

The Celebration Rotunda

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PLAN

The plan for the Rotunda was to create a focal point for event photographs for the many themed and cultural events held at Amber Aged Care Facility. By creating a focus, decorating it suitably would become part of the activity/event planning, thus providing a purposeful activity to accompany all cultural events and assisting to maintain the wellbeing of the residents.

In its initial planning, seeing the Rotunda at a Cheap As Chips store for \$99.00 a few weeks before Christmas, inspired an idea. It was purchased with the plan to use it as 'Santa's Photo Booth' for the Christmas Party. Many children attend our Christmas Parties and the idea of having Santa in a highly decorated booth that the residents would make the decorations for during craft sessions, would not only enchant the children, but the residents would enjoy watching their grand-children go into the photo booth to visit Santa, evoking memories of taking their own children to visit Santa many times in their past. Unfortunately, due to 42 degree heat the outdoor party was cancelled and the Rotunda, still in its box was stored away. When Valentine's Day was approaching, the box was re-discovered and the Rotunda was the source of much discussion of ideas. Residents decided to decorate it to use as both a photo and kissing booth, creating a fun environment and enhancing a sense of well being and feeling of worth.

There are many benefits for providing leisure interests to maintain the well-being and feeling of worth in a care facility. The plan with this particular leisure activity, 'decorating and using the Rotunda as a focal point for events and celebrations' has

had many positive outcomes. These outcomes are described by Avisar (2015) with reference to Seligman's PERMA Model of wellbeing.

UNDERPINNING THEORY – PERMA Model of Wellbeing

The PERMA model is a series of five main elements that Professor Martin Seligman identified as being the basis of human well-being. Each element plays an important part in identifying how happiness might be supported, using the principles of positive psychology (Avisar, 2015).



Ways that the five key elements of the PERMA model underpin activities that use the Rotunda as a focal point for cultural events:

POSITIVE EMOTION

Seligman (2011) explains that positive emotions help us to perform better, strengthen our relationships, boost physical health and inspire creativeness. His studies have shown that when a person feels good, they will be more creative, perform better, look to the future with hope, grasp and-enjoy the present moment and take chances. Positive emotions are not just about putting a smile on a face (Avisar, 2015). With regards to the work that we have done with the Rotunda, residents have shown their enjoyment by being creative and by anticipating each project with significant optimism and enthusiasm. Residents have strengthened their

friendships with each other through these shared goals and they have been extremely proud of their achievements. They have found that spending time with each other and participating in group activities can make them feel good.

It is important that leisure workers provide such opportunities for residents in aged care settings. Positive interactions with others are often limited without such events to assist in bringing people with a shared interest together (Anderson and Heyne 2012, pp138-139). There is strong evidence to support that by providing culturally specific events within a residential facility that a sense of belonging as well as enjoyment can be achieved (At Home with Diversity).

'Seeing smiles makes us want to smile. Hearing laughter makes us feel like laughing. And when we share our good feelings with others, they appreciate and enjoy our company (Avisar 2015).'

These images show how being involved in the shared goals of decorating the Rotunda, has helped with maintaining feelings of being valued, helpful and also encouraging enjoyment within the facility.

- **FEELING VALUED:** Residents have been proud and keen to let others (including family) know what they have been doing in order to create each Rotunda.
- **FEELING HELPFUL:** Residents have keenly wanted to participate as they say they want to 'help me out'. Some have shown a great commitment to both the lifestyle program and their own well being by regularly asking when they

will be helping to make more. They chat and laugh and have said they really enjoy doing something helpful.

- ENJOYMENT: Some residents have spent hours almost daily to prepare decorations. The residents' also love to pose for photos.



ENGAGEMENT

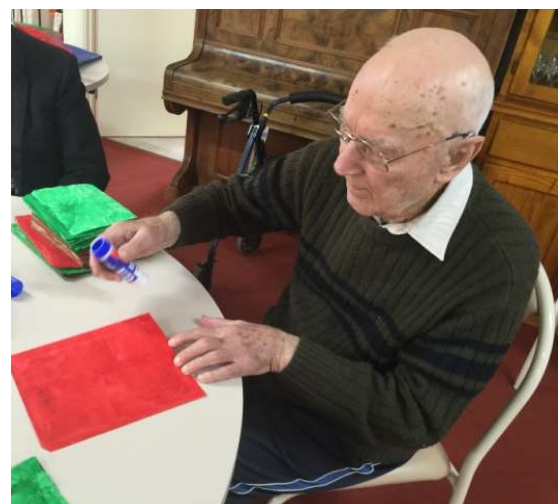
When we are engaged in what we are doing, we experience a state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Whether working or taking part in leisure activities of any sort, when a person is 'engaged' in the moment, there are no feelings of boredom or uselessness, but rather, feelings of being absorbed and inspired (Avisar 2015).

It has been identified that when a person does not have the ability to engage in productive and valuable activities, they will feel undervalued (Avisar 2015).

Residents' have actually initiated craft sessions because they like to feel valued and important and they like to be doing something helpful. They have on many occasions been deeply engaged in the craft sessions, making decorations, and preparing for the various Rotunda events.

In order for residents to engage well, it is essential to involve them in an activity that will make them feel confident, whilst maintaining opportunities to be productive and ensuring that they feel valued. None of the activities that have been facilitated to decorate the Rotunda have been difficult or unachievable. This is to ensure that we are mindful of all levels of residents' abilities and to support their strengths.

Residents actively engaged in participating in making decorations for the Rotunda.





RELATIONSHIPS

It is important to ensure that Leisure Workers assist clients to maintain and foster relationships. In the Relationships aspect of the PERMA model, the importance of the human need for physical and emotional contact with other people, as well as love and maintaining connection is identified (Avisar 2015).

During the Rotunda projects, residents have been encouraged to work together creating an environment which encourages friendships to develop good relationships with each other over a shared common interest. Forming such friendships has promoted feelings of belonging and the feeling of being part of the community. There is evidence that supports the importance of environments that maintain social and cultural life. This is, after all, a basic human right of all people... and the older persons living in our facility (Legal Services Commission, 2016. Pp.7).

Amber Aged Care is a multi-cultural facility with the main focus being the Baltic Countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Capturing the events that are important to residents is encouraged, and assisting the residents to work together in a harmonious manner to create culturally specific events is a major focus.

Not all people communicate in the same way, and this has been evident many times during our Rotunda craft sessions. Some residents will reminisce, sing to background music, or discuss what is being done. Others will work quietly but all harmoniously, and with the same shared goal.

Residents from a variety of CALD backgrounds working together on shared goals





MEANING

Studies have shown that people who belong to a community and pursue shared goals are happier than people who do not. It is also very important for a person to feel that the work that they do is consistent with personal values and beliefs. From day to day, if we believe our work is worthwhile, we feel a general sense of well-being and confidence that we are using our time and our abilities for good (Avisar 2015).

Residents who aspire to help others, socialise with others, or just want to keep both mentally and/or physically active find meaning in the activities on the Rotunda

program. Not only have there been events that focus on fun, but there have been events that have brought residents together with a more solemn significance. For example, when the Rotunda was decorated for ANZAC Day with poppies that had been made by the residents, the entire demeanor of the room changed. No-one spoke loudly, there was no laughter, no-one walked through the Rotunda but they all walked around it, as though it had become a sacred space. Although nothing was said, the Rotunda, this time, held an entirely different meaning for the residents. This demonstrates how important it is for Lifestyle workers to create a space where feelings might be expressed and freely acknowledged.

The facilitation of culturally specific activities for all residents and not just those from CALD backgrounds, is an important part of supporting wellbeing. Studies in a specific CALD facility have shown that-meeting the diverse needs of residents by providing culturally appropriate activities can provide opportunities for residents to achieve best possible outcomes (Greek Welfare Centre, 2015, p.14)



On ANZAC Day, hundreds of paper poppies were painted by residents and then cut out and stuck all over the Rotunda. A wreath was also made from the paper poppies.



Deportation Day – the most significant day in the cultural calendar of the people from the Baltic Countries. Paper banners were made of the three flags and heaps of paper crosses were made and stuck all over the Rotunda to represent the thousands of people who died as part of the Deportation. Residents from the Baltic countries were able to say a silent prayer in remembrance of their lost home and loved ones.

Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday:

This event was particularly exciting for the residents who are from Great Britain.



Tom and Lilian's 65th Wedding Anniversary:



ACCOMPLISHMENT

One fantastic outcome of the Rotunda is seeing how proud and happy the residents have been each time it has been decorated for use. Residents with a range of cognitive and artistic abilities have been involved with exploring their creative side from painting to colouring, gluing, cutting, sorting and threading.

A sense of well-being is also supported by accomplishment and achieving goals (Avisar 2015). Residents have not only been proud of their achievements within the work space, but have shared what they have done as part of a group with other residents, staff and their family members. The comments, smiles and enjoyment that has been observed on many occasions is a testament to how much they feel a real sense of well-being through their accomplishments.



Further to the benefits of maintaining well-being through the PERMA model, there is link with the idea of using a focal point for photographic purposes. Taking photos of the residents at cultural activities/celebrations was the initial idea behind the purchase of the Rotunda. Taking memorable photos can be fun, and photographing residents participating in worthwhile and/or meaningful activities has further enhanced their self-esteem and sense of well-being.

These photos show residents proudly posing, and using dress-up costumes to ensure a good picture in the Rotunda that they have helped to decorate.

Easter: residents cut out yellow chickens and threaded pipe cleaner legs onto them.



Secret Spies event: residents cut out glasses, magnifying glasses and shoes



Australia's biggest Morning Tea – teapots
and tea cups were coloured and cut out



Christmas in July – a combination of
threading cotton wool to make snow and
making snowflakes with pipe cleaners



David Rowse in his 2011 article, *Using Focal Points in Photography*, identified that when people look at photographs, they search for something of interest to look at and that photos need a place for the viewer's eyes to rest. By the introduction of the Rotunda, we have created something for people to look at.

To make the Rotunda inviting to look at, we have considered the importance of the presentation of the Rotunda by matching the decorations the residents have made, to the theme of the cultural event through colour, position, suitability and creativity. Rowse explained that using colour would ensure the focal point of the photo would stand out. We have been mindful of this theory with each Rotunda experience.

These photos show how colourful decorations have ensured perfect photo opportunities. Colours also add to the identification and appropriateness of the cultural theme.



Valentine's Day



St Patrick's Day



Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

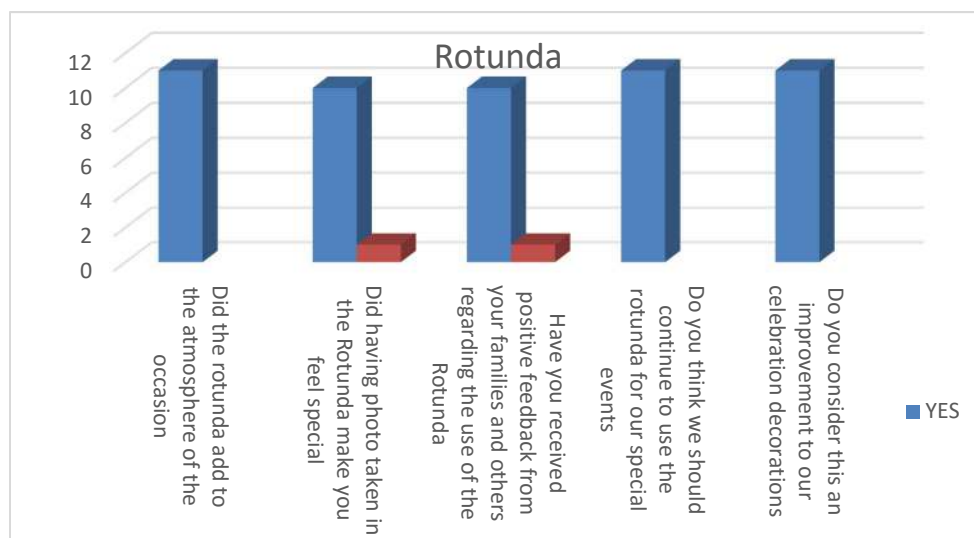


Christmas in July – Winter Wonderland



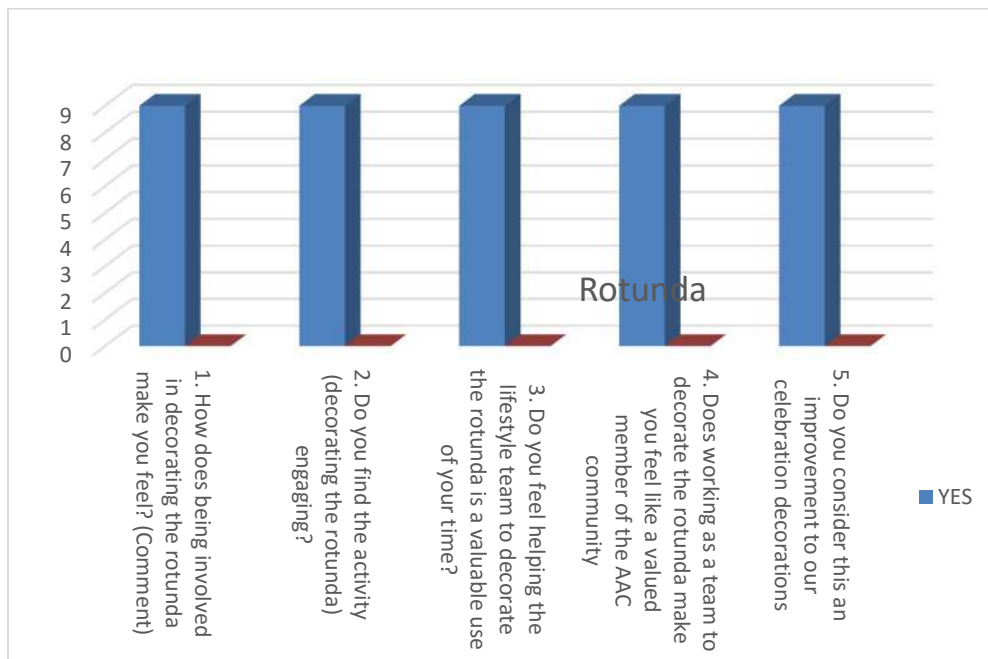
EVALUATION:

At the conclusion of the first Rotunda experience Valentine’s Day, residents were surveyed and the results were overwhelmingly positive.



The Rotunda continues to be evaluated after each use with verbal feedback, and by looking at the photos as evidence.

Graph 2 shows the responses from residents involved in the decorating of each Rotunda 6 months later how much they continue to enjoy it.



There are nine regular residents who participate in the craft activities making and preparing the Rotunda. These are their responses – six months later all positive

Sample Residents Comments

Question 1

- *Makes me feel good, I like doing things*
- *I like to be helpful. I feel helpful*
- *I like doing things with everyone else*
- *It's a good feeling doing things to help out and it certainly passes the time*
- *Enjoy making things for the Rotunda*
- *It's a good way to pass the time*
- *Good*
- *What we do is beautiful. Both the made decorations and all the other things*

- *Very good and helpful. Like the fun of getting together and put my mind to work*

Question 5

- *Good seeing it used and looking good*
- *I like having a nice time with the girls, they dance with me, I love to dance*
- *I love it. So beautiful and so much work*
- *A lot of fun. I don't normally like my picture being taken but I like to have it taken in the Rotunda when it's all decorated*
- *I like to fix everything. Just ask me and I will do it. I will always help.*
- *Proud.*
- *Good.*
- *It's good, exciting*
- *Its good fun and I like seeing the pictures when my daughter comes in with her i- phone thing.*

What has happened as a result of this?

An unexpected bonus is that the Rotunda has brought many of the residents into the electronic age. Residents are keen to see the photographs after they are uploaded onto our very own Amber Aged Care Facebook page. Four of our 32 residents now have their own Facebook page!

Many family and friends look daily on the Amber Aged Care Facebook page and excitedly await photos, not only to see what the Rotunda and their loved ones have been up to, but so that they can share these quality leisure experiences with their loved ones, forwarding on, or tagging themselves.

“Navigating an inspired future”

Modern research is helping us to better understand the nature of wellbeing. As leisure practitioners we can use this knowledge to work with our clientele to improve their wellness outcomes and quality of life. The Rotunda experience is an example of ways that strengths based approaches, consultation, participation and creativity continue to guide practice into the future, not only sitting comfortably with social media but providing interest, intrigue and a pathway into modern culture for older people who are living in care facilities.

Residents of Amber Aged Care are not only helping to inspire me, they are inspiring themselves by constantly thinking about what we can do next.

The Rotunda has also provided a visually exciting way of sharing information and activities with family and friends. Family members often attend our events and they too, want to be photographed in the Rotunda with their relative...



Rusty with his two daughters



Ollie with his wife

Lilian and Tom and their daughters



Meeting Accreditation Standards:

The Rotunda is a Continuous Improvement Project for Standard 3.7. Leisure interests and activities. The impact on other standards is also evident; 3.4 emotional support, 3.8 cultural and spiritual life, 3.9 choice and decision making, 4.4 living environment, 2.13 behavior management and even 4.8 catering. (Australian Government, 2016). It has created a renewed interest for the residents and exciting challenges for me as the Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator to consult with them about where and how to use it next. Often the residents want to decorate the Rotunda 4 or 5 times per month, creating a huge challenge for myself, my co-workers, and for the residents who are now constantly busy with their creative skills. The Rotunda will not become stale as it is ever evolving – Navigating an Inspired Future!

Comments and Acknowledgements:

From the manager...

As the manager at Amber Aged Care it has been a delight to see our residents so engaged and involved in decorating the Rotunda for all kinds of different events. I personally have found it fascinating to watch an object take on a life of its own, so I did some research and I found this phenomena has a name! It's called "essentialism," or the idea that objects are more than just their physical properties. This was clearly evidenced when during the ANZAC Day celebrations, without any communication or discussion, residents chose not to enter into the rotunda. Through an unspoken understanding and out of respect for the event the rotunda had become sacred! Having over 60% of our residents come from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during or after World War 2 and having suffered through horrible atrocities and deportation from their homelands, the significance of activities that provide meaning, a sense of ownership and a feeling of being actively involved in the community, at this stage in their lives, is even more rewarding to observe. The lifestyle team does a fantastic job at giving our residents the autonomy and freedom to create and design this object for all kinds of different events. While the rotunda is just an object, the thought, teamwork, and love that goes into decorating it, by the residents has made the rotunda a special and treasured part of our facility.

Kimberley Moss. Manager.

From family ...

Being an adult child who lives overseas and has a mum suffering from dementia in Australia, the opportunity to witness some of her day to day events via the Amber Care Facebook page has brought me incredible comfort and joy on many occasions. To see mum actively involved in the weekly events, a big smile on her face, dancing her heart out one day and posing for photos with 'this weeks' dignitary or featured performer under the themed rotunda decorations, knowing that she is surrounded by a group of care workers who provide thoughtful, mindful and engaged activities brings peace to my heart. On my last visit home in April, I had the opportunity to sit under the decorated rotunda, with 'the queen', to celebrate 'her' birthday along with my mum, who has been an avid supporter of the monarchy my entire life. I felt like I had become part of the 'magic' of the rotunda...the world that is created under her arms every event. It makes my mum happy, and therefore, it makes me happy. The beautiful decorations that rotunda has seen over the course of this year so far, is a testament to the creativity, heart and beautiful effort Sooz and her staff put into their work. My world, and feeling connected to my mum, would be entirely different and even more difficult if it wasn't for the effort they put into documenting their activities on a weekly basis. I can't thank them enough. *Martine Locke*



Accreditation Agency...

May 2016 - Accreditation Agency 3 yearly visit. The assessors Judith Silkins and Kerry Rochow were so impressed by the concept of the idea, and the incredible opportunities and experiences the Rotunda has created, it was suggested that I present this Activity at a conference. Judy stated 'it's too good not to share'.

Concluding Comments:

It is hoped that this report will provide inspiration for those who read it, to seek a meaningful focal point in their leisure service to help to maximize energy, inspiration, anticipation and well-being for the participants. This has been our experience here at Amber Aged Care with our Celebration Rotunda ... I wonder what the Rotunda is doing today?



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