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A Client Care Module:

# ACTIVITIES FOR CLIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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# IN端KNOW

Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time



A Client Care Module:

# ACTIVITIES FOR CLIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE



We hope you enjoy this inservice, prepared by registered nurses especially for nursing assistants like you!

#### **Instructions for the Learner**

If you are studying the inservice on your own, please do the following:

- Read through all the material. You may find it useful to have a
  highlighting marker nearby as you read. Highlight any information that is
  new to you or that you feel is especially important.
- If you have questions about anything you read, please ask
- Take the quiz. Think about each statement and pick the best answer.
- Check with your supervisor for the right answers. You need **8 correct** to pass!
- Print your name, write in the date, and then sign your name.
- Keep the inservice information for yourself and turn in the quiz page to
   \_\_\_\_\_\_ no later than \_\_\_\_\_\_.
   Show your Inservice Club Membership Card to \_\_\_\_\_\_ so that it can be initialed.
- Email In the Know at <u>feedback@knowingmore.com</u> with your comments and/or suggestions for improving this inservice.

After finishing this inservice, you will be able to:

List at least two benefits each of these activity types: Physical activity Mental activity Sensory activity



Discuss why people with Alzheimer's disease may resist activities and what you can do to help.



Describe how ADL's are beneficial activities that can become part of your client's daily routine.



Suggest activities for every AD client, regardless of stage or health status.



Help your AD clients participate in stage appropriate activities every day.

#### **THANK YOU!**



# INKNOW

Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

## A Client Care Module: Activities for Clients with Alzheimer's Disease

#### **DECREASE THE FOUR A'S OF ALZHEIMER'S**

Think of all the things you do to relax, to stay fit, to feel pleasure, to satisfy your curiosity and to learn new things. These are your *preferred activities*. The activities you choose play a key role in your **quality of life**.

People who have Alzheimer's disease need access to activities too. And just like everyone else, their activities should be a reflection of their skills, abilities and interests.

The research is clear—appropriate activities have a *positive effect on the behaviors* associated with Alzheimer's disease. Investigators have found that appropriate activities *decrease agitation and negative emotions, while increasing positive emotion.* 

People with AD who have regular opportunities to engage in preferred activities have less of the "Four A's of Alzheimer's:" Anxiety, Aggression, Agitation and Apathy.



Keep in mind, the definition of "activity" is loose and it changes as the person progresses through the stages of Alzheimer's. In general, an activity is:

Anything that keeps a person interested, busy, or in any way engaged, physically or mentally.

Keep reading to learn all about the activities you can do with your clients and their loved ones in all stages of Alzheimer's disease. You'll end up with a long list of activities from which you can choose, and you'll get some great tips on making activities successful, pleasurable and safe for everyone!

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#### THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVITY

#### **TYPE OF ACTIVITY:**

#### **BENEFITS:**

#### **Physical Activity**

Examples: Walking, stretching, cleaning house.

- Reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.
- Can help manage high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, or high cholesterol if present.
- Improves ability to function and stay independent.
- Extends life. People who exercise live longer!
- Improves mood and relieves depression.
- Improves strength, balance and coordination.
- Lowers risk of falls and injury.
- Improves quality of sleep.

#### **Mental Activity**

Examples: Simple puzzles, reading together, reminiscing.

- Increases blood circulation in the brain.
- Stimulates memory.
- Improves mental focus.
- Improves self esteem.
- Improves mood and relieves depression.
- Enhances creativity.

#### **Sensory Activities**

examples: Any activity that stimulates the five senses (smell, sight, taste, touch and hearing).

- Help root the person in the present.
- Decrease agitation and restlessness.
- Improve sleep.
- Provide improved quality of life for the patient and the caregiver.



Grab your favorite highlighter! As you read this inservice, <u>highlight five things</u> you learn that you didn't know before. Share this new information with your co-workers!



## રાંગકે સાદાંડ

Activities can help pass the time and be a fun way for people to maintain function. Here are some added benefits to staying active:

- It can be entertaining.
- It provides a distraction.
- It promotes communication.
- It almost always has a therapeutic value.
- It stimulates thinking and creativity.
- It improves the quality of life.

### Beneficial activities can be:

- **Planned**...like a weekly outing to church.
- Spur-of-themoment...like singing along with a song on the radio.
- **Daily**...like getting dressed.
- Occasional...like going out to eat.



# Heest This!

### THE STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Understanding the stages of AD is an important part of choosing appropriate activities. Here's a refresher on the stages:

**During the Early Stage of AD** the person may
have poor concentration,
a short attention span,
trouble making decisions,
and short-term memory
problems.

As the disease progresses to the **Middle Stage**, early problems worsen, and you may also see episodes of getting lost, problems with speech and following directions, and trouble sleeping at night.

During the **Late Stage**, you'll find loss of balance and ability to walk, loss of short and long-term memory and speech, and an inability to perform basic skills such as eating or drinking.

#### **OVERCOMING COMMON BARRIERS**

Getting your client with Alzheimer's disease (or other dementia) to participate in activities may be easier said than done! There are a few common barriers you may need to overcome! For example, placing items, like a puzzle or art supplies, in front of the person with Alzheimer's may not bring the joyful smile you had hoped for. Instead, it may create confusion, agitation or anxiety.

#### Here are some ways you can help:

- **Resistance happens.** If your client strongly resists an activity, it may be because he or she can't do it—or fears doing it. There's no point in forcing the activity in this case.
- **Get the activity started.** Your client may have *desire* to do the activity you present, but may lack the ability to start or carry out the task.
- **Demonstrate.** Show the person how to perform the activity by providing simple, one-step directions.
- Provide help when things become difficult. For example, during a
  housekeeping activity, you may discover that your client can expertly
  sweep the floor. Then, you may find that she is unable to coordinate
  holding the dustpan and the broom at the same time to pick up the dirt.
  You can hold the dustpan down on the floor and give a simple instruction,
  like, "okay, now sweep the dirt into here."
- **Focus on the process, not the result.** Does it really matter if there are still toast crumbs under the table? No! You can go back later and finish the job when your client is busy with something else. All that matters is that the person did the activity and feels useful.
- Let old habits shape the routine. You may notice that at certain times of the day, your client seems to feel the need to do routine things. For example, she may start to set the table before dinner or sweep the kitchen floor mid-morning. Don't resist or restrict these urges. Instead, plan these activities as part of the daily routine. It helps her maintain her sense of purpose.
- You may need to pull a complete 180! You might assume that a person who was a professional artist all her life would choose painting as a preferred activity. But, that's not always the case. A professional artist may become frustrated by the inability to produce quality work as the symptoms of Alzheimer's progress. Instead of sticking to the familiar, this client might enjoy a new opportunity for self expression.
- Offer support and supervision. Realizing that you can't perform routine life skills and activities can really damage your client's self-esteem. If you see your client struggling or becoming frustrated, simply show him how to perform the activity in a calm, matter-of-fact way. Speak to him like an adult and let him know you are confident that he can succeed.

#### **ADL'S ARE ACTIVITIES!**

#### WHAT ARE ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLs)?

ADLs are those essential activities everyone must do on a daily basis, including:

- **Eating**
- **Toileting**
- Dressing
- Bathing
- Walking
- Getting outside
- Getting in and out of

a bed or a chair

As Alzheimer's disease progresses, there is a steady decline in the ability to perform activities of daily living. Performing ADL's can be a great way for your AD client to get some physical, mental and sensory activity without even knowing it!

#### TIPS FOR INCORPORATING ADLs INTO YOUR CLIENT'S DAY

- Encourage your clients to assist with their own personal care as much as possible. Lifting an arm to brush their own hair is a form of exercise. So is getting dressed and bending over to wash their own feet.
- Give simple directions, one step at a time for any activity.
- Ask "yes" or "no" questions. For example, instead of "Which shirt would you like to wear?" try "Do you want to wear your blue shirt today?"
- Pay attention to body language. For example, if your client seems agitated, it may not be the best time to ask her to sit and brush her hair.
- Tell your supervisor if you think your clients could be more independent in their activities—if they only had certain items. For example, Mr. Lawson can dress himself if he has slip-on pants and shirts without buttons.

#### **MAKE IT COUNT!**

It may be easier and faster for you to do everything for your clients, but if you do, you are taking away important activities and helping to create dependence.

**For example:** Mrs. Smith tries to do her own personal care. But, she stops every few minutes to remember what she's doing, especially when she brushes her teeth and puts on her shoes. You hate to "waste time" waiting for her to finish, so you do it for her. After a few weeks, Mrs. Smith loses interest in caring for herself. She begins to feel helpless and shows signs of depression.

Assist your clients when you are ordered to and when common sense tells you to. For example:

- Always help your AD clients in and out of the bathtub.
- Monitor the use of sharp items, like razors for shaving.
- Stay close by when your AD client walks up and down stairs or on uneven surfaces.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Safety comes first ... but don't "do" for your clients just because you are in a hurry.



# GONVEGL 111

Think about a client you care for right now and answer the following questions:

Do you think your client is getting enough activity?

□Yes	
------	--

If you answered yes, list a few of the activities your client does regularly.

If you answered "No,"
what do you think your
client CAN do for activity?

*Is there anything you are* doing for your client that she might be able to do herself (with some help)?




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#### **SEATED EXERCISES**

Your client does not have to be a star athlete to get some exercise! In fact, there are things he can do right in his chair. Here are a few seated exercises:

- Marching feet.
- Turning the body from side to side.
- Raising the heels, then toes.
- Clapping under the legs.
- Bicycling the legs.
- Making circles with the arms. (Forward, then backward.)
- Raising the opposite arm and leg, then switch.
- Practicing moving from sitting to standing (if allowed).

If your client has trouble following simple directions, sit in a chair beside him and demonstrate the exercise. Ask him to do what you are doing.

#### A CLOSER LOOK AT PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

#### Examples of physical activities your client may be able to do include:

- Walking (indoor or out)
- Stretching
- Yoga or Tai Chi
- Seated Exercises (see side bar)
- Dancing (can be done in a chair)
- Lifting light weights (like soup cans)

- Shopping
- Light housework
- Light gardening
- Active or passive range of motion exercises

#### TIPS FOR INCORPORATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO EACH CLIENT'S DAY

- Most people need about 30 minutes of activity at least five days a week. This can be broken up into shorter sessions throughout the day. For example, you might take your client on a 15 minute walk in the morning and then have her do some sort of housework or gardening tasks in the afternoon.
- Encourage your clients to perform "useful" tasks such as emptying waste baskets, dusting or folding laundry.
- Your clients may be more eager to walk if you make it fun. Promise to sing to them as they walk or use that time to tell a few jokes or to talk about the day's news headlines.
- Pay attention to body language. For example, if your client seems to want to walk and pace then sweeping the floor would be a better activity choice than sitting down to sort socks.
- Dancing can be a great exercise. If your clients enjoy music, encourage them to move to the beat—even if it's just tapping their toes. Some movement is better than none at all!
- Make sure you know how much physical activity is allowed for your client.

supervisor if you're allowed to perform range-of-motion exercises. Keep your clients' safety in mind at all times.

Make sure they use any assistive equipment that has been ordered for them, such as a cane or walker.



#### **MENTAL ACTIVITIES MATTER!**

#### Examples of mental activities your client may be able to do include:

- Reminiscing (talk about old times, watch family videos, look at family photographs).
- Reading together (books, magazines, newspapers, or internet blogs on subjects that interest your client).
- Cooking together (mash potatoes, stir batter or shuck corn).
- Sorting objects by color, shape or type. For example, sorting socks, cards by suit or spoons by size.
- Completing puzzles (word search, and jigsaw puzzles).
- Listening to music (can include singing, dancing and playing a simple instrument).
- Going through "Sensory Boxes" (see side bar).

### TIPS FOR INCORPORATING MENTAL ACTIVITY INTO YOUR CLIENT'S DAY

- Remembering the past gives people a way to show who they are, what they've accomplished in their lives, and a chance to relive happy times.
   For people with Alzheimer's Disease, it is a way to talk easily about things they do remember.
- Ask about family photos your client keeps. Encourage your client to tell you about the school he attended or what he did for a living.
- Consider reading the day's newspaper headlines or one interesting article from the newspaper to your client.
- Talk to your clients about crafts and hobbies. Ask them what they would enjoy doing. But, be sure you check with your supervisor before providing clients with craft materials—especially scissors, glue and paint. Some clients need to be supervised when working with these items.
- Helping out in the kitchen can include putting groceries away (where they belong), creating a meal plan, or choosing recipes out of cookbooks.
- Play simple word games. For example, you might ask your client, "What's
  the opposite of up?" Or try a simple game of charades. Mimic an activity
  like eating or writing and see if your client can guess what you are doing.



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#### **MEMORY BOXES**

Develop themed memory boxes to stimulate memories and begin conversations. Ideas are endless but here are some suggestions:

- Under the Sea
- Trains
- A Picnic
- Any Holiday
- Colors: Red, Blue, Green, Black, etc.
- Wedding

#### Here's what you'll do:

- Fill the box with as many items as you can find that are associated with the theme.
- Bring the items out one at a time and allow your client to touch and describe the object.
- Serve something to eat or drink that is related to the theme.
- Have a simple craft to go with the theme.



# 

#### **Chai Tea Sensory Activity**

Use this activity to stimulate your client's senses!

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 6 whole cardamom pods, lightly crushed
- 6 whole cloves
- 1 (1-inch) piece fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 single-serve black tea bags

Milk and honey to serve.

#### Instructions:

Let clients feel and smell the spices. Ask if they remember using any of these.

Bring the 5 spices and 3 cups water to a boil. Remove from heat, set aside for 10 minutes.

Talk about the smell and how it might taste.

After 10 minutes, add tea, let steep for 3 to 5 minutes.

Strain through a mesh, discarding solids. Pour tea into cups and serve with milk and honey.

Discuss how the tea tastes, smells, and feels.

#### **FOCUS ON THE FIVE SENSES**

During the later stages of Alzheimer's Disease, most clients become totally dependent. They lose the ability to communicate, walk and feed themselves. But even at this stage, quality of life is very important — and there are some "activities" that you can still do with them. The key is to focus on the five sense! Here are a few suggestions:

#### What Can You See?

- A bird feeder at the window
- Fish tanks
- Wind Socks and Pennants
- A digital picture frame
- Wall Clocks even if you feel they cannot tell time
- Mobiles for Their Rooms

#### **Good Things to Touch**

Pet Therapy (dogs, cats & rabbits to touch)

**Dolls & Stuffed** Animals

Fuzzy blanket or pillow

Activity Aprons, Blankets and Pillows

Jewelry Box, with large broaches, watches, belt buckles, etc.

Fabric Books, Wall Paper Books & **Picture Books** 

Hand Massage with Scented Lotions

Hugs

#### Listen to the Sounds

- **Favorite Music**
- Wind Chimes
- Sound Machines with CDs that play nature sounds.
- A real rain shower.

#### What's that Smell?

- Aroma Therapy, lavender recommended
- Scented LED Candles (battery operated)
- **Scented Hand Lotions**
- Cooking Smells (Bread and Pies)

#### Mmmm, that Tastes Good!

- Familiar Foods from Childhood
- **Comfort Foods** 
  - Sweet treats (if allowed)
    - Sucking on a Lollipop can comfort someone who is upset.
    - Cold Ice Cream or **Popsicles**
  - **Small Sips of Carbonated** Drink.

See the Side Bar for a Chai Tea Activity







#### **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

#### **ACTIVITIES WITH FAMILY AND CHILDREN**

Being around children can be fun for some clients with Alzheimer's disease. It may bring back happy memories and provides a sense of belonging. It helps the person remember how to love and be loved.

#### Here are some things your client might enjoy doing with family:

- Play a simple board game.
- Read stories or books.
- Walk in the park.
- Go to a school event.
- Talk about fond memories from childhood.

Encourage your clients' families to bring children for visits but it's usually best to limit the activity to an hour or two. The kids' energy level may wear out elderly clients!



#### **SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES**

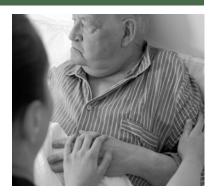
People with AD have the same spiritual needs as everyone else. Talk to your client or his family members about his spiritual life. Find out if he went to church or prayed regularly. Ask about his particular religion and learn about any special customs or holidays associated with it.

For many elderly people, the church is the largest source of social support aside from family and it is the most common source for social interaction.

#### Here are some tips for helping a person with AD who has spiritual needs:



- Invite church members or volunteers from the same faith to visit with your client. This can help him feel connected and remember pleasant times.
- Involve the person in spiritual activities that he or she has known well. These might include worship, religious or other readings, sacred music, prayer, and holiday rituals.
- Play religious or other music that is important to the person. It may bring back old memories. Even if the person with AD has a problem finding the right words to speak, he or she still may be able to sing songs or hymns from the past.



# TOOK OALI

#### SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

Depression is common in people with Alzheimer's, especially during the early and middle stages.

 It's estimated that up to 40 percent of people with Alzheimer's disease suffer from depression.

Identifying depression in someone with AD can be tough because they both cause some of the same symptoms. For example, both can cause:

- Loss of interest
- Social withdrawal
- Trouble concentrating

The good news is that depression in a person with Alzheimer's may be less severe, may not last as long and the symptoms may come and go.

If you observe symptoms of depression in your AD client, discuss your concerns with your supervisor. Treatment is available and can make a significant difference in quality of life.



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#### **REVIEW WHAT YOU LEARNED!**

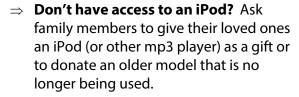
- 1. An activity is defined as anything that keeps a person interested, busy, or in any way engaged, physically or mentally.
- 2. The right activities can have a positive effect on the behaviors associated with Alzheimer's disease, and can decrease anxiety, aggression, agitation, and apathy.
- Realizing that you can't perform routine life skills and activities can really damage your client's selfesteem. Expect resistance and set-backs.
- It may be easier and faster for you to do everything for your clients, but doing this robs them of important opportunities for enriching their quality of life.
- 5. During the later stages of Alzheimer's Disease, most clients become totally dependent. But quality of life is still important and there are some "activities" that you can still do with them. The key is to focus on the five sense!

#### THE POWER OF MUSIC

Plenty of research is going on *right now* to measure the benefits of using **iPods** (or other mp3 playing devices) with personalized playlists for people suffering from dementia or Alzheimers' Disease.

Listening to preferred music though personal headphones has had a major, positive impact on everyone who uses them. Many residents in the studies have come off their anxiety medications and have decreased combative and depressive behaviors.

**Not convinced?** Go to musicandmemory.org and look around. You'll find research on the connection between music and the brain. Then watch a video or two. You'll see for yourself how music transforms people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Be prepared to cry!





- ⇒ An iPod Shuffle (or similar device) is a good choice since it has very few buttons, no display screen and is easy to learn how to operate.
- ⇒ **Here's another solution.** Most smart phones can store and play music through headphones too. Or, you can download free apps like Pandora or Spotify and stream free music through the phone.
- ⇒ Be sure to include the client and/or the family members in building the playlist. The wrong choice of music can make the whole technique backfire.
- ⇒ **Larger, padded headphones** that rest on the sides of the head and ears will be more comfortable than small ear buds that go inside the ears.

#### Here's what some users have to say:

"Our residents have improved mood, brighter affect, increased socialization, etc. They tend to verbalize and sing more after listening to their iPod."

> ~ Melissa Lien, Long Island State Veterans Home, Stony Brook, N.Y.

"One gentleman who had a diagnosis of failure to thrive actually gained weight and began taking an interest in the world after he started using the device."

Janice Chiampa, Genesis Healthcare, Andover, Mass.

# FINAL THOUGHTS: 101 ACTIVITIES FOR CLIENTS WITH DEMENTIA OR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Having trouble thinking up new activities to do with your clients? Keep this list with you at all times. There's something for everyone, in every stage of AD on this list!

1.	Vacuum	30. Dye Easter eggs	58.	Eat ice cream	83.	Talk about famous
2.	Dust tables	31. Sort socks	59.	Plant bulbs		events
3.	Bake cookies	32. Take a walk	60.	Make cards		Recall nursery rhymes
4.	Read newspaper	33. String fruit loops	61.	Sort cards by suit	85.	Write down recipes
5.	Invite children to visit	34. String beads	62.	Write a letter	86.	Count squirrels, birds, trees outside window
6.	Read a letter out loud	35. Make Chai tea	63.	Dress-up fancy	87.	Make and fly paper
7.	Listen to music	36. Look at photos	64.	Pop popcorn		airplanes
8.	Sensory boxes	37. Reminisce	65.	Name the U.S.	88.	Take care of bird
9.	Color / Draw	38. Clip coupons		Presidents		cage/fish tank
10.	Make lemonade	39. Sort poker chip	66.	Give a manicure	89.	Trace/cut leaves
11.	Wipe countertops	40. Count things	67.	Music, movement & props	90.	Simple trivia questions
12.	Weed the garden	41. Fold towels	68.	Plant a tree	91	Finish Bible quotes
13.	Make soup	42. Afternoon Tea		Wrap gifts		Finger paint
14.	Name that Tune	43. Play cards		Finish a famous		Cut out pictures
15.	Readers Digest	44. Do chair exercises	70.	saying		Read/listen to a short
16.	Fold clothes	45. Play charades	71.	Feed the ducks	94.	story
17.	Pet visit	46. Paint	72.	Play with play dough	95.	Put coins in a jar
18.	Cut out cards	47. Cut out paper dolls	73.	Read picture books	96.	Sew sewing cards
19.	Wash silverware	48. Identify states and	74.	Put a simple puzzle	97.	Put seed in bird
20.	Bake bread	capitols		together		feeder
21.	Sort objects	49. Make a family tree		Sand wood	98.	Clean out pumpkin
22.	Sing Christmas songs	50. Take photos	76.	Rub on hand lotion	99.	Roll yarn
23.	Life review	51. Make PB&J Sandwich	77.	Decorate place mats	100	D. Reminisce about
24.	Organize junk drawer	52. Make leaf rubbings	78.	Arrange fresh flowers	40.	vacation
25.	Make a collage	53. Water house plants	70	in a vase	10	1. Make a cake
26.	Sing old songs	54. Reminisce about first kiss	79.	Remember famous people	Ad	d your own ideas:
27.	Take a ride	55. Beanbag toss	80.	Rake leaves		
28.	Make a pie	56. Dance	81.	Make a fruit salad		
	<b>5</b> 1					

57. Sing a hymn

82. Sweep the patio

29. Read a poem



# INKNOW

Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

### EMPLOYEE NAME (Please print):

DATE:	 	 	

- I understand the information presented in this inservice.
- I have completed this inservice and answered at least eight of the test questions correctly.

**EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:** 

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

# Inservice Credit: Self Study 1 hour Group Study 1 hour

File completed test in employee's personnel file.

### A Client Care Module: Activities for Clients with Alzheimer's Disease

Are you "In the Know" about activities for clients with AD? <u>Circle the best choice or fill</u> in your answer. Then check your answers with your supervisor!

#### 1. The best example of a mental activity is:

A. Talking a walk.

- C. Building a birdhouse.
- B. Doing a puzzle. D. Petting a dog.

#### 2. For many elderly, the largest source of social support, aside from family is:

A. Church.

C. Social media.

B. Clubs and leagues.

D. Friends and neighbors.

#### 3. When doing activities with clients who have Alzheimer's, you should:

- A. Give all the directions at the beginning of the activity.
- B. Ask open ended questions like, "What would you like to do today?"
- C. Give plenty of choices.
- D. Demonstrate the activity in a calm, matter-of-fact way.

#### 4. Clients in the late stages of AD can still enjoy this type of activity:

A. Physical

C. Sensory.

B. Social.

D. Mental.

#### 5. True or False

Most people with AD are not physically or mentally able to participate in activities.

#### 6. True or False

ADL's are important, but should not be considered actual activities.

#### 7. True or False

It's okay to suggest religious or church-related activities to your clients if they are open to it.

#### 8. True or False

Activities with children should be limited to 1-2 hours at a time.

#### 9. True or False

Listening to music though headphones has been proven to be upsetting and disruptive to most AD clients.

#### 10. True or False

The symptoms of depression are difficult to spot in people with AD.