



Top 10 Skilled Nursing Activities

During COVID-19

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What You'll Learn

Central to many assisted living facilities is congregation - in activities, common spaces and dining rooms. But with the risk of the spread and transmission of COVID-19, facilities have taken steps to protect residents and staff, from enforcing social distancing and visitor restrictions to canceling all group activities. Since interaction is essential to an individual's health and well-being, learn creative ways facilities can help encourage socializing safely.

More than



40%

of seniors regularly experience loneliness.

– University of California, San Francisco

The Impact of Social Distancing on Seniors

Being socially isolated is hard on everyone, but it is particularly harmful to older people. According to University of Georgia gerontologist Kerstin Emerson, physical distancing could contribute to an already underlying issue experienced by many older adults - *loneliness*.

Research shows that loneliness leads to higher risks for conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, anxiety, depression and cognitive decline, among others, according to the National Institute on Aging. On the other hand, those who take part in meaningful, productive activities with others tend to:

Live Longer

Boost their mood

Have a sense of purpose

To help residents stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among older adults who are used to living engaged lives, there are steps facilities can take.



Social isolation alone can have the same negative impact on older adults' health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Ways to Innovate with Activities

Since older adults are at high risk for COVID-19, daily opportunities for these seniors to interact are limited. But the delivery of activities in facilities remains as vital as ever during the pandemic. **Here are 10 ways facilities can encourage residents to stay stimulated and engaged.**

- **Encourage** residents to leave their doors open so they can invite conversations with surrounding residents
- **Offer** in-room materials to residents like watercolors, craft supplies or yarn so they can create and consider holding art contests of the finished works
- **Set up** a pen pal program that connects residents to students and provide stationery and pens
- **Provide** a list of virtual book clubs seniors can join online or consider starting your own that residents can take part in through a video conferencing platform
- **Provide** exercise classes on the facility's internal TV channel and encourage walking outside
- **Organize** singing or dancing sessions in the hallways
- **Hold** a movie night and air a film on your TV channel so residents can talk about it the next day
- **Suggest** residents arrange video chats with their families and friends and provide devices for technology for those who need it
- **Gauge interest** and pair residents with each other for online games like Words with Friends
- **Set up** games in doorways like bingo, trivia or even soccer

And do not forget to ask for suggestions from residents and their caregivers, who may have new ways to keep up socialization during COVID-19 social distancing.



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