Purposeful activity for people with dementia

CAMTED-OP
Last sessions activity task

• What did we learn about communication with our residents from the previous session?
Learning outcomes

• To develop an understanding of the importance of activity.

• To increase understanding of what to consider with activity in relation to people with dementia.

• To develop an understanding of the sort of emotions that people with dementia may feel when carrying out purposeful activity.
Activities Discussion

Activity 1
Why do people need activity?

• Activity is essential to human existence, health and wellbeing.

• The urge to engage in purposeful and meaningful activity is a basic human drive.

• This in-built motivation does not diminish or disappear as people age.

College of Occupational Therapy (COT) 2007
What activities do you do?

- Write down a list of 5 everyday activities that you have done in the last day or so.

- Does your list include a mixture of leisure, work and self care activities providing a balanced lifestyle?

- Do these activities help you to maintain skills, provide exercise and mental stimulation?

- Do these activities allow you choice, independence, sense of worth, self esteem, social inclusion and sense of purpose?

- How do you think your balance of activities and the benefits you get from them compare with those in your residents lives?
Why do people with dementia need activity?

• Activities have many purposes for human beings, meeting needs for inclusion, identity, and roles in life.

• There appears to be a link between engagement in meaningful activity and well-being which relates to the needs of people with dementia.

• People with dementia seem to be particularly at risk of not ‘doing’ and this can lead to ill being. (Why do we think this might be?)

Menne, Kinney and Morhardt (2002); May, Edwards and Brooker (2009)
What do people with dementia get from activity

• Activities for people with dementia may be more important to their psychological well-being than the physical and social environment.

• Activity has the potential to: enhance quality of life, promote strengths, reduce rate of cognitive decline, enhance relationships and communications, draw on interests and enhance self esteem.

• Marshal and Hutchinson (2001)
Capacity for doing

• ‘Doing’ things can become difficult for a person with dementia but it is unusual for a person with dementia to be unable to engage with their world at all.

• Engagement is a term that describes the way that we connect with the world and can vary from just observing objects and people to complex types of activity such as cooking a meal.

May, Edwards and Brooker (2009)
What people with dementia say about activity

“It is through activity that life has meaning and purpose”

“I like to help and have value”

“Activity is an important distraction from negative feelings”

Phinney et al. (2007); Menne et al (2002); Nygard and Ohman 2002
Skills for making a cup of tea

Break the activity of making a cup of tea or coffee down into small steps from beginning to end.

1. Make a list of these steps

2. Use the next slide to work out potential difficulties for someone with dementia each stage of the making tea process.

3. Look at the following slide of the brain and identify which parts are used when making a cup of tea… it’s more complicated than you think!
How brain function may affect activity

**Parietal Lobes** – Body control and space
**Left** – Sequencing body movement, ability to read and write, Construction ability, 3D and nature of space
**Right** – Spatial function, Understanding how parts make wholes, Damage can result in visual neglect on left side

**Frontal lobes** –
Control of behaviour, planning and decision making
**Left** – Initiating activity, impairment leads to apathy and lack of interest.
**Right** – Impairment leads to lack of social graces and sexual disinhibition.

**Occipital Lobes** - Vision
Sends visual analyses to temporal and parietal lobes

**Temporal Lobes** – Memory Language and understanding
Memory formation and orientation to place within the hippocampus in sub cortex
**Left** – Mapping between objects and words, ability to understand language particularly nouns, knowledge and recognition
**Right** – Knowledge of people/ face recognition, Understanding tones of speech

Perrin et al, 2008
How may a person with dementia have difficulty performing these steps to make a hot drink?

Orientation  
Motivation and initiation  
Planning and sequencing  
Memory  
Recognition of objects  
Spatial awareness  
Co-ordination  
Attention and concentration  
Risk awareness  
Problem solving
Potential for activity with people with dementia

The graph indicates that people with dementia often do not achieve their maximum functioning ability.

What might be some reasons for this and can we do anything to reduce the gap?

Adapted from Kitwood 1993
Not all difficulties are caused by deterioration in the brain

Environment

Sensory and health problems

Personality and life history

Other people!!!!!

There can be other reasons!!!

Kitwood, 1993
How we might maximise potential

- Recognises familiar faces but can't place them
  - Introduce self by name and role

- Able to wash self but doesn't know where or what with
  - Escort to bathroom, offers to fill basin and gives soap and flannel

- Able to put most clothes on but gets muddled about order
  - Lay clothes out in sequence and if necessary offer verbal prompts

Loveday 2013
What activities would interest you?

Choose one or two of the activity cards
Would you enjoy an hour session of your allotted activity?

Does it interest you?
Have you done the activity before?
Do you have the skills for the activity?
Why do you think you would enjoy it?
Why do you think you would not enjoy it?
Would any of your colleagues enjoy it?

Activity 4
Selecting activity

• The general rule for the selection of appropriate activity is that most people gain benefit from an activity which matches their interests and level of cognitive ability.

• The Pool Activity Level (PAL) Checklist can give a guide as to a person’s ability in a number of activities.

• Engagement in activity is likely to change for each person throughout the course of the dementia.

Pool (2011)
Using the Pool activity level

• Look at the case study information about Elsie.

• Based on this information complete the Pool Activity Level checklist.

• Total up the scores for working at each of the different levels.

• Look at the appropriate profile (planned, exploratory, sensory or reflex) to give a general guide as to how you could support Elsie in a particular activity.

See how an Individual action plan can be formulated which is specific to the Elsie.
How to adapt activities

• Sometimes it may be necessary to adapt an activity depending on the disabilities that a person with dementia may have.

• How do you think we could best support Elsie if we were going to make a fruit salad with her?

Look at the hand out to see an example of how a person with dementia could be supported whatever their disability
Early stage

- People at early stage may place greater significance on typical everyday activities in order to maintain a sense of continuity and contribution.

- The person can plan working towards achieving a goal but may need direction.

- Directions need to be simple.

- The person may be able to carry out familiar tasks in familiar surroundings.
Daily activities.

• Activity need not be a structured group.

• Task oriented activities such as doing the washing up and household chores. Some homes adopt a “whole home approach” e.g. domestic staff show a resident how to dust or help make a bed.

• Laying a table, folding laundry, tidying tasks, preparing food and chatting are examples of purposeful activities that people may enjoy.

• Duffin (2012)
Moderate stage of dementia

• More likely to participate in activities they can relate to such as reminiscing about a time that they can recall.

• Participation is more concerned with the process of taking part than the end result.

• The person is experiencing growing difficulties in perceiving and understanding the world of ‘others’.

• The ability to sequence a task is impaired and more complex activities need to be directed one step at a time.
What decade is this?
What decade is this?
Reminiscence and reactions

• Do not be afraid or avoid issues

• Listen and explore sensitively

• Encourage group support

• Sharing emotions is also a function of the group
  A person may have waited a long time to share an experience
Rummaging / Feely bags

- Aim to encourage the person to grasp objects and explore them.

A rummage bag filled with things which have curiosity value and sensory appeal can be helpful. This can include beaded necklaces, fur, silk scarf, cotton wool, fir cones.

NICE (2011)
Later stage dementia

• Movement is reflex response to stimulus and speech has generally disappeared.

• Direct stimulation raises person’s self-awareness.

• Warm and reassuring tone and volume of voice vital to establishing rapport.

• Use Primitive reflex - smiling, waving, handshake
Sensory activities

- This intervention is generally used with people with moderate to severe dementia.

- Develop a range of activities that include all 5 senses.

- The person engages in the world through touch, taste, hearing, smell and sight. Suitable activities can help the person focus and sustain attention for a few minutes.

- Aromatherapy and massage may be a useful way of reducing anxiety, agitation or other non cognitive symptoms.

- It is not the end product that is important but the opportunity to engage in the activity.

- NICE (2011)
Dolls / Soft toys

• Provides the opportunity to explore emotional expression, communication and a person’s role.

• Dolls can have benefits to certain individuals but not every one likes them.

• Valuing the persons perceptions and feelings.

Andrew (2006); Gibson (2005)
Animals

- PAT animals, soft toys and robot animals.
- Regular contact can lower agitation and isolation.
- Can improve mood and increase communication and relaxation.
- Some people communicate more readily with a pet than with humans.
- Not every one likes animals.

NICE (2011)
Responses

• Observe the person responding to the activity.

• If the person appears uncomfortable or distressed then do not continue with the activity.

• If the person seems upset try to analyse why this may have occurred.
Case study - Lilly

• Put together an activity plan for Lilly that will bring her pleasure, comfort and stimulation and enable her to have things to look at or touch while she is in bed. Consider if it would help to have things to talk about and do when sitting with Lilly rather than just helping with personal care tasks.

• How would you know whether these activities have impacted on Lilly’s wellbeing? What kinds of signs would you be looking for?
The challenge

• Remember that some people are happy to sit and watch what is going on around them for a while rather than being actively involved.

• The challenge is to learn to recognise if sitting and watching is really what the person wants at the time. If a person says ‘no’ to an activity we can think of another way to engage their interest.
Useful contacts

NAPA – National association for providers of activities for older people. www.napa-activities.co.uk

Horticulture – www.livingeggs.co.uk – will bring fertilized eggs, incubators and instructions to the home for hatching real chicks.

Community links – Try local museums, cafes, pubs to organize visits at less busy times.
References


[Accessed 9th October 2012]


