

The Impact of COVID-19 on Play in Assisted Living Residences

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Key Themes from Literature

Senior Citizen Play



- Similar findings to impacts of play on children
 - ◆ Social connections
 - ◆ Physical activity

Play in ALRs



- Engage residents
 - ◆ Social
 - ◆ Physical
 - ◆ Creative
 - ◆ Mental

During COVID-19



- Psychosocial health decreased
- Physical health suffered

Methodology



Massachusetts



Qualitative Analysis of Key Informant Interviews:

- Teresa Marciello, Director of Elderly Services for the town of Wilmington
- Ethan O'Rourke, Activities Director at Susan S. Bailis Assisted Living
- Residents at Susan S. Bailis Assisted Living (n=2)

Importance of Play



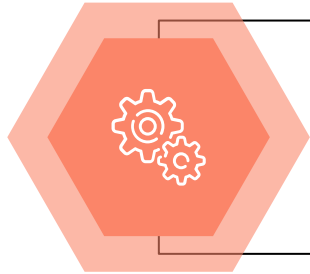
Community Building

Groups that play together spend more time together outside of an activity.



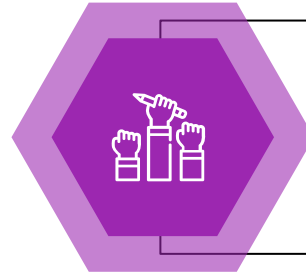
Communication Skills

Play results in an improvement in communication skills.



Memory & Cognition

Decreased symptoms regarding memory and cognition issues.



Play for Play's Sake

It's fun! "Gives you something to look forward to every day."

"I don't care how old you are, we all need to play and exercise our minds so we don't lose who we are."

Health Effects of Covid-19



Mental

- Increased symptoms of anxiety, Alzheimer's, and dementia.
- Feelings of anger



Social/Emotional

- Feelings of isolation
- Low participation



Physical

- Deterioration of physical health, also as a result of social and mental factors
- Less active
- Unhealthy behaviors

Barriers to Play



→ Mobility

- ◆ Any physical activity must have accommodations
- ◆ Embarrassment over lack of mobility

→ Transportation

→ Cognitive

- ◆ Anger, frustration, and retaliation if residents cannot figure out or remember something

→ Technology

→ Gender Inclusion

Recommendations for Practice & Programs

Implementing More Popular Activities

BINGO (with prizes), events involving free food & drink, live music, dancing

More Direct Communication

Make activities a larger and more consistent part of residents' lives, not just a flyer on the wall



Increase in Free Time/Less Structured Activities

Time and resources to explore personal interests and develop hobbies

Promote Active and Healthy Activities

Combat deteriorating health with physical activity; utilize mindfulness practices for body/mind awareness and regulation

Limitations

- Small sample size (resident interviews)
- Only one assisted living residence
- Location: Massachusetts (high vaccination rate, cannot apply findings to other states)
- Time period (still at the end of the pandemic, don't know full effects)



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