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TOP TIPS for happy staff, happy residents & happy homes

A Room with a View

- ✓ part and parcel of the care home
- ✓ Free resources
- ✓ enhance quality of life for residents,
- ✓ make working life happier/easier for staff
- ✓ promote good care practices to potential new residents and families



- “...So you could go from your room, down through all these corridors and **not see outside at all**” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)
- “..it’s an historic garden, it has a lot of established stonework and plants...there’s lots of slopes...but **we still use those areas with views from the windows**...the outside space is still being used by people in the house” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)
- “...She’s (Activity Co-ordinator) put bird tables outside the windows so that they (the residents) can see the birds. And she’ll go out and put the feed there so it attracts the birds, so they’ve got **something to look at** while they’re lying in bed” (Manager, Summerlands)

Get the Back Story

- ✓ Helps the 'settling in' process
- ✓ Include in initial conversation
- ✓ Past interests can change
- ✓ Discover current connections (what, how, why, when)



- “So when people arrive here, within the first week, I will aim to get a **personal profile of somebody’s likes and dislikes**, their history, their family, their occupations , how they spent their retirement...a lot of people have interests...that we’re able to adapt and hopefully help them reimagine those interests”
- “...For instance, a lot of people who will have done **flower arranging** in their local churches...so even people with limited movements who would at one point, have liked the design aspect of flower arranging, they **can still take part** in that. They can still **recognise colours** and **select the flowers they want**, even if they’re **not physically capable of arranging the flowers**, someone else can help them do that”
(Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)

All Aboard!

- ✓ Essential 'buy – in' from everyone
- ✓ not an add-on or an activity
- ✓ fundamental part of human life and health
- ✓ Positive nature-friendly approach



- “[t]here is a logistical aspect...I think ‘Right at ten to two, I need to start with that person, this person and this person, which means at one o’clock I have to tell the carers that this person will need personal assistance, personal care’ ...there isn’t much spontaneity from the resident’s point of view, to going outside for a planned activity” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)
- “...It made them [staff] think slightly outside the box with the things that could be done. One of the loveliest things is it’s brought the gardener into the home more. It made her realise that in the winter she doesn’t have to think ‘there’s not a lot to do’. We can say, ‘Come in Sally. Bring the things indoors’” (Owner, Holly Hill)

One Size Doesn't Fit All

- ✓ Non gender-specific
 - all women 'craft'?
 - Are all men practical?
- ✓ Levels of ability & confidence
- ✓ Motivation - 'unfinished' is ok!



- “..it’s never going to be **one size fits all**” (Gardener, Holly Hill)
- “...someone who’s **quite active** and...is looking around and wanting to collect, they could be the person you choose **to go out and collect all the materials**. But they **might not necessarily then sit down at the table and do the painting**. That might be other people saying ‘Oh what have you got? Let’s have a look’” (Activities Co-ordinator, Holly Hill).

Time IS on your side

- ✓ Be versatile. Contact with nature needn't be lengthy
- ✓ 5 minutes each day has benefits
- ✓ Have tasks or hobbies just outside the door/window to make life easier for all



- “...lack of **time** that the care staff have because...their work is very **task orientated**, so they never **stop...as soon as something is done, it's time to do something else...**I think I've only known a few times where we've been really quiet, that they've been able to take people out” (Manager, Summerlands)
- “...I believe going outside is very important...what I tend to do is **use the garden as the route to the communal area**. So rather than just come out of the bedroom and come down the back hallway...I'll go out the patio doors, **go right round the garden**, then come back in. So **they still go to the dining room but they've been outside...**the fresh air does everybody good” (Care Staff, Holly Hill)

The Four Seasons

- ✓ A garden's resources can support all year round
- ✓ access to all seasons helps people identify and connect with time and place
- ✓ Access all year round to cater for individual needs



- “...certainly their sense of time, in a calendar sense has gone. But **nature’s calendar has more appeal** if somebody sees snowdrops, they know it’s spring...they don’t know it’s March the twenty-second but they do know from the cold in the air and from the dew, they’re aware of what time of day it is and of what’s growing” (Activities Coordinator, Summerlands)
- “...apart from the time aspect, people will remember **the sights and the smells and the sounds**. So it isn’t just about ‘Oh we did that in the summer’, ‘We did that when the roses were up’...there will be triggers of things...So **whatever emotions that triggers, or whatever memories that triggers**, hopefully the emotion will be one that it was a happy afternoon, **it was happy time spent**” (Activities Coordinator, Summerlands)

Nature's adaptability

- ✓ Last minute changes
 - Weather
 - Individual mood
- ✓ bring nature indoors
- ✓ A 'handy' bag of nature



- “...there is nothing wrong with...just going out and walking round the garden...why would you need to do more? But if it's too inclement to go out...you need an activity that you can plan to do” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)
- “And the fact that you've unpredictability, you don't know who's up in their room, who's having a walkabout day...you know what you want to do, you think you know how you're going to do it...you have a pretty good idea of where you're ending up, but the fact that the whole process could be very unpredictable...it's not a straight...fluid exercise from start to finish” (Gardener, Holly Hill)

Risk v Benefits

- ✓ Trips and falls can happen outdoors AND indoors
 - ✓ RoSPA Oct 17 – more hip fractures indoors than outdoors
- ✓ Balance risk and benefit to create positive thinking
- ✓ “Risk-tolerant” - turn negative into positive



- “And I said...’hopefully you’ll be able to help me this afternoon to pick...I really need some help, cause I’ll be pushing a wheelchair and I won’t be able to cut this stuff [herbs] at the same time.’ And he said, ‘Oh if I can help you out mate, of course, I will. I can help you out mate’
- ...he liked all the picking, so he was in charge of the secateurs. It was very, very stressful...but he cut the things [like fennel] that the people in the chairs couldn’t reach...he did get a bit secateurs happy but he enjoyed himself, and he was out with other people.” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)

Social or Serene?

- ✓ A communication tool
- ✓ A coping mechanism
- ✓ Connecting with people, places through narratives woven in nature
- ✓ Re-connecting with ourselves



- “And so it gives them something...they can link back to, but can also be talked about by carers, and it gets the conversation going, and it’s that interaction. So it’s all about interaction, which is the important bit” (Gardener, Holly Hill)
- “...and I think it’s calming...over the years we have had residents that have liked just to walk quietly around on their own, and to find a quiet space” (Owner, Holly Hill)
- “...After he’s finished his cigarette, sometimes he just sits in the garden cause he wants to be there” (Activities Co-ordinator, Summerlands)

Nature for all

- ✓ Residents, staff, families, visitors, community
- ✓ Restorative spaces
- ✓ Calming and safe
- ✓ Friendly and social
- ✓ Engage, discover & re-connect



- “...Because a lot of the time it can be daunting...if relatives come, having something to do...I encouraged a relative to go round the gardens, it was a lovely day. And she was very forthcoming in doing [the nature palette] with her mother which worked very well...it probably prolonged the time they were out” (Deputy Manager, Summerlands)
- “...I often need a very quiet space to talk to families about difficult things. And in that end shelter which is more private, I’ve done a lot of talking about end of life care. I’ve done a lot of listening when somebody’s lost a father or a mother. It’s a quiet space to sit out in the fresh air and talk, listen and just be with somebody. Because it’s very difficult to find a private space in a care home” (Owner, Holly Hill)

Thank you!

For more information on nature-based training and the My Nature Training Toolkit please visit

www.sensorytrust.org.uk/training/whats-in-our-nature.html

For more information on the findings from the My Nature evaluation please see *Journal of Dementia Care*, 26:5, Sept/Oct 2018, 18-21.

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