

Understanding Older Adults in LTC

Adaptation of "Activity for Understanding Older Adults"

Cut 12 small pieces of paper & write out:

- 3 special people in your life
- 2 items that are important to you
- 3 activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, cooking, & toileting for example)
- 2 senses (sight, smell, taste, touch, & hearing)
- 2 foods you dislike

Place the papers on a flat surface, facing up. Follow the story/instructions:

- You are 86 years old.
 - Take away 2 pieces of paper.
- Due to your impaired spatial perception, you miss a step and fall down onto the sidewalk. This fall causes you break a hip.
 - Take away 2 more pieces of paper.
- Now, turn the remaining papers over (face down).
- While at the hospital, the doctor comes you and says that you need rehab in a skilled nursing facility.
 - Take away 3 more pieces of paper.
- Turn the remaining papers back over (face up).
- While at the skilled nursing facility, you are having troubles with ambulation and the daily rehab is difficult for you.
 - Have your neighbor take 1 piece of paper away.
- Instead of getting better, you are getting worse in the skilled nursing facility. You now need a wheelchair.
 - Take away 2 more pieces of paper.
- Now you need help with all of your ADL's. The facility staff helps you with tasks such as eating, bathing, and transferring. Also, you have become depressed and want to spend most of the day in bed.
 - Take away 1 more piece of paper.
- Now, you are left with 1 piece of paper.

Follow up questions:

- What is on that last piece of paper?
- Are you happy that you were left with that?
- How does it make you feel?
- How did you feel when your neighbor took something away from you?
- How about when the "doctor" took things away from you?
- Were you mad?
- Do you wish you were left with something else?
- Do you think that this happens to the older adults we work with?
- Do you think these things happen quickly?
- Do we give them time to adjust or grieve?
- Do you have a better understanding for what it is like to be an older adult in LTC?