

# NCCAP NEWS

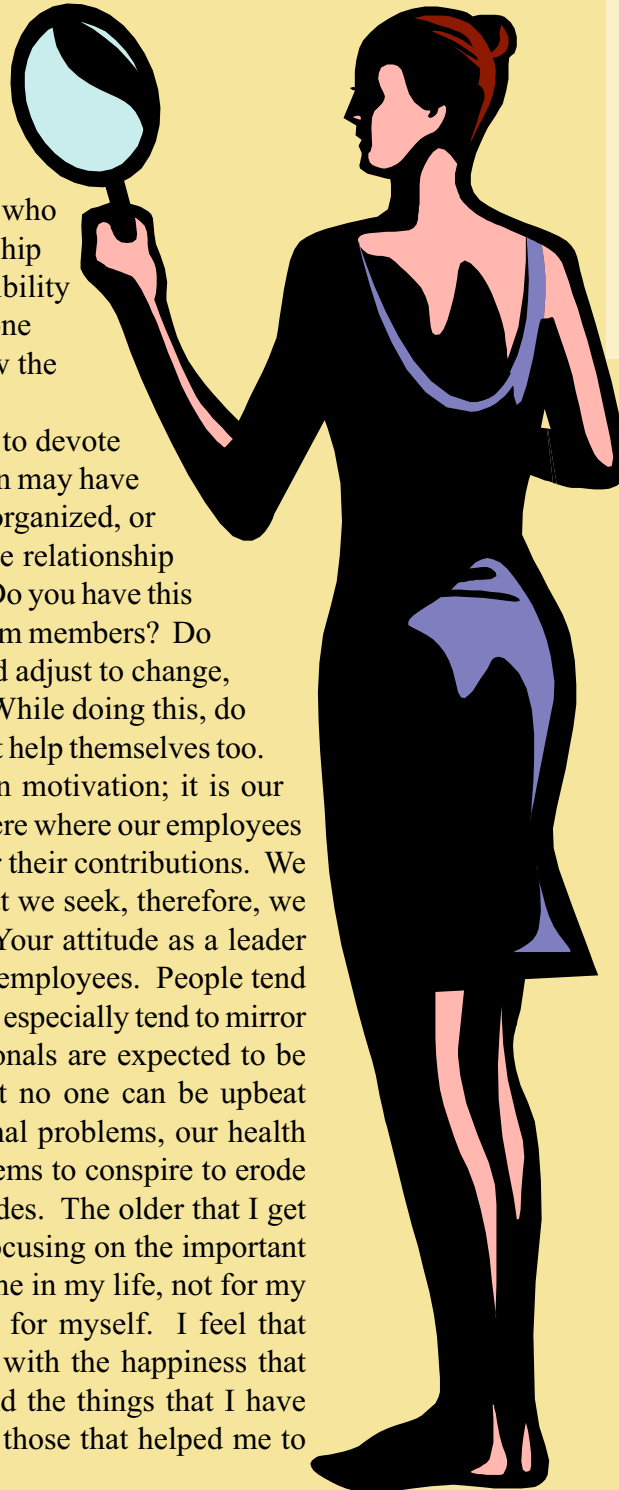


THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION COUNCIL FOR ACTIVITY PROFESSIONALS

## the Important Things in Life

By Ginger Johnston ACC

Few individuals in this world who achieve a position of leadership can truly claim sole responsibility for their accomplishments. Someone has helped us. Someone who knew the individual, and the goals of the organization, and who was willing to devote effort to achieving both. This action may have been so subtle, so natural, so well organized, or so well woven into the fabric of the relationship that it is visible only in retrospect. Do you have this kind of positive impact on other team members? Do you help your co-workers grow and adjust to change, providing guidance and support? While doing this, do you realize that our employees must help themselves too. We are all responsible for our own motivation; it is our responsibility to create an atmosphere where our employees feel appreciated and recognized for their contributions. We all know that we will only get what we seek, therefore, we must choose our goals carefully. Your attitude as a leader will set the pace and tone for your employees. People tend to mirror each other, and employees especially tend to mirror their managers. Activity Professionals are expected to be upbeat, however we all know that no one can be upbeat all of the time. Sometimes personal problems, our health problems, and people problems seems to conspire to erode our positive feelings and our attitudes. The older that I get the more I realize and try to live focusing on the important things in life. I try to find more time in my life, not for my family, staff or my profession but for myself. I feel that all of the above will be rewarded with the happiness that I find. When I look at my life and the things that I have accomplished I have to remember those that helped me to



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

the Important Things in Life.....1  
 Fun Ways to Add Cognitive Stimulation to Your Activity Programs .....2  
 NCCAP Goes Green.....4  
 One on One Visits-Where Are They And Who Needs Them?.....6  
 The "Times" they are a Changing or are they?.....6  
 Use It or Lose It.....8

accomplish my goals. I am thrilled whenever I get the opportunity to assist a new Activity Profession with his/her goals. To see that light in their eyes, to watch as they grow professionally. If you have not experienced this feeling I wish that I could encourage you to reach out to a new activity professional and encourage them to pursue their dreams. We all know that life doesn't always happen the way that we had planned, everything in our life is not in our control. But as a general rule, it's up to each of us to decide whether to smell the roses and answer the famous question: Are we having fun yet? Are you having fun? Come on lets have a little fun in the process of smiling on someone else and their dreams. So many of you have impacted my life for the better, and for that I am thankful.

I have recently realized that I need to enjoy myself more, I love my family with every fiber in my body, I love my job and the residents that I

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• serve. I am extremely proud that I am  
• nationally certified, and that I have  
• had the opportunity to assist others in  
• pursuing their national certification. I  
• found a little saying many years ago  
• that I continue to hold on to and try  
• to live by. "Your most important sale  
• is to sell yourself to yourself" Isn't  
• that the truth. So many of us do not  
• believe in ourselves, and when you do  
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• life, I chose Activities as  
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• to make it a success. I can truly say  
• that I have fun at what I do. And as  
• I have aged, I now must work to find  
• happiness in everything that I do. I  
• would like to express to each of you  
• that we must listen to ourselves. We  
• don't need to copy other people's ways,  
• and most certainly we do not need to



act out certain lifestyles to impress other people. So start today, not tomorrow or next week, you will need to overcome many obstacles. You will be forced to go against the better judgment of many people. You may be faced with prejudices. But believe me you can have whatever you want in this life if you try hard enough. Remember this is your life; so let your life be designed by you just for you and a life that you deserve.

Take some time and just look up at the sky, as you did when you were a child. Lean against a tree and dream your world of dreams. Work hard at what you do, and be willing to laugh at your mistakes. Most of all be willing to praise yourself for learning from those same mistakes. Always have dreams. Always try to make those dreams a reality, help someone else find their dreams. Focus on the important things in life, starting with YOU. **NN**

# Fun Ways to Add Cognitive Stimulation to Your Activity Programs

By Patricia A. Gaudio, Day Services Activity Assistant, Williamsburg Landing

Studies have demonstrated that cognitive stimulation not only enhances a resident's memory and cognition, but helps to reduce depression and behavioral disturbances (Tonarelli, 2007).

In fact, incorporating regular but varied types of cognitive stimulation can either form new brain cells, or increase the communication avenues between existing nerve cells (Shankel

and Amen 2004). This in turn will not only potentially reduce the progression of dementia, it will also improve the resident's quality of life.

**A**n important aspect to effectively exercising your mind is to make sure you use varied cognitive stimulation. If you only do one type of mental exercise such as crossword puzzles, only those language pathways will be strong. You must incorporate a variety of multi-sensory stimulation, such as reminisce, object recognition, association, comprehension and motor memories to exercise different mental pathways. Socialization has found to be very important in this mix. Social interaction stimulates the pathways that involve complex abilities such as cooperation, recognizing right from wrong and knowing when to respond and when to be quiet. (Shankel and Amen 2004). Therefore, offer cognitive stimulation in a group program to obtain the maximal therapeutic benefits.

I have found that the key to introducing cognitive stimulation into your programs is to make them as "failure free" as possible and make it FUN! Residents with memory loss often suffer with self esteem issues. They are so afraid that they will "make a mistake" that they choose instead not to participate or volunteer any information. There are a few ways to reduce their anxiety. First, try to make and discussions based on their opinions rather than facts. In this way there isn't any right or wrong responses. You might also want to divide into teams and make it a group effort. This takes the onus off of one individual to recall something.

Finally when dealing with recall questions such as trivia, always preface the activity by explaining that the purpose of this is to exercise your brain. The goal is not to just to get the right answer. The benefit comes from the stimulation your brain cells receive from the process of actually thinking about, puzzling over and trying to connect with the information.

Here are some fun ways that I have had success introducing cognition stimulation into my activities.

### What do you see?

Bring copies of pictures of famous paintings or calendar scenes. Ask your participant what they see? What do they notice? Is this someplace you would like to visit? What do you think this person is thinking? These are all failure-free questions. There is no right or wrong answer.

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### Musical Object

This is a modification of the old favorite "Musical Chairs". Prior to the program, tape music relevant to the participants lifetime era, placing random pauses as you tape. Second, make up a variety of "Consequences". This can be based



on a theme connected to your object. For example if we are passing a stuffed cow, your consequences can relate to farms, dairy products, and cows. I try to have questions concerned with rhyming (How many words can you rhyme

with Cow?), saying a tongue-twister (Could a Cow Cook Cauliflower?), something silly (Turn to the person on your right and try to sell them a cow.) and association (How many milk products can you think of?) The game starts with the participants sitting in a circle. When the music starts, they pass the object to their left. Whoever is holding the object when the music stops, must pick a consequence. It's amazing how fast the participants try to pass the cow to keep from getting a consequence, and how many laughs happen when they do!

such as "fruit". Ask the residents to identify by touch alone what is in the bag without looking. This seems to even up the playing field as you exercise the connection between the brain and the senses. If the resident doesn't immediately recognize what the object is, ask them specific descriptive questions, such as: What shape is it? Is it hard or soft? Is it smooth or rough? This then can be played as a team effort.

So, let your own creative imagination run wild! When planning programs try to add some failure-free, fun cognitive stimulation. The participants will love the fact that in addition to having fun, they are also doing something that is good for them. **NN**

#### References

Shankle, W.R. & Amen, D.G. (2005). *Preventing Alzheimer's*. New York: Penguin  
Tonarelli, L. (2007). CST: An evidenced based, person-centered cognitive stimulation program for better cognition and quality of life. *Alzheimer's Care Guide*, 15 (4), 16-18.



#### What is it?

Place a collection of items in bags, one per bag. Have a theme to your items



**NCCAP is starting a new contest. Everyone that assists an individual in receiving their national certification, verified by their name being written on the front cover of the application in the designated space, will have their name entered into a drawing for over \$1,000.00 in Gas Card giveaways. The drawing will be May 1, 2009.**

## NCCAP Goes Green!

By Kathy Hughes, ADC  
NCCAP Vice-President



NCCAP continues to offer its members and the entire Activity Professional community the opportunity to support the environment. We have placed all of our information on our website at [www.nccap.org](http://www.nccap.org). Our newsletter is available for all to read through our articles and our NCCAP application as well as the NCCAP Standards Packet is accessible for anyone to use.

We are looking into electronically submitting your renewal as well, but this will take some time. We will announce this service as soon as we have all the information available. We do have a renewal form on the web site for those who have misplaced their notification from NCCAP.

We also have a **Bulletin Board** that many can use to earn clock hours, by submitting an article of 400-600 words and post them on the bulletin board. This opportunity to earn 1 clock hour for every article posted can assist you in obtaining your hours. Simply write an article about activities, programs that you use in your facilities or articles about special events that you have designed that you would like to share with others and post them on the bulletin board under "Program and Activity Ideas". You will need to register to use the bulletin board.

We have also offered the opportunity to advertise your upcoming conference or educational sessions for free on the NCCAP bulletin board. You can get ideas of sessions offered that have been NCCAP pre-approved. There are home study and MEPAP listings that will assist you in finding your continuing education opportunities.

For the MEPAP Course Instructors we have a separate area to share ideas and to get updates from NCCAP. MEPAP Course Instructors are also listed under "MEPAP Course Instructor Listing" from our home page at [www.nccap.org](http://www.nccap.org).

Our **Current Events** section is updated with current information and any *new* programs offered by NCCAP. Check this area regularly for the most current information that NCCAP has to offer.

Don't forget that you can e-mail us at [info@nccap.org](mailto:info@nccap.org) with your change of address so that we can update our database. You can also e-mail us with questions and to receive information including

the **Interpretive Guidelines**. We also have a link to all the state regulations that affect the delivery of activities on our home page.

In our effort to go green, we are encouraging members to e-mail us and let us know if they would like to read the **NCCAP News** online and save a tree or two. Not only will it help the environment, it will also reduce the number of newsletter that NCCAP sends out. NCCAP also needs to save your hard earned money to meet the needs and interests of our membership in a more cost effective way. We are always looking for ways to reduce our costs so that we can keep the cost of certification and renewals

to its current rate. We have not increased your costs in years due to those programs that have reduced our overhead. You can help us do that by reading the NCCAP News online.

Starting in September we will again be offering the **NCCAP Chat Room** for obtaining your clock hours. This reduces the need to travel to sites for continuing education credit and is our fundraiser for our scholarship programs. For \$10.00 you can earn 1 clock hour of continuing education that is NCCAP pre-approved and assist you in your renewal process. You can also just join us to share ideas and concerns about activities. This offers you the ability

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to earn your hours in the comfort of your computer. Check the NCCAP Bulletin Board for the times and the dates of the NCCAP Chat. Many activity professionals have taken advantage of the NCCAP Chat room. If we have not scheduled a time to use the room for NCCAP you can also use it for your state association board meetings. A few state associations have found that they have reduced their costs by meeting in the NCCAP Chat room. Just e-mail us at [info@nccap.org](mailto:info@nccap.org) and let us know that you are using it. We can help your state association **GO GREEN** as well.

There are many ways to reduce your carbon footprint and we are working towards those goals. If you have any other suggestions for us to maintain our **GO GREEN** goals, please let us know. NN

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## ONE ON ONE VISITS – WHAT ARE THEY AND WHO NEEDS THEM?

*By Suzanne Remaklus*

**W**hat is a one-on-one visit? A one-on-one visit is an encounter between two people. In a nursing home setting, one-on-ones are beneficial to the overall activity program. A good one-on-one session should last ten to fifteen minutes in length. Most one-on-one programs are based on meeting with a resident at least three times weekly. Activity staff must keep a record of each resident's one-on-one visit, recording what activity was presented and what the resident's response was.

*Continued on page 7*

# The “Times” they are a Changing or are they?

*By Nancy Best, ACC*

**I** am honored to be certified as an ACC, as well as, a C.T.R.S. Our profession has been struggling for recognition since I began working in Long Term Care. This article may take many of us down “Memory Lane”.

My career in Activities began in July of 1976, as an Activity Aide. I graduated from WVU in Recreation and Parks; of course, I was qualified with the degree. What a hoot, a quarterly report on every resident which consisted of; (a) they refused, (b) they participated in activities, or (c) not interested. Care Plans were called TPC (Treatment Planning Conference) and were held once a year.

In 1978 I was encouraged to apply for my C.T.R.S.; I met the criteria with my BS in Recreation & Parks and a full time job in a facility. The next 10 ½ years I met the C.E. requirements for re-certification and retained my title. In 1990, as the struggle for recognition intensified, suddenly, we were required to take a national exam to be certified. This meant NO grandfathering what so ever. Pass the exam or you were not

entitled to use the C.T.R.S. after your name. I had to take a 200 question test, a three hour limit to complete it, and score over 80% correctly on the exam. Very tight security, so no one could cheat – photo ID to get into the exam room, I.D. to go to the bathroom and return! I was scared to death, out of College for 17 years with only CE's in LTC as my expertise in my field. The only problem, the exam covered all aspects of training. I did not have recent courses in Drug and Alcohol, but did in all other areas.

By some miracle from GOD, I passed the exam. I could have complained about taking the exam, why should I have to? I had been certified since 1978, good at my job, and enjoying my field. However, this was the new criteria for credentialing and I had to comply. I could not blame the Executive Director, Board of Directors, or NCTRC. This process was to enhance the professional recognition of training in general and activities in our area of expertise.

Earlier in my article I mentioned I am also an ACC with NCCAP. In May 2002 my adventure began as a certified ACC. The main reason I became accredited, was because it was specific to activities in Long Term Care. What better way to gain valuable knowledge in our field? Over the course of the last six years, I have been actively involved with our organization. I serve as the State Representative for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the NCCAP Board of Directors, and volunteer my time as a reviewer for renewals. I have witnessed our struggle for professional recognition first hand.

NCCAP Standards changed in 2007, to require initial applicants to have the MEPAP (both sections) to become certified, no matter what

your background, experience or education as it is the core knowledge for our field. Yet, some still argue for the old Grandfather clause to be re-instated. Are we afraid of a little more knowledge in our area? As our journey for recognition advanced, so did the criteria for certification, such as with my C.T.R.S., this is not the Executive Director's fault or the Board of Directors; it is the ever changing regulations and changes in Long Term Care, meeting the industry needs and evolving on behalf of the quality of care for our residents.

We should take pride in our vocation of choice and not whine about the standards of practice for certification. If we allow our requirements to regress, will the care for our residents regress also? Support the standards, support NCCAP and be proud to use your title after your name.

We get a bang for our buck, at the price we pay for a two year certification cycle. If it's renewal time, renew. If you are not certified, meet the standards and become certified. Make the days count for your residents. **NN**

#### We're looking for Activity PHOTOS

Scan and email us fun pictures with residents and Activity Professionals. Photo release and captions required.  
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Continued from page 6, ONE ON ONE VISITS...

There are a variety of residents who would benefit from one-on-one attention from Activity Staff. Residents who are bed-bound and/or room bound need special attention. Many of the residents who are bed/room bound are residents who have been admitted from a hospital stay or, in some instances, are failing in health and are under Hospice care. There are residents who could be totally dependent on someone for all their needs, such as a comatose resident or one who has had a stroke. There are those residents who do not benefit from large and small group activities such as residents who are in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease.

There are even those residents who do not wish to participate in little to no group activities out-of-room. Those residents prefer to plan their own leisure activities on their own or with help from the Activity Department. There are those residents who want the extra attention; they may have no family or family that live out-of-state or not many outside visitors and are lonely.

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There are quite a variety of needs of residents who requires one-on-one attention. There needs to be a variety of one-on-one program ideas that will meet the needs and interests of each resident who requires or would benefit from one-on-one attention. Implementing the Activity Assessment form where it lists Activity Preferences is a good starting point. Having an idea of what their interests are and taking into account their abilities will make for good one-on-one programming. For those residents who may be comatose, in late-stage Alzheimer's and/or, because of their abilities or limitations, the Activity Staff can ask family and/or friends of the resident what their past interests were.

If they enjoyed crafting, a simple craft that takes very little time to make is a good example. Reading, listening to music, bird watching are other examples of one-on-one visits. Listening to a resident talk about his/her past is another way of having a good one-on-one. One can take just about any activity and adapt it to make a one-on-one visit both enjoyable and fulfilling to the resident. **NN**



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## USE IT OR LOSE IT

By Kathy Stowers, [kstowers@wvsf.us](mailto:kstowers@wvsf.us)

Many Activity Professionals have long noticed changes in behavior and physical ability in their residents while interacting with them over a period of time. Some of these changes are a result of the normal aging process. But is there a way to help slow the process?

Aerobic exercise research shows that it will be of benefit in the area of physical aging. New studies indicate it will aid not only physical aging, but also cognitive fitness. The same exercise which

causes an increase in cardiovascular fitness will also help boost cognitive processing speed, visual and auditory attention and motor function. This is explained because of the improvement in cerebral blood flow. Eight of 11 studies evaluated at the University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht, Netherlands found aerobic exercise increased respiratory endurance, which coincided with improvements in cognitive function. This included motor function, cognitive speed and auditory and visual attention. Despite the positive mental health benefits seemingly associated with aerobic exercise, it could not be confirmed that physical activity is required for cognitive fitness. Researchers want to know if the same effects can be gotten with other means such as more intense

or longer exercise. Tai Chi challenges the body and the mind. It's benefits are many. It can improve flexibility, balance, strength and coordination, and may help to improve heart function and lower blood pressure.

The Young-At-Heart Senior Center in Rock Springs, Wyoming developed a pilot program which they hope will be adopted as a statewide initiative on senior fitness. The Mind, Body and Soul program includes a walking club, brain games, yoga and a healthy eating program.

Exercise appears to be essential in helping people to continue their physical and mental lifestyle during their senior years. **NN**