

MDS Alert

Best Practices: Make Activities a Key Part of Behavioral Care Plans

Find out how potatoes helped put an end to a resident's aggression.

If you don't include activities in behavioral care plans, don't expect to earn an "A" for your efforts from surveyors. **The goal:** "You want to engage residents in activities that promote positive behaviors or at least avoid negative behaviors," says **Kurt Haas, RN, BSN**, former Ohio survey agency chief and now CEO of Nursing Home Perspectives in Canal Winchester, Ohio. In fact, Haas sees that approach as being "paramount when preventing resident-to-resident aggression or even dealing with a resident whose behavior upsets others -- for example someone who is verbally hostile. Activities get people engaged in a safe environment that lowers stress levels."

You can also design activities to meet a resident's need to rummage or perform repetitive activities, which, if interrupted, can cause the person to become aggressive, says Haas.

Example: Haas consulted with an Iowa nursing facility caring for a resident with severe dementia who was behaving aggressively. The staff figured out that the man, who had been a potato farmer, enjoyed washing and inspecting potatoes. The resident found the activity to be meaningful and it helped resolve his aggressive behavior, Haas reports.