Meaningful, Enjoyable, and Doable: Optimizing Older Adults’ Activity Engagement at Home

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References


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). *Physical activity is essential to health aging*. Atlanta, GA: Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. ([http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm)).


Table 1: Strategies to Support Activity Engagement in the Context of Dementia-Compromised Abilities

**Take advantage of Strengths.**

**Encourage Independent Participation** as much as possible.

**Approach** slowly, calmly, and with relaxed smile. Do a 3-second assessment – what information are you receiving from the individual? What mood are they displaying? What is their posture like? What are they doing with their hands? This information can alter how to approach and interact with that individual.

Pay attention to **Body Language**, ensuring that facial expression, tone, and posture/body language all match.

Focus on **Communicating** effectively, supporting use of reminders or cues if people are experiencing memory loss, providing written cues or physical demonstration of the task if people are unable to understand or use words.

When people experience **Agnosia**, or inability to recognize familiar objects or faces, gestures & demonstrations can be effective but they may need direct assistance to start the activity and when people experience **Apraxia**, and are unable to perform familiar motor tasks, staff will need to perform hand over hand assistance to help the client engage in the task.