



## COVID-19 – Carer’s Activity Guidance Help Sheet

### **I work at a care home and need to find activities for my residents – what do I do?**

Many carers like yourself are now in the position of not only providing regular care for their residents but are having to find ways to occupy often large numbers of residents – often of differing abilities. You may also be in the position where residents are having to keep the recommended two metres apart from each other, or there maybe others who are in self-isolation. Here we offer some useful guidance and ideas on how to keep everyone’s mind and bodies active – and provide the carers with some breathing space to continue with the daily tasks. We have also provided a separate product reference sheet to print off. \*Suggestions for those who are in Self-isolation are highlighted in blue.

### **They’ve had their breakfast, now what?**

After breakfast, try to start with something simple that is easy to set up which will appeal to all abilities – simple large print wordsearches (WSLP) and crosswords (LPCCB) are ideal for older people and can be photocopied so each person has an individual sheet and pen to avoid cross contamination. The Activity Workbook (AAC1) is packed with many varied simple puzzles that keep everyone busy and more importantly, allows some time for carers to do other necessary jobs. \*This can also be used for those in self-isolation but keep a set of puzzle sheets and pens specifically for their individual use to avoid cross-contamination – wipe pen/pencil after use with sanitiser.

### **How do I ensure they are getting enough exercise?**

Exercise is very important to get the circulation going and loosen up stiff limbs. This is especially so with older people who sit for long periods of time. If you have a large TV, make sure everyone can see it and then put on an exercise DVD – the Move it or Lose it (MOL1) range are perfect for this as they are designed to be done either seated or standing. Julie Robinson is an experienced instructor and gives just the right balance of movement. You can give everyone some Exercise Resistance Bands (ERBR) to use (or make your own using old stretchy tights).

Simple games like Badminton (BADM) can be played for a fun way to keep fit and players can be kept two metres apart if necessary, by taping lines on the floor. Softball tennis (TENNIS) can be played indoors or outside too and the sponge ball is slower to bounce making it ideal for those with slower reaction times. \*Self-isolators can also be played the DVD at a later time – or if confined to bed, encourage them to do a series of stretches starting from the toes, lower legs and upwards to the head (as much as they are physically able). Even deep breathing can have a beneficial impact on the body. If there is some strength there, why not provide an exercise band (ERBR) to stretch upper arms. It can even be looped around the feet to encourage leg stretches too and is easily washed. For exercising fine motor skills, chunky nuts and bolts (NAB) to do/undo are a great fun addition too.

### **Don’t they need some fresh air too?**

If the weather allows and if you are lucky enough to have a garden, encourage residents to go outside for fresh air and a change of scenery. Take some paper and paint or crayons and ask them to sketch what they see. If this is not possible, get someone to go out and collect various leaves and flowers or blossom and bring inside for people to sketch or paint. Can they identify what they are? Open a window and listen to the birds (less traffic on the road now means their song is easily heard).



A birdwatching kit (BWK) can provide enjoyment for many – maybe set up a round the clock bird watch to keep notes on which birds visit the garden or nearby feeder hanging from a tree? \*Self-isolators may particularly enjoy watching birds coming to a feeder outside their window and this provides an ever-changing interest. They may not be allowed outside but an open window is invaluable to allow sounds and scents to waft in. If the view is unappealing, why not add a Window Wall Mural (TTW17) to add interest – choose from a variety of ‘views’ and they can be removed and placed elsewhere if needed.

### **I want to do some crafts but don't want a lot of mess to clear up.**

Don't worry. There is a huge range of ready-to-go craft kits that need little preparation. Often all you need is a wipe-clean table and a good light. The secret is to have smaller manageable groups of say 4-6 people. If there are some other carers who can help then maybe take on a group each. Some enjoyable craft kits to go for are Weaving Widgets (WWK1) – notched plastic cards that can be woven with yarn to make squares. These can be either used individually as coasters etc or sewn together to make a larger mat or table covering. No sharp edges to worry about so these are ideal for residents with dementia.

For those with a higher level of ability, wooden construction kits such as the Wooden Birdhouse Kit (WBH1). This makes 12 complete birdhouses and comes with everything you need. The construction can be done on one day and the painting the next, so makes a long-lasting activity. Maybe enlist the help of those more able-bodied residents to help with wiping the table down or placing the birdhouses on a safe place. \*Self-isolators will also enjoy craft projects to help with relieving boredom. Those in bed may enjoy a smaller set of Scratch Art Tags (SAT4) as there is no messy paint and can be done even lying down. Once finished, these can be hung up and enjoyed. Or why not give some modelling clay (ART70) for a tactile craft. This can be moulded into a bowl shape or rolled out and cut into heart shapes, then inscribed with a short message before being painted at a later stage.

### **What about the evening?**

After the evening meal, many residents will be up for some group fun! You can organise a Pub Quiz night with some singalong music (try our Party Favourites CD set (CDPF)). These sets come with large print songbooks to allow everyone to join in. There are some excellent quiz sets that have questions for all levels of ability. For more simple levels try Quiz Floor Mat Question Card Set 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (QMQC2) or for something more challenging try the Pub Trivia Quiz (PQP2) Game to get the evening off with a swing – you might want to keep the beer to a minimum though! \*No need for Self-isolators to miss the fun as they too can have their own quiz with a Musical Quiz CD (MUQ1). Listen to the first few bars of the tune and name that song!

To round up the evening, why not settle down to a good old musical DVD or re-run of Morecombe and Wise etc? there are so many resources available on YouTube etc to enjoy and this leaves carers with a chance to put your feet up and enjoy a well-earned break.

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