

## **OUTINGS**

### **The Safe Route**

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Facility outings prompt reminiscing, self-worth, confidence, smiles, and a variety of positive emotions for residents. They provide opportunities to stimulate participants' physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Some facilities choose a scenic route, some a busy route, but all need to take the safe route.

Resident outings are planned for optimal enjoyment and a majority of the time are successful. However, the saying "better safe than sorry" definitely applies to outings. This article outlines precautions and preparations for outings and provides some suggestions.

#### **🚐 KEEP IT IN THE VAN**

Items to keep in your facility vehicle include car or cellular phone, important phone numbers, tissues, notepad, pen, first aid kit, and disabled (handicap) parking permit. (The permit can be obtained from your local Division of Motor Vehicles.)

The above recommendations are not an amazing discovery. They are provided to assist you and your staff in planning resident outings. The goal is to provide stimulating and quality of life experiences through outings. This goal is easier to obtain if we take the safe route.

#### **🚐 DON'T GET STUCK IN THE VAN**

Talk to your Administrator about policies and procedures for the facility vehicle(s). Usually, someone has organized the registration, inspection, and proper decals; however, be mindful of expiration dates. You do not want to be pulled over for an overdue tag with a van full of residents. Before leaving on an adventure, make sure the vehicle has plenty of gas, tires have proper air, and equipment is working. It's common sense, but when we have a destination and residents in mind, we sometimes overlook these details.

#### **🚐 IF YOU GET STUCK IN THE VAN**

Even though you have taken every precaution possible for a smooth outing, it sometimes does not happen that way. Your facility vehicle should have a first aid kit which includes a protective barrier device for CPR. Call your local rescue department or Red Cross chapter and ask for a donated kit or list of needed materials. It is also recommended that you keep a car or cellular phone with you at all times. This is important for emergencies and communication with your facility.

#### **🚐 KNOW YOUR RESIDENTS**

Before you head out, know which residents have DNR's (Do Not Resuscitate) orders, allergies, seizures, or diabetes. If you can not remember all this information, write it down. Knowing your residents may prevent medical emergencies or decrease the severity of a medical situation. Again, keep the cellular phone handy to communicate with your facility.

#### **🚐 LEAVE A PLAN**

Facilities have different sign-out procedures for residents. It is important to leave a list of residents on the outing with the Charge Nurse and with your facility's administrative office. Also, include estimated time of arrival and departure and name and phone number of destination. It is also a good idea to check with the Medication Nurse (if applicable) to administer medications before your group departs.

## **📌 PLAN AHEAD**

Announce outings in your facility's monthly newsletter and/or post notices on the Activity Bulletin Board. Use a sign-up sheet for each outing and encourage residents to sign up ahead of time. This allows you to plan for needed staff, volunteers, or extra vehicles. Call the destination and let them know the estimated number of people. Sometimes, you can get special discounts or extras if you call ahead, but always ask if there are any specials. Plan ahead by having CPR certified persons on your outing. CPR certification is strongly encouraged for Activity Staff. Finally, plan ahead by getting input from your residents. Resident Council meetings are a great place to get outing ideas. Instead of trying to figure out where they want to go, just ask!

## **📌 IDEAS FOR OUTINGS**

• Coffee and bagel shop • Mall walking • Library • Scavenger hunt scenic drives • Historic areas • Specialty stores • Local factories • Bible study at community church • Visits to preschool • Community theater productions • Animal shelter • Ride through subdivisions and neighborhoods • Parks • Ice cream parlor • Senior discount day at local retailers • Apple or berry picking • High school or college sporting events and musical performances • Grocery shopping for cooking group

Take the road less traveled, but remember to take the safe route.

*Kim has worked in the long term care activities field for seven years. She presently is the Education Outreach Coordinator for the Greater Richmond (VA) Alzheimer's Association and has had that position for over a year. ☺*