



Getting to Know the Life Stories of Older Adults: Activities for Building Relationships

Kathy Laenhue

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Positive relationships begin with people enjoying one another. This fresh look at reminiscence uses fun-filled, lively activities to help people laugh with, as well as learn from, each other. The engaging program will foster understanding and build a sense of community through meaningful interaction.

Nine in-depth group exercises and more than 30 informal mini-exercises cover broad topics such as individuals' backgrounds, personal preferences, and social history. Games, discussion, storytelling, and other interactive methods are used to reveal participants' unique characteristics, experiences, and interests. Substantial benefits will result including


- * expanded self-awareness and self-esteem
- * strengthened relationships among participants, families, and caregivers
- * disclosure of useful information for personalizing care
- * enhanced brain functioning

Appropriate for people of all ages, but aimed particularly at older adults, these activities can be used in long-term care settings, assisted living facilities, adult day centers, and senior centers. The exercises can also be adapted for one-on-one use in home or community settings and used with intergenerational groups.

Each main exercise is completely scripted and easy-to-implement with minimal preparation. The manual also includes adaptations for people with dementia, additional resource lists, and a CD-ROM with printable handouts.

Every person is unique--use these activities to discover, celebrate, and benefit from the experience and individuality of older adults.

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