Fostering Community and Involvement in Independent and Assisted Living Communities

Turning neighbors into community through meaningful engagement!

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Why Community Matters

A strong sense of community in senior living enhances well-being, purpose and belonging. When residents feel connected, they are more likely to participate, build friendships, and experience improved emotional and social health.

Community is not just built through activities--it grows when residents feel seen, valued, and needed.















Key Elements of Community

Successful engagement programs often focus on three core elements:

<u>Connection</u>

Creating opportunities to meet, talk, and share experience with one another

<u>Purpose</u>

Helping residents contribute their talents, skills, and life experiences to the community.

<u>Participation</u>

Encouraging residents to take an active role in shaping programs and events.

Practical Strategies to Foster Community

1. Resident Leadership

Invite residents to help lead programs or share their expertise.

Examples:

- Resident-led clubs
- Coffee or discussion hosts
- Welcome ambassadors for new residents
- Peer mentors

2. Shared Experiences

Programs that allow residents to create something together.

Examples:

- Community art or quilt projects
- Gardening clubs
- Cooking or baking groups
- Volunteer projects

3. Storytelling & Life Sharing

Residents connect deeply when they share their personal histories.

Examples:

- Show & Tell treasure programs
- Life story circles
- Veteran recognition programs
- Memory or legacy projects

Welcoming New Residents

When a new resident arrives, thoughtful outreach can help them feel included.

Consider:

- Pairing them with a resident ambassador
- Inviting them to small group activities
- Introducing them to residents with similar interests
- Learning about their hobbies and talents

Small gestures can help transform strangers into neighbors.

Discovering Resident Talents

Every resident has a lifetime of experiences and skills to share.

Ask questions such as:

- What hobbies or interests have you enjoyed throughout your life?
- Did you have a favorite career or volunteer role?
- What activities bring you joy?

These discoveries can lead to new programs and opportunities for involvement.

Remember

Community is created when residents feel they are part of something meaningful.

"Activities create opportunities—but relationships create community."

Engagement Toolkit

Simple strategies that build community in any setting





1. Resident Leadership

Encourage residents to lead or co-lead programs

Examples:

- Coffee hosts
- Welcome ambassadors
- Discussion leaders
- ***Soup Suppers***

2. Shared Purpose

Programs that create something together

Examples:

- ***Community quilt***
- Memory books
- Volunteer projects
- Garden club







3. Story Sharing

Programs that highlight life experiences

Examples:

- “Show & Tell Treasures”
- Story circles
- Legacy projects
- ***Artist in Residence***





Creating connection between residents.





