dee" Ice Cream Cart

Hallway / Doorway Activities

Hallway or doorway activities are a way of encouraging residents to move their bodies, interact safely with their neighbours and have some fun.

In addition to doorway activities, suggestions for hallway activities include:

- Bingo
- Horticulture
- Yoga
- Trivia
- Sing Along
- Church Services

Special Events and Themed Activity Days

This time of the year and the circumstances we find ourselves in, gives us a great opportunity to develop and implement special events and themed activity days. This can be done by keeping an eye on the calendar. Follow the [Holiday link](#) to view important dates for 2022.

This is also a great time to develop other special events and themed activity days that may meet the needs of your residents and your home.

Additional ideas include:

- Music Mondays
- Community Art Show
- 7:30 pm daily health care providers recognition (cheering)
- Italian Day (or any other ethnicity)
- Country and Western Day
- Strawberry Social Day
- Chocolate Themed Afternoon
- 1950s Nostalgia Day (or any other time period)
- Messages and/or pictures sent to and received from families via social media
- Writing notes to each other/pen pals
- Messages to staff

Let your imagination flow and most of all, have fun!

Outdoor Entertainment Ideas

As the weather becomes nicer and COVID-19 measures continue, here are a few outdoor entertainment ideas to consider. By using parking lots, court yards and green spaces residents can be engaged and entertained at a distance.

- Bagpiper - piping around the building so everyone can see and hear
- Trumpeter - circling the building so everyone can see and hear
- St John's Pet Therapy Parade
- Singers or Choirs
- Antique Car Show

Connecting with Friends and Family Cart

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Providing a sense of belonging
- ✓ Providing an opportunity to alleviate fear, loneliness
- ✓ Providing an opportunity for socialization

Supplies:

- Tablets
- Laptops
- Smartphones
- Pens and paper
- Sterile wipes to clean equipment after each use



Instructions:

1. Meet with resident and contact family to establish the best way for connecting loved ones, through:
 - Virtual call (Skype, FaceTime, Zoom)
 - Letter / hasty note
 - Traditional phone call
2. Develop a sign-up sheet with times and dates to avoid overlap while ensuring a successful connection for each resident.
3. Take care around to residents' rooms at established time and date.
4. If it is a written connection, support the resident with supplies and physical help.
5. Before ending the 1:1 session, ensure the resident is feeling calm and comfortable (residents may find connecting with loved ones emotional).

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

A Little Bit of Everything Cart

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Reminiscence
- ✓ Fine motor coordination
- ✓ Intellectual stimulation
- ✓ Past hobby



Supplies:

- Photocopies of Sudoku puzzles and other stimulating puzzles
- Comics
- Word Searches
- Colouring pages
- Colouring pencils
- Small Craft ideas with simple 2 to 3 step instruction
- Crochet hooks
- Corking kits
- Donated magazines and books
- Small seedling or plant

Instructions:

1. Ensure the cart is equipped with supplies to meet the needs of all.
2. Individual supplies are meant to be left with the resident and are not to be reused or recycled.
3. Adapt the cart to meet the personal needs of each of your residents. No one knows the resident like the recreation and life enrichment staff, when it comes to residents' needs and capabilities.

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

The Comfort Food Cart

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who enjoys a social interaction
- ✓ Providing a sense of enjoyment
- ✓ Providing an opportunity to a change from the ordinary
- ✓ Providing a sense of reminiscence
- ✓ Satisfying a sweet tooth (think of health alternatives)

Supplies:

- Appropriate/ themed drinking cups
- Plates, Utensils, Napkins
- Assortment of fluids

Instructions:

1. Collaborate with Dietary Staff or Food and Beverage Manager.
2. Develop a schedule of the different comfort carts on different days.
3. Tie a theme into a special event. Example Mother's Day/high tea sandwiches.
4. Advertise what cart is coming around on what day and time.
5. Include healthy alternatives.



- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Doorway Chair Dancing

Shared by Bay Haven Care Community, Collingwood

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Music lover
- ✓ People who like to move
- ✓ People who are physically active

Supplies:

- CD-player, I-pod, karaoke machine, computer hook up for YouTube
- Chairs set up in doorways
- Match music to the type of dance



Instructions:

1. Determine what type of dance people would like to and find music or video.
2. Some choices are Tap, Tango, Country, Charleston, and Polka.
3. Start slowly, with slow stretching to music, slowly picking up the pace introducing different movement to the type of dance.
4. Continually monitor the person's breathing, balance and emotions through the activity.
5. Attached is a sample of chair dancing. Be creative. Bust a move!

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=chair+dancing+youtube&&view=detail&mid=D02780DAFCB91EA6053DD02780DAFCB91EA6053D&&FORM=VDRVRV>

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Do all movement sitting in a chair
- ✓ If the person has difficulty hearing adjust the volume
- ✓ Have the person feel the vibration through their hands
- ✓ If it is difficult for them have them reminisce of their fondest memories of dancing

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Emotional
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Spiritual

Door Painting

Shared by Victoria Village, Barrie

Great Activity for:

- ✓ Someone who likes hands-on activities
- ✓ Sense of mastery
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Self-expression



Supplies:

- Nontoxic/washable paints
- Masking tape
- Large sheets of paper
- Cup of water
- Palette or paper plate for paint
- Table to place supplies on

Instructions:

1. Tape paper to resident's door.
2. Use masking tape to section off the paper into a design
3. Have person (may need support) to section off some of the paper by laying tape out across the page.
4. Start painting - can use different colours to paint in different sections.
5. Carefully remove tape from painting, show person the final product.
6. Hang painting somewhere safe to dry.
7. Display artwork for everyone to see.

Ways to make it more accessible:

- ✓ Use a table to paint on
- ✓ Tape paper down on table
- ✓ Build up paint brush handle with masking tape to allow for a looser grip while painting
- ✓ Use painter tape for design

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|-------------|
| ✓ Physical |
| ✓ Cognitive |
| Emotional |
| Social |
| Spiritual |