



**CURRENT ISSUE**

Subscriptions are **FREE** to Qualified  
Long-Term Care Professionals

Log in to View Digital

Subscribe

FROM OUR PRINT ARCHIVES

## A Growing Role for CNAs

View/Post Comment

E-Mail Article

Printer-Friendly

Permalink

Special Edition for DONs • Page 24  
A Growing Role for CNAs

The F-248 tag requires that CNAs get more involved in activity programming.

By Sandra Stimson, CALA, ADC, CDP, & Fred S. Sganga, FACHE, LNHA

Many dementia units have only one activity assistant. When that person leaves the floor, the residents often sit idle with no other form of stimulation. Typically, nursing assistants are not involved in daily activity programs for several reasons. (See box 1.)

But the new interpretive guidelines regarding F-248 are going to change all that. Under these regulations, CNAs should help transport residents to programs, implement care plans and activity interventions in resident rooms, and participate in day-room activities.

Together with the activity director, the director of nursing and the administrator must recognize this new role for CNAs. They should provide communication and training opportunities to help CNAs fulfill this requirement.

### INVOLVING CNAs

The first step is to provide various in-service training sessions on the following topics:

- the scope of your activities program
- types of activities offered
- times and location of programs
- location of activities supplies
- activity resources (downloads, Web sites and magazines)
- quick activities
- policies and procedures for all programs
- guidelines for implementing a program.

Once you've educated the CNAs on your activities program, identify those who would like to participate in or lead activity groups. Then conduct individual meetings with the CNAs to find out their strengths. For example, one aide might like to sing, while others may enjoy spiritual programs or discussions on their cultures. Incorporate these types of programs into the activity calendar during times when you need CNAs to cover the day rooms and assist with programs.

In addition, involve the nursing assistants with planning activities. Ask the activities director to solicit input from CNAs when planning the next month's activity calendar. Since CNAs know residents so well, they usually have great ideas. Challenge them, as a group, to come up with 25 ideas for these activities and post those ideas prominently in a frame.

### ON THE DEMENTIA UNIT

Planning activities on the dementia unit may require a special selection process. Not every CNA wants to work on the dementia unit. To find the best fits, select CNAs who have taken on leadership roles (as lead CNAs) or who have previously expressed interest in working on the dementia unit. The ideal CNA for the dementia unit would be someone with experience, compassion, creativity, good verbal skills and motivation to be a team player.

Assign a lead CNA to target daily ADLs and schedule the other CNAs to work with the dementia activity program. Since activity rooms can't be left unsupervised or understaffed, nurse managers or dementia unit directors should provide a daily activity room schedule so the nursing assistants know when they can help with

### Search Articles

Search our archives for print and web articles.

Search...

**The Best Value for your IT needs**

**LINTECH**  
Partners in Care.  
For the Long-Term.

Search thousands of job listings—  
**UPDATED DAILY**

Presbyterian Homes

**We Speak A Different Language.**  
Evanston, Arlington Heights,  
and Lake Forest of Illinois

### Free e-Newsletter

Sign up to receive our **FREE** e-Newsletter. You'll receive exclusive information, special offers and career information just for ADVANCE for Long-Term Care Management. For a sample, check out our [latest newsletter](#).

Name

Email

Zip

activities.

#### STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Nursing assistants have a lot of important work to do daily. To avoid over-burdening your CNAs, recruit volunteers to be bed-makers or hire someone from one of the many organizations that work with disabled clients who would be interested in a minimum wage, part-time job.

You can improve the daily quality of life for your residents if everyone works together. The administration, nursing and activities staff should take the time to develop a quality program. Great things will occur when we motivate our CNAs to step up their involvement with activities. n

Sandra Stimson is executive director of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, Sparta, N.J., and Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care, also in Sparta. Fred S. Sganga is executive director of the Long Island State Veterans Home, Stony Brook, N.Y.

#### BOX 1: Reasons CNAs cite for lack of involvement with activity programs

- Lack of activity training
- Don't understand activity terminology
- Activity supplies not available
- Don't want to get involved
- Not comfortable leading an activity
- Not in my job description
- I'm not paid enough to do activities
- Not enough help in the day room
- Not on my assignment list
- Not aware of care plan interventions
- Not invited to care plan meetings
- Unit manager or dementia director gives no direction
- Activity assistant gives no direction during a program
- Don't have time to transport to day room
- Too many residents to care for on this shift.

—Sandra Stimson & Fred S. Sganga

#### BOX 2: Activity Incentives to Motivate CNAs

- Provide certificates for the most creative activity.
- Provide recognition for bringing in a volunteer or group.
- Hold a monthly luncheon to exchange activity ideas.
- Send staff to activities courses and seminars.
- Promote CNAs to working in the activity department as positions open.
- Provide incentives for higher learning.
- Provide competitive salaries for dementia unit workers.
- Have daily stand-up meetings with an uplifting quote.
- Have CNAs present at corporate functions.
- Allow CNAs to give facility tours.
- Make training fun (role playing, word searches, games and personal -stories).
- Honor CNA birthdays with residents.
- Celebrate Nursing Assistant Day.
- Provide positive feedback about activity program or involvement.
- Replace torn uniforms if caused by residents.
- Distribute logo pins to acknowledge trained staff.

- Always remember to say thank you.

—Sandra Stimson & Fred S. Sganga

#### POST A COMMENT

**Email:** \*

Email, first name, comment and security code are required fields; all other fields are optional. With the exception of email, any information you provide will be displayed with your comment.

**Name:**

First \*  Last

**Work:**

Title  Field  Facility

**Location:**

City  State  - Select one -

**Comments:** \*

To prevent comment spam, please type the code you see below into the code field before submitting your comment. If you cannot read the numbers in the below image, reload the page to generate a new one.



Enter the security code below: \*

- Receive emails when a new comment is posted
- Remember me on this computer

**POST COMMENT** **RESET**

Fields marked with an \* are required.

We Care Throughout the *Day..ay*

**PUBLICATIONS** Nurses | LPNs | Enterprise Imaging & Therapeutic Radiology Management | Imaging and Radiation Therapy Professionals | Directors in Rehabilitation | Physical Therapists & PT Assistants | Occupational Therapy Practitioners | Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists | Audiologists | Long-Term Care Management | Managers of Respiratory Care | Respiratory Care Practitioners | Administrators of the Laboratory | Medical Laboratory Professionals | Health Information Executives | Health Information Professionals | Nurse Practitioners | Physician Assistants | Healthy Aging | Sleep Medicine

**SERVICES** ADVANCE Healthcare Shop | ADVANCE Healthcare Shop Live | ADVANCE Custom Promotions | Healthcare Careers | Job Fairs | Online CE | ADVANCE Custom Publishing | Recruitment Solutions Center

**CORPORATE** About Us | Contact Us | Advertise | Work for ADVANCE | Subscribe | Privacy Policy | Terms of Service

© 2008 Merion Publications | 2900 Horizon Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406 | 800-355-5627 | Publishers of ADVANCE Newsmagazines