

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Care Tip: Integrate Tactile Stimulation and Touch in Activities

An activity expert shares some inside tips for meeting this basic need.

Activities provide an opportunity for residents to receive enjoyable touch and tactile stimulation, such as digging their feet into sand in the bottom of water-filled wading pools to replicate a day at the beach.

That's just one idea that **Reta Underwood, ADC**, has used to provide tactile stimulation, which has the added perk of defoliating the feet, she says. As part of the simulated day at the beach, you can "apply suntan lotion or oil, both of which are great aroma enhancements and also lubricate the skin," adds Underwood, president of Consultants for Long Term Care Inc. in Buckner, Ky.

Devising activities that meet people's needs for "human contact and touch" and helping them "feel a part of the bigger picture" has always been a standard of practice for Underwood.

Examples: "Waltzing provides an opportunity for people to touch, as do clapping games where you have a partner and clap hands while saying rhymes," she says. Some residents may enjoy cuddling up with a pet animal. Baby dolls provide an option for people with cognitive impairment. "Providing tactile interventions such as a doll for someone with cognitive impairment is beneficial if the person engages with the doll" in a positive way as if the doll were a real baby, Underwood says.

"There are dolls and stuffed animals that look and feel alive and real."