



Interactive transition program for new residents to your home

FutureAgeCare
Lifestyle & Leisure

e-resource

HOneysuckle PrOgram

HOneysuckle is an interactive transition program for new residents to your home.

We're all really passionate to see our new residents connected to their new home and help them make what can be a difficult time the most positive experience possible. New residents can sometimes quickly isolate themselves and be mistakenly thought of as anti-social or "prefers to be alone". Often it may be that they are going through a myriad of unsettling feelings such as fear, grief, anger and disempowerment. The move into nursing care for some can be seen as the end of their life's journey. The reality is that part of life's journey *is* the end of life and its final season, which for some people may be at your nursing care home.

first impressions...

The first few days and weeks in your home can often shape a resident's attitudes towards their surroundings and others, as well as their willingness to be involved in daily life and activities. Negative experiences at the start (and how we deal with them) can sometimes determine whether a new resident will interact well with others and choose to participate in your social and leisure activity programs. If a new resident is overlooked or mishandled when they first arrive, there is a danger that they will isolate themselves, become depressed and lack the cognitive, physical and social stimulation that they need. It then becomes more difficult to encourage participation and socialisation as time goes on.

Experience has taught us that negative experiences with new residents can greatly affect the quality of relationship that staff will have with **family and friends** of your new resident also.

Honeysuckle is a spin on the word "Honeymoon" and the concept is for you to consider a honeymoon period of special care and attention for your new residents and their loved ones as they integrate well into their home.

Honeysuckle aims:

- ✓ For your new resident's transition into your home to be an experience that is as comfortable, affirming and positive for them as possible
- ✓ To create an atmosphere of reassurance for the resident; affirming their uniqueness and individuality and quickly establishing areas of their lifestyle and leisure interests that can be continued in their new home
- ✓ To establish positive relations quickly with family and friends of the new resident

Outcomes:

- ✓ Proactively working through emotions such as grief, loss, anxiety and depression by maintaining a sense of purpose, value and family life for the resident
- ✓ The resident is more able to come to terms with their new life by being able to continue experiencing aspects of their life and identity as known to them already
- ✓ Reassurance for family to see that their loved one is still respected and valued and can maintain his or her interests and unique identity

Key areas for consideration:

**Social
Spiritual
Lifestyle
Purpose**



Social: Family, friends, social circles and how time is spent with others

Encourage as much family and friend visits and involvement as possible: Family will feel more confident to continue visiting your new resident if they are made to feel welcome in your home. Show them around your facility; suggest they have a family lunch in the garden; let them help in any way they can. People will continue to visit if they feel confident that they have **a role to play**. Your new resident will adjust more quickly to their new life if they experience the reassurance of regular family visits and familiar faces.

Buddy Program: buddy your new resident with two or three friendly residents who can help them feel welcome, visit them in their room and invite them to activities. This works well if your new resident has no other regular visitors. A friendly visit from a resident who can empathise and have honest chats with them gives the opportunity to express how they feel in an encouraging environment, with people who are in a similar situation. The Buddy Program has also proven to work well with residents experiencing dementia.

Grief and loss: it is most important that your new resident receives some form of grief and loss counselling. Whether you have available a social worker, Chaplain, counsellor, or you are available to do this yourself, it is important that there are avenues for your new resident to talk through their feelings. Small group sessions with other residents are also an option, where everyone can share and listen over a cup of tea. Affirming how a person is feeling, what they are going through and validating them is extremely important. Why not host a one-to-one or small group session shortly after your new resident has arrived. You might also like to include a family member that they feel comfortable with to help provide reassurance.

Recap:

- ✓ **Encourage family and friends visiting; make them welcome and involved**
- ✓ **Buddy your new resident with other residents for emotional and social support**
- ✓ **Grief and loss program – affirm and validate their feelings; a chance to share**
- ✓ **Tackle negative experiences quickly – be honest and open to all**

Spir-it-u-al – of, relating to, or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things; of or relating to religion or religious belief



faith
religion
belief
values

Spirituality can mean many different things to different people. For one resident, sitting in the garden and looking at the water feature was their way of experiencing peace in their daily world. For another person it means to say prayers at night before going to bed. Our spirituality is unique and can be developed and explored over time. It is very important that people are always invited along to spiritual-based activities in your home, regardless of whether there is a religion recorded in their personal care plans or not. One resident at the age of 99 years old decided that she wanted to become a Christian. Sometimes, facing the end of life can stir up a desire within to either re-visit religion and faith that was once part of their life when younger (think Sunday School or attending church choir). Others decide to take up a faith for the first time in later life.

If your new resident is open to attending your faith-based activities, it can help them adjust to their new home and reconcile any past and present feelings and experiences. Many people say that spiritual activities such as attending church, prayer groups, meditation and pastoral care visits have helped them to experience forgiveness, healing and restore inner wellbeing and peace. Consider these possibilities and discuss with your new resident and/or their family:

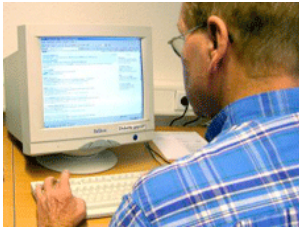
- Attending church services, healing and memorial services hosted onsite
- Pastoral care and Chaplain visits
- Prayer groups (or your resident can become prayer partners with another resident)
- Meditation and relaxation focus groups (see our Relaxation Meditation tips)*
- Celebrating specific religious and cultural days of interest
- Involvement and family/friend visits who have similar spiritual interests
- Garden walks and meditation close to nature: water, birds, flowers, monuments
- Create avenues for appropriate rituals and ceremonies: arranging flowers and religious objects, spiritual music and programs on TV/DVD and radio, planting a baby tree in memory of a loved one, placing flowers in the fountain to mark a wedding anniversary for example (remember deceased loved ones)

Tips: effective activities to enhance spirituality for residents experiencing dementia can include reciting well known prayers with them that may enhance memory (eg the Lord's Prayer). Creating permanent or temporary altars can include objects like candlesticks, flowers, battery operated candles, incense (with supervision) plaques, small statues and stones with inspirational words (such as peace, believe, promise, hope, love etc) sand, proverbs, music, family photographs

Recap:

- ✓ *Encourage and invite to spiritual and faith based activities/create own ideas*
- ✓ *Encourage family/friends of similar faith interest to be involved also*
- ✓ *Consider the use of rituals, religious ceremonies and objects unique to your resident*

Lifestyle & Purpose = *the way in which a person lives; what is important to them*



Lifestyle and purpose can also be linked to culture (values and identity). When a new resident moves in they can sometimes feel like they have become just another face in the crowd or a “bed number”. It is important to look at who they are and were - not just many years ago but 2 months ago and one year ago.

Many residents were, until recently entering your home, very active, social people with great purpose to their day. Experience has taught us that some residents who have appeared to be dominating and “interfering” in the function of a facility, have in fact simply been once very busy and active and are trying to find a purpose and way of contributing to their new life and home.

Whilst it can be a difficult task to match your activity program to one that is similar to each new resident’s lifestyle and preferences, we list some ideas for you to consider. We’ve listed a previous lifestyle activity followed by a suggested alternative activity for your new resident:

Previous important lifestyle focus: ***Alternative suggestions to suit:***

Computers & business from home = simple photocopying, filing, collecting paper for recycling, assist with handing out mail, date stamping internal mail, pinning up notices on community noticeboard, collecting old magazines for recycling, writing birthday and Christmas cards, contributing ideas and articles for facility newsletter, helping create monthly activity program

Likes walking/outdoors = Garden visits, picnics, feed the birds, water the plants, outdoor exercises, seated relaxation on balcony/veranda watching people/cars/birds passing by

Likes hosting dinners, BBQ, parties = assist with tea trolley rounds, help lay table for meals, fold serviettes, assist with BBQ, role of host during Happy Hour, volunteer host for special functions, reminisce together with cooking and food magazines, decorate dining tables with flowers or centre piece features, assist with writing invitations to social gatherings, assist resident with smart dress for social events such as bus trips, suggest resident provides input on meal and recipes for newsletter, assist with cooking group activity

Church volunteer = volunteer host during church visits/services, assist with running of prayer or scripture groups, visit isolated residents with similar faith beliefs, help staff prepare and celebrate spiritual days of importance, assist with creating temporary altar for residents to visit (such as a chapel-style environment), resident selects inspirational thought, prayer or scripture for the day to be displayed on community notice board

RSL/Club member = attend Happy Hour, bingo and other club-style games (eg Melbourne Cup, Two-Up, Hoy) assist with raffle days and on-site fundraising, attend Club Day games with prizes such as miniature cold meat or fruit platters, singalong and reminisce, create Clubs to attend with special invites and written membership

Independent/strong character = Have a “free choice” activity day. Although potentially uncharted territory, giving residents the opportunity to decide what we are going to do together today is a very empowering experience and satisfying for those who are used to being independent and in control of their daily lives!

Recap:

- ✓ *Look at the person’s recent lifestyle as well as further back in their life history*
- ✓ *Focus on immediate tasks and activities that bring purpose to their day*
- ✓ *Look at possible similar activities/lifestyle that your new resident can pursue*
- ✓ *Consider choice and independence as much as possible*

We hope these suggestions help generate ideas, creativity and are thought provoking for you. We realise that your work in the recreation, leisure and therapy field is not always an easy one and that there are not always perfect solutions for your unique residents.

Our aim is to personalise activity programs as much as possible and provide innovative concepts through a “pool” of suggestions for you to consider via our website and email resources.

This e-resource is not copyright – please feel free to use ideas and pass on to others. Ideas and concepts must be tailored to your specific clients and residents, according to the environment, safety and advice of your work peers.

If you have any topics that you would like us to research, comment on or address that you feel is relevant, please contact us...we would love to hear from you and continue on the great journey called FutureAge Care!

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