

One Size Does Not Fit All

Unfortunately this adage also holds true when attempting to design an activity calendar that fits the leisure patterns of adults who have diverse backgrounds, levels of education, and religious preferences. Throw varying degrees of cognition into the mix and the challenge to provide activities that appeal to the majority of your residents, becomes even greater.

Experienced activity directors know that the key to developing a successful program is to find a common thread within the patchwork quilt of each person's interests; the three most common being some form of exercise, music, and reading. Once that is accomplished, the task of providing activities that have a global appeal to your resident population becomes much simpler.

The next step is to simplify each activity into segments that can be altered to match specific resident abilities. Adaptive devices and task segmentation are frequently used to facilitate the participation of a large group of residents in a single activity. For example; the task of building a birdhouse could evolve into a successful activity simply by assigning the more difficult aspects of the project like measuring and cutting to residents capable of performing these tasks, and allowing those with cognitive or physical limitations the opportunity to perform simpler duties like sanding or painting.

Activity offerings in a Life Plan Community should be made to order and address the individual needs and interests of residents in specific levels of care. This can be very difficult to achieve as residents whose needs are ever increasing are unable to move through the care continuum due to the lack of available space. Fortunately, many Continuing Care Retirement Communities have begun to recognize the need for separation between care levels and are moving forward on plans to expand services and resources to accommodate the influx of people who are searching for the ultimate destination in which to live life to the fullest. The key to providing the ultimate in senior living in the future will hinge on the ability of a facility to provide separate but equal amenities and services to their entire resident population.

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