

CONTINUITY OF LIFE IN NURSING HOMES

BY

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When it comes to place a loved one in a long term care facility, the thought of it can be pure paranoia. In fact, this is not an easy decision to make and stereotypes associated with nursing homes make it even more difficult. The negative labels given to these institutions exist for so long, they become harder to be removed. However, the attributions of the professionals in the field of recreation happen to make a compelling difference.

In nursing homes, several departments such as: nursing, social services, dietary, housekeeping and recreation are put in place to provide services to the clientele. The therapeutic recreation department plays a vital role in nursing home life. The residents are kept active cognitively, socially and physically on a daily basis. These happen by assessing the needs of the residents and offer programs based on their social, emotional needs and

religious belief. Leisure or recreation existed for the time human beings were born, except that it expanded and shrilly defined during the industrial revolution time. It is said "leisure appeared to be a key element of life involving music, chanting, art and games."(pg.53)

Florence Nightingale, a nurse from the Great Britain helped change the viewpoints of recreation in hospitals. She wrote "Bearing in mind that you have all these varieties of employment which the sick cannot have, bear also in mind to obtain them all the varieties which they can enjoy." (1859, p.36)

In Re-creation we find the verb re-create, which mean that we bring back everything that our customers knew, enjoyed to different adaptive levels. In other words we deliver quality of life activities to them (our customers). For those who may still not able to grasp the idea behind recreation let me join the

American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) in defining it. "Recreational Therapy" means a treatment service designed to restore, remediate and rehabilitate a person's level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations caused by an illness or disabling condition.

For this reason , when people go to nursing homes, programs such as dancing with the stars, religious services, choir, concert, drama, elegant dining are found. It is true that we (recreation therapists) cannot reverse the diagnoses given by the doctors, but we can

definitely alleviate their emotional pain. We do so by trying with all our might to distract their mind from their current situation. From the time we come in to the time we leave, we try to make them live life once again by bringing them programs and activities they thought they would never be capable of participating in. We bring a bright smile to their faces and change the guilt, the paranoia, the sleepless nights attributed to the worries in the mind of their family members.

Bibliography

**Long Term Care for Activity
Professionals, Recreational Therapists and
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