



Lifespan Caring Network

Respite Care Training Program

Staying Engaged: Free Time Activities

*Adapted and used with permission from "Lifespan Respite Training Manual" published by the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin



Topics Covered:

- 🌸 Age-Appropriate Activities
 - 🌸 At-Home Activities
 - 🌸 Adaptations
 - 🌸 Community Outings
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Age-Appropriate Activities

No matter who you are working with, it is very important to take into consideration the appropriateness of an activity. *Even if the individual has a cognitive delay, you can structure activities geared to the person's actual age.* Remember to also consider the person's interests when choosing activities. The best thing to do is talk to the parents about the likes and dislikes of the individual.



At-Home Activities

Talk to the family. Find out if there are activities they want you to *stay away from*, or if there are activities that the individual really *likes*. Ask *where things are* in the house, and if there are any areas of the house that are *off limits*. Ask the family if there are any *routines or schedules* that need to be followed.





Ideas for At-Home Activities

- ▶ Read Books: a great settling-down activity
- ▶ Craft Projects: make something for family members, friends, teachers, etc. Use upcoming holidays as a theme.
- ▶ Movie: check with the family to see if there are any restrictions on type of movie or amount of TV watching
- ▶ Playing Outside/Going for Walks: be cautious of traffic and other dangers
- ▶ Board Games/Card Games: another great “down time” activity
- ▶ Cooking/Baking: be aware of food allergies; check with caregiver about restrictions in the kitchen
- ▶ Creative (Make-Believe) Play: have fun, be goofy, play!
- ▶ Dressing Up: check with caregiver on restrictions
- ▶ Spa Day: nails, hair, make up
- ▶ Crosswords and Word Searches
- ▶ Puzzles: consider number and size of pieces to be used for different levels; make sure picture is appropriate
- ▶ Scrapbooking: use older pictures, or take some new ones
- ▶ Housework: the individual helps with chores around the house

Arts & Crafts Adaptations

Equipment:

- ▶ Grip holds – to help individuals get a better grip around thin objects like pencils, pens, paint brushes, or color pencils
- ▶ Chalk extensions – made long enough for anyone who uses a wheelchair to be able to participate
- ▶ Sensory toys – to introduce different textures, or to use as a fidget item to help the individual get through activities
- ▶ Fat-handled paint brushes – an easy grip for those with poor fine motor skills



Arts & Crafts Adaptations, Cont.

- ▶ Paint dabbers – to keep clean, without worry about getting dirty; easy to hold on to
- ▶ Handles on stamps – easier to hold by handles instead of trying to grip stamps, especially small ones
- ▶ Finger paint brushes – for those who like to paint but don't like to get dirty, or don't like the feeling of paint on their hands
- ▶ Adaptable scissors – come in a variety of styles so that it is easier for the individual to use them alone or with assistance



Sports & Games Adaptations

Modifications: Consider modification of rules or boundaries, and modification of grasps, body postures, or the body parts used to play a game. Evaluate equipment: it may be helpful to use larger or lighter equipment, Velcro, or a larger goal or target.

Basketball

- Use various balls (size, weight, texture, color)
- Allow traveling
- Allow two hand dribble
- Disregard 3-second lane rule
- Use a larger goal or lower the goal
- Slow the pace
- Use a beeper ball or radio under the basket

Softball

- Use Velcro balls and mitts
- Use larger or smaller bats
- Use a batting tee
- Reduce the base distance
- Shorten the pitching distance
- Use a beeper ball



Golf

- Use a club with larger head
- Use a shortened club
- Use colored, larger balls
- Use a tee for all shots
- Shorten distance to hole



Bowling

- Reduce number of steps
- Use two hands instead of one
- Provide a bowling ramp
- Remain in stationary position
- Use a partner



Sports & Games Adaptations, cont.

Soccer

Play walking, instead of running

Well-defined boundaries

Reduce playing area

Play six-a-side soccer

Hold ball in lap while pushing wheelchair

Use a deflated ball, nerf ball, beeper ball, or brightly-colored ball

Use a target that makes a noise when hit

Volleyball

Use larger, lighter, softer or brightly-colored balls

Allow player to catch ball instead of volleying

Allow to self-toss and set ball

Lower the net

Reduce the playing court

Stand closer to net on serve

Allow ball to bounce first

Hold ball and have player hit it



Tennis

Use larger, light balls

Use shorter, lighter racquets

Slow down the ball

Lower the net or do not use net

Use brightly-colored balls

Hit ball off a tee

Allow to drop serve

Stand closer to net on serve

Use a peer for assistance



Websites to Purchase Adaptive Equipment

Arts and Crafts

www.abilitations.com

www.schoolspecialty.com

www.econocrafts.com

www.Ssww.com

www.UnitedNow.com

www.cptoys.com

Sports and Games

www.sportime.com

www.Flaghouse.com

www.PalosSports.com

Others

www.adaptyourcamp.ca

Often you are able to make adaptations yourself. For example, you can use clay to make a marker grip so that it's easier to hold. Using your imagination and viewing products from these sites may give you ideas for do-it-yourself modifications.



Community Outings

With any community outing, you should know the individual with whom you are working, really well.

Be aware of challenges you might face:

- waiting in lines and crowds
- accessible bathrooms
- gift shops/snacks and money
- meltdowns

Have a plan in case something does happen, as well as a back-up plan.

Community Outings, cont.

Talk to the family ahead of time about common challenges you might face in the community.

Think about transportation: Does the individual ride well in cars? Is the family OK with you transporting the individual?

Be prepared. Pack a bag with anything you might need for the outing.



Ideas for Community Outings

- Take a Walk
- Go to the Park
- Go out to Eat
- Community Events
- Zoo
- Library





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Respite Care Training Program

Making Connections:

Meeting Clients and Caregivers





Topics Covered:

- ✿ Finding Clients
 - ✿ Meeting a Potential Client
 - ✿ Know Your Limits
 - ✿ Training with a New Client
 - ✿ When Things Are Not Working
 - ✿ Professionalism and Responsibilities
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Finding Clients

- ▶ There are many ways to find individuals who need a respite worker. The best way is often word-of-mouth – ask people you know if they know of anyone looking for a respite worker.
- ▶ Look at the classifieds and internet job sites. Contact local organizations that work with people with disabilities – they might have a job board or be willing to post your information
- ▶ Many disability organizations welcome volunteers – a great way to get some experience with different populations, and possibly find a connection at one of their events or through your volunteer experience.



Meeting a Potential Client

A caregiver is interested in you as their in-home respite worker. Now what?

- You need to have an interview with the caregiver about the job. Generally, you will be asked questions about yourself. Be prepared, and be honest about yourself and your experiences.
- During the interview you will also find out information about the caregiver and the individual.
- This gives you a chance to *ask questions* and decide if this is a good fit.

During the Initial Interview: Some Questions to Ask

- ▶ Tell me about the person I will be working with (name, age, diagnosis?)
- ▶ What are some of the individual's likes and dislikes?
- ▶ How does the individual communicate?
- ▶ Does the individual need personal care assistance?
How much?





During the Initial Interview: Questions to Ask, cont.

- What are some of the challenges of working with the individual (e.g. behavioral, physical)?
- Does the individual have any medical needs (medications, seizures, special diets)?
- Are there any pets in the house (especially if you are allergic)?
- What is the work schedule that you are looking for? A couple of times a month, weekly, or daily?
- What is the rate you are paying a respite worker?



Know Your Limits

After you talk to the caregiver, take some time to think about the information you received, and if you are interested in pursuing this position.

For some individuals with disabilities, it may take them a long time to get used to a new person, such as a respite worker.


If you have hesitations about working with the family or individual, you need to seriously consider this before accepting a position.

It's ok to say no, or to ask additional questions.



Things to Think About

- ▶ Does this individual have challenging moments? Am I ready to handle these things? Is the individual bigger than I am, and can I stay safe? Do I feel that I have the experience to prevent moments from getting too big?
- ▶ Am I OK with doing personal care? How do I feel about wiping someone after he/she has a bowel movement? Do I have concerns about personal care for the opposite gender, or someone my own age?
- ▶ Do I have experience with seizures? How will I respond in an emergency situation?
- ▶ What types of things really get to me (e.g. grinding teeth, repeating the same phrase over and over)? How would I handle this? Is it something I can move past?



You Got the Job!

Once you and the caregiver/parents decide that you want to work together, you need to be prepared. Both you and the individual you care for will have a better chance of having a positive experience if you know what to expect. The individual and parents are your best sources of information.

Ask questions! Have the caregiver/parent write down needed information. Take notes when talking to them. Try to visit the house and the individual while the caregivers are there. This is a good time to watch how they interact with the individual, and how each responds and reacts.

When meeting the individual, be friendly, introduce yourself, and talk to him or her. You want the caregivers to see your comfort with the individual, and you need to show them that this will be OK.

Things To Ask When Training With The Caregiver

- Will you give me a tour of the house? Are there any areas in which the individual, or myself, are not allowed?
- Are there any special routines (bedtime, meals, afternoon)?
- Tell me about meal times. Are there any particular foods that we should stay away from? Any allergies?
- How can I tell that the individual is getting upset or anxious? How should I respond?





Things To Ask, cont.

- If the individual does become upset and shows aggression, what should I expect? How do you react?
- How has the week been going for the individual? How about today?
- Can you write down the medication schedule, and show me where everything is kept?
- Are there any limits on electronics, e.g. amount of TV, computer?
- Are snacks allowed? What is appropriate for snack and when?



Things To Ask, cont.

- ▶ Can we go into the community? What should I expect?
- ▶ Can you show me how to use the communication device?
- ▶ Are there any siblings or roommates? What are the interactions between them and the individual? Am I responsible for them also?
- ▶ Tell me about the individual's seizures. What do they look like, how long do they last, how should I respond, does the individual receive a PRN med, do you want to be called, when would I call an ambulance?
- ▶ If there is an emergency, how do I contact you? Is there another person I can call if I can not reach you?



The Day Has Come and Gone!

When the caregivers return home, tell them how the day went. Be honest about things that might have come up that you were not sure how to handle. Tell them if there were any issues or moments, and how you handled them.

Open communication is the best way to build a solid relationship with the caregiver.

If anything happened or was broken, or if you made a mistake, that's OK. At some point the caregiver has most likely made the same mistakes. Be upfront, and do not try to hide things from the caregivers. Make a plan for how to handle the situation next time.



When Things Are Not Working

Sometimes things do not work out. Maybe the hours do not fit into your schedule, or you are moving to another area and can no longer work for the family.

Give as much notice as possible. Some individuals have a hard time transitioning, and it will be a process for you to work your way out of the family.

Some families might want you to train a new respite worker.



When Things Are Not Working, cont.

Other times, you might be struggling in working with the individual for a variety of reasons. Reasons might include personality conflicts, they are getting under your skin or you are getting under theirs, the care that the individual needs is not a fit to your experience, or you just are not happy.

It is important that you realize this about yourself and try to make any adaptations that you can. If it is not something you can work with, then you need to move on. Try to give the caregivers plenty of notice, and explain that it is just not what you are looking for.

Things are not going to work out perfectly every time. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses; you need to be able to look at yourself and know when it is not a good placement. If you are not happy and enjoying your job, the individual can tell and will not be happy when you are there.



Professionalism and Responsibilities

As an In-Home Respite Care Provider, you are going into someone's home as a professional. This is a job, and even though you might get to play and have fun, you still need to remember some important professional guidelines:

- ▶ **Respect confidentiality.** You will learn things about the family, caregivers, and/or the individual, that are private. Do not share them with your friends and family. You never know who is listening and how it might get back to the family.
- ▶ Your main responsibility is the **care and safety** of the individual. Put the needs of the individual first, and do a good job. Treat that person the way you would like to be treated. Do not make fun of, or make a joke, at the individual's expense.
- ▶ Keep your **personal life** at home. Do not answer your cell phone or respond to texts during working hours. You are paid to be with the individual, not to be on your phone.



Professionalism and Responsibilities, cont.

- ▶ Maintain a **professional relationship** with the caregivers. Many of the families and caregivers with whom you will work are stressed. They might try to call you with very short notice to come over, or might stay out longer than the time you are scheduled. They might consider you a friend, and ask you to do favors for them that you might not be comfortable doing. YOU need to set the standard, set boundaries, and learn to say no.
- ▶ **Cover yourself.** Write down anything that seems unusual, or “not right;” keep a record of conversations, if you have any concerns. This covers you if something comes up, because you will have a record of what and when this was addressed with the caregiver. It is also a good idea to give the caregiver a written record of any incidents that happen (keep a seizure log, incident report, etc).

Congratulations!
you have completed all of the
modules



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