

Elder Companion

Lesson 8

Leisure Activities¹

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AGENT'S TEACHING GUIDE

Leisure Activities

- Part 1:** Why Leisure Activities?
Part 2: Possible Activities for My Client
Part 3: Exercises for Older Adults

Time: 1 - 1 ½ Hours

Equipment/Supplies: Overhead projector; transparencies created from Handouts A through D

Instructor: County faculty and/or Recreation staff member

Background Information

Leisure and Recreation

Handouts: Part 1

Handout A: Purposes of Recreational Activities

Handout B: Physical Activities

Handout C: Social Activities

Handout D: Mental Activities

Part 2

Handout E: List of Possible Activities

Part 3

Exercises for Older Adults

Objectives (Expected Outcomes):

Participants will be able to:

- understand the purposes of leisure recreational activities,
- list the four kinds of recreation and leisure activities and examples of each, and
- understand the need to adapt activities to individuals.
- demonstrate exercises for older adults

Background Information: Leisure and Recreation

Leisure activities are important to the well-being of everyone at any age. It is especially important for your elderly clients.

- to offset empty hours, monotony, and boredom
- to develop a feeling of usefulness, belonging, and self-confidence
- to renew and refresh physical strength
- to stimulate social relationships
- to improve personal enjoyment and satisfaction
- to encourage creative, inventive, and expressive feelings and talents

There are different kinds of recreation/leisure activities. These include:

- Physical - Physical activities are good for our bodies and our minds. Some examples of such activities are:
 - walking
 - slow stretching
 - dancing
 - horseshoes
- Social - Social activities are a good way to meet new friends and stay close to others. This, in turn, may help older persons feel more a part of the world around them and help their feelings of self-esteem. Some social activities are:
 - talking on the telephone
 - visiting with friends and family
 - eating meals with others
 - attending family events or parties
- Mental - Mental activities help stimulate our minds. Some examples:
 - reading/listening to tapes
 - games
 - hobbies and crafts
 - crossword puzzles

Emotional well-being is helped by all these activities. A person who stays active and involved in life will feel better. It is only natural that long, lonely hours of doing nothing take their emotional toll on an aging person. Recreation and leisure activities serve to help older persons feel better about themselves and better about the people around them.

A list of possible activities for the variety of people with whom you may be working is included. Work on adding more and more ideas to this list. Your clients will have different likes and dislikes, interests and needs.

Remember, consider the physical, social, mental, and emotional aspects of your client before choosing or suggesting an activity; as the activity must be right for that person. A blind person could not read a magazine; yet, he could listen to it on a talking book machine. A person who can't write could send a tape recording instead. Activities can be modified and adapted to meet specific needs.

LESSON PLAN

Part 1: Why Leisure Activities?

Introduction:

Leisure activities are important to the well-being of everyone at any age. It is especially important for your elderly clients.

DO:

- Use the background information to discuss the emotional benefits provided by leisure activities.
- Show transparency created from Handout A, *Purposes of Leisure Activities* and distribute the handout. Ask the participants why they participate in leisure activities? Make a list on the chalkboard or newsprint
- Show transparencies for the three types of activities from created from Handouts B, *Physical Activities*; C, *Social Activities*; and D, *Mental Activities*.
- Have the participants divide into three groups...physical, social and mental. Have them list as many activities as they can think of which fall under their heading. Have each group share their listing with the group.
- Talk about how each type of activity helps the individual.

REFLECT:

- C Why do we engage in leisure and recreational activities?
- C What are some of the benefits to the person?

APPLY:

- C How will you use this information in your work with your elder?

PURPOSES OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- to offset empty hours, monotony, and boredom
- to develop a feeling of usefulness, belonging, and self-confidence
- to renew and refresh physical strength
- to stimulate social relationships
- to improve personal enjoyment and satisfaction
- to encourage creative, inventive, and expressive feelings and talents



PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Physical activities are good for our bodies and our minds. Some examples of such activities are:

- walking
- slow stretching
- dancing
- horseshoes



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Social activities are a good way to meet new friends and stay close to others. This, in turn, may help older persons feel more a part of the world around them and help their feelings of self-esteem. Some social activities are:

- talking on the telephone
- visiting with friends and family
- eating meals with others
- attending family events or parties



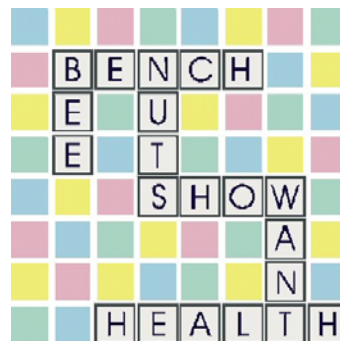
MENTAL ACTIVITIES

Mental activities help stimulate our minds. Some examples:

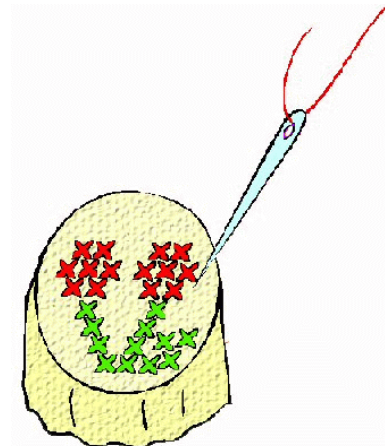
- reading/listening to tapes



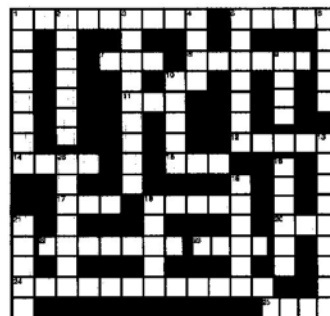
- games



- hobbies and crafts



- crossword puzzles



LESSON PLAN

Part 2: Possible Activities for Older Adults

Introduction:

As a companion, there will be times when you will encourage and take part in recreation activities with your clients. As you know, all older people are not alike and what works with one may not with another. Get to know your client. Find out what she/he enjoys doing and is able to do. People must always be given the chance to express themselves about their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, interests, needs, and limitations.

DO:

- C Using the same groups from the previous activity, have the participants determine which of the activities are appropriate for their elder companion.
- C Discuss their choices and use Handout E, *List of Possible Activities* for them to supplement their list.

REFLECT:

- C Which of these activities do you know how to do?

APPLY:

- C Make Activity Kits for them to use with their elders. Let different people lead the rest of the group in participating in some of the activities.

Handout E

LIST OF POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following alphabetical list of activities is partial and should be used to stimulate your own thinking. Do not use as a checklist. Do not use the list to ask clients which activities they wish to do.

Auto rides	Hearts	Rummy
Bird feeding	Dominoes	Scrabble
Bird watching & walks	Knitting	Solitaire
Cards	Labeling family pictures	Spectator sports
Checkers	Letter writing	Story telling
Chinese checkers	Library	Tatting
Coffee breaks	Making family photo albums	Television (watching, playing television game shows, etc.)
Collecting (stamps, coins, rocks, etc.)	Movies or videos	Toy making (cloth, wood, etc.)
Conversation	Music	Walking
Crocheting	Newspaper clippings	Writing (newsletter, letters, local paper, poetry, etc.)
Crossword Puzzles	Puzzles	
Exercises	Reading	

Adapted from Adult Sitter Clinic Workbook, 2nd edition, by Diane Smathers, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Athens, 1983.

LESSON PLAN

Part 3: Exercises for Older Adults

Everyone needs physical stimulation to keep them physically and emotionally fit. The elderly are no different. Many elderly clients have physical limitations which keep them from engaging in extensive physical activity. However, there are exercises which they can do. Today, we are going to learn to do some of them.

DO:

- Distribute Handout F, *Exercises for Older Adults*. Divide the participants into pairs for practicing the exercises. Assign one of the exercises to each pair. Have one person read the instructions while the other person does the exercise. Then reverse the roles so each gets to practice.
- Have each pair demonstrate their exercise to the group. As they demonstrate, everyone practices the exercise.

REFLECT:

- C Why would you try to do these exercises with your elderly clients?
- C Do you feel comfortable doing these exercises with other people?

APPLY:

- C Practice these exercises until you can do them without looking at the notes/illustrations.

EXERCISES FOR OLDER ADULTS

The following exercises are adapted from "PEP Up Your Life" from American Association of Retired Persons. They have been reviewed by Leigh Ann Martin, Exercise Physiologist, and are offered here for use in work with older clients.

Shoulder Shrugs: for the upper back, to tone shoulders and relax the muscles at the base of the neck.

Steps: In a sitting or standing position, start with your arms resting at your sides, raise your shoulders toward your ears, hold this position for a 3 second count, and slowly lower your shoulders to the beginning position.

Suggested repetition: 8-12 times.

Arm Circles: to strengthen shoulders and upper back.

Steps: Sit or stand erect with your arms extended to the side, elbows straight, head facing forward. Rotate arms from the shoulder in small circles.

Suggested repetition: 10 forward circles, 10 backward circles.

Arm Curls: to strengthen arm muscles.

Steps: Use a weighted object such as a book or a can of vegetables (start with no more than 5 pounds). Stand or sit erect with arms at sides, palms facing forward, and holding weighted object. Bend your arms toward your shoulder, hold for one second at the top of the motion, and slowly lower to starting position.

Suggested repetition: 8-12 times.

Quarter Squat: to tone and strengthen lower leg muscles:

Steps: Stand erect behind a chair, hands on chair back for balance, feet shoulder width apart. Bend knees slowly, do not let your knees go past your toes, hold in the lowered position for 1-3 seconds, and slowly rise to a normal standing position.

Suggested repetition: 8-12 times.

Heel Raises: to strengthen the calf muscles and ankles.

Steps: Stand erect, hands on hips, or on a chair back for extra balance, and feet shoulder width apart. Slowly raise body on toes. Lower slowly to starting position.

Suggested repetition: 8-12 times.