

DRTA Award for Excellence 2019

**REALISTIC AGED CARE OLD-
TIME DANCE PROJECT**



INTRODUCTION

A key element in the delivery of this Realistic Aged Care Old-time Dance Project is to enhance the quality of life and continue the love of old-time dancing for not only residents in my care but to promote this throughout every aged care facility in the areas where I work and promote Diversional Therapy.

This activity is structured, most importantly, to continue the fun, laughter and enjoyment of a real old-time dance activity. This activity aims to maintain and improve existing individual skills such as short term memory loss, fine and gross motor skills, mobility, socialisation, community involvement, physiological, mental stimulation and most of all to reminisce about the many nights spent dancing.

After working in industry for 11 years as a Diversional Therapy Co-ordinator (150 residents), my observation was that old-time music, old-time dancing, circle of dance, dancing independently with or without a partner, singing all the old songs, playing a percussion instrument or as simple as sitting and listening to old-time music, brings so much happiness. It has been said to me by residents, since introducing a Realistic Old-time Dance Program to many aged care facilities, "If you will come back and do another dance, I just want to live longer".

No-one is left out and this is one program I have implemented throughout the whole of Toowoomba and outlying areas, that all residents, no matter what level of care, can be involved and have so much fun, laughter and enjoyment enhanced into their lives. Through all my observations whilst working in industry for many years, teaching Diversional Therapy for nearly 7 years, I feel so proud and privileged to simply put a smile on all individuals in my care and have them say "thank you" so many times. Resident's say to me "when can we have another old-time dance, soon I hope".

Planning this activity I ensure that all requirements of the policies, procedures and guidelines of the organisation are adhered to.

"Learn to give thanks for the skills and capabilities that remain, do not focus on what has been lost" *Chris Gauld*

OBJECTIVE

Excellence in DRT practice:

- ✚ 10 years employed as Diversional Therapy Co-ordinator – Salem and Northridge Lutheran Aged Care Toowoomba
- ✚ 10 years Volunteer Coordinator – Salem and Northridge Lutheran Aged Care Toowoomba
- ✚ Wesley Mission Project – mentoring Leisure and Lifestyle coordinators throughout 11 facilities
- ✚ Excellent accreditation results – feedback saying my programming was impeccable and would I consider writing a book on ‘How to Successfully Run a Diversional Therapy Program in an Aged Care Facility’. (I have commenced this book)
- ✚ Successfully led a team of 7 Diversional Therapists for 10 years
- ✚ Teaching students all over Australia (TAFE Queensland) into the Diversional Therapy Certificate IV and Diploma – all students having great success in gaining employment past 7 years
- ✚ Lead provider for Queensland with TAFE Queensland Leisure and Health Industry – presenting at Workshops, Forums and State Conferences held at Mooloolaba Qld over three days
- ✚ Presenting to other teachers throughout Queensland into the Leisure and Health Sector
- ✚ Introduced a Leisure and Health Short Course to enable all students to study into the Aged Care/Leisure and Health industry, meeting industry needs. This assisting a lot of students to be able to continue their pathway into the Certificate IV/Diploma of Leisure and Health without such a financial burden.
- ✚ Introduction of the ‘Realistic Aged Care Old-time Dance Program” has certainly added to the wellbeing of all individual current needs. The feedback received from organisations has been excellent and most of all the fun and enjoyment that has been observed within Management, Nursing Staff, Support Staff, Gardeners, Family and friends (all dressing up and dancing) this is amazing to observe.
- ✚ Teaching extra knowledge base workshops relating to Diversional Therapy - Dementia Skill Set, Palliative Skill Set, Falls Prevention Workshop (all accredited). Also teach accurate documentation to meet Accreditation Standards

ELIGIBILITY

A current financial full-time member of Diversional and Recreation Therapy Australia

CRITERIA

Documentation of each step within the process (plan/design, review, implement, evaluate). Detailed analysis of the reasoning behind the development of the event/project, and the proposed impact to the stakeholders involved.

Plan/design, review

- ✚ Documented on Monthly Activity Schedule
- ✚ Resident's family and friends - notified through program and invitation implemented and sent regarding the old-time dance program
- ✚ Because this project is planned around bringing real life dancing and music memories back to our residents I have included the chef and kitchen staff to organise a supper.
- ✚ Enough space, well ventilated, lighting appropriate for activity, seating appropriate, enough space for wheelchair/wheelie walker dancing, room for physically able persons to dance, appropriate environment for professional and display dance session. I have sent Invitations and phoned the professional/display dance groups (community involvement). These lovely people who accepted to come, followed up prior to event
- ✚ Invitations sent to all staff – great for staff moral
- ✚ A real old-time dance band organised.
- ✚ Decorating the environment, just like an old-time dance hall
- ✚ Ordering in extra food items and organising extra cooking sessions in the activity week
- ✚ Posters displayed throughout the facility
- ✚ Delegation of planning and review activities to be implemented and follow-up 1 week prior

Implement:

I implemented this program prioritising the resident's needs. I have implemented many new successful projects over the past 15 years but the success of this project has brought so much happiness and tears of happiness that I could have never imagined. This success has been observed through the following interventions being put into place:-

- ✚ Inclusion of facility staff, family and friends – invitations printed and sent out
- ✚ Choosing a suitable venue

- ✚ A great old-time dance band playing all the recognised songs of our resident's era
- ✚ Supper prepared and distributed just like our residents remember
- ✚ Residents seated around the environment just like they remember
- ✚ Residents, staff, family and friends dressing up for the event
- ✚ Professional and old-time dance display so residents could enjoy seeing all the dances they remember
- ✚ Staff, family and friends dancing with their loved ones whether in a wheelchair, using a wheelie walker, ambulant or just being able to dance within their capabilities
- ✚ Involving all residents in a special dance called a 'monte carlo' and having a prize given at the completion of this dance
- ✚ Implementing a 'Monte Carlo' dance seated
- ✚ Raffles organised and a lucky door ticket prize organised as well

Evaluation

- ✚ Great attendance from residents, staff, family and friends
- ✚ No matter what the health status, physical impairments, cognitive impairment, low self-esteem and self-worth, sight and hearing impairment, mobility status and age, this project evaluated as a great success
- ✚ Feedback from residents: "If you will promise me you will organise another old-time dance, I really do want to live longer"; "Please come back, you have brought back so many beautiful memories, this is the best activity I have done"; "I didn't think I could dance any more, thank you"; "To dance with my daughter, I could not ask for more, thank you";
- ✚ Family feedback has been amazing saying "you have brought new life to my Mum/Dad, thank you".
- ✚ Management and staff of the facilities have been amazed at the success and attendance of this project
- ✚ Bringing back memories when the professional dancers perform and residents asking them to do special dances has enhanced their choices and decision making
- ✚ Raffles, lucky door prizes – an enjoyable part of this program, winning a special prize to suit all no matter what age
- ✚ Ambulant residents can ask someone else to dance – choice of partner

The evaluation process to include reference to measurable outcomes and opportunities for future improvement. Ideally the evaluation would include some graphics and discussion on the data offered within that graphic process, consistent with quantitative research.

This program has been contextualised and adapted to meet many difference individual needs such as:

- ✚ Wheelchair residents – dancers and seated activities specifically for these residents implemented
- ✚ Floatation chairs – dancing with staff, family or friends with upper body to the beat of the music, taking part in singing and dancing with an ambulant partner
- ✚ Ambulant residents – able to dance to slow music with a partner and take part in all dances of choice that they have loved
- ✚ Wheelie walker residents – some dance with their wheelie walker to very slow music played by the band, some are able to join in ‘Circle of Dance’ where they link arms and dance in a circle. Linking of arms just give that support
- ✚ The program allows residents to just sing to the songs they know from their era
- ✚ Posters to feature pictures of old-time dancers, music and sing-a-long pictures, people just having fun. This needs to be eye catching with lovely colours.
- ✚ Professional dancers that accept to attend and many old-time dancers who do attend, encourage them to dress-up in ball gowns or something very pretty for the ladies and men dressed in a dashing standard.
- ✚ I grew up in an era of old-time dancing so have the privilege now, to be able to pass on and ask the residents what they have loved.
- ✚ Old-fashioned cooking (cakes, sandwiches, tea and coffee to be served). This requires some adaptability to the food hygiene and levels of food consistencies required for the residents. Any special food organised for visitors to cover their requests.
- ✚ Many different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, values and beliefs can be covered in the world of this dance and music program

The evaluation process may also include interview or survey results, consistent with qualitative research

- ✚ A simple mini survey carried out pre and post project implementation. Questions are asked on this:
 - Food preferences for supper
 - Music requests
 - Dance requests
 - Time for commencing and concluding
 - Residents part of planning the invitations
 - Donation of raffle gifts
 - Time put aside for demonstration dancers
 - Input into decorating the environment

Reference to the underpinning theory or models of care and discussion on how that theory or model relates to the project. The theoretical basis must have a DRT focus

Why dance for Older People? Dancing, music and singing as implemented in my project will cover the following models of care:-

- ✚ As our residents age they need to enhance their physical, mental emotional and social needs
- ✚ Positive aging is all about not feeling lonely or bored. Our residents are social creatures and growing old should not be a solo adventure
- ✚ The focus is certainly on the care of the resident and not on the cure
- ✚ The process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life is what dance is all about
- ✚ By maintaining and improving upon skills and introducing new skills is an important goal to set each individual resident
- ✚ Maintaining functional ability enables wellbeing in older age
- ✚ Active aging is facilitating the rights of older people to remain healthy and continue to participate in community life
- ✚ Celebrate our resident's age and defy expectations. Learn to focus on the skills that remain, not skills that have been lost.
- ✚ Aging can be difficult to accept and our resident's vision becomes impaired. The experience of this old-time dance program tends to take a lot of the negative feelings and certainly turns them into such positive experiences. These dances help residents to find their place. Loneliness and boredom contribute to poor mental health and I have personally seen on many occasions how residents who have forgotten to smile, return of this happiness is observed.
- ✚ A great Diversional Therapist will enhance the Positive Aging Model of Care by introducing activities like this one, bringing back happy life experiences to many people. I try to be this person on a daily basis
- ✚ The Activity Model of Care, used by Diversional Therapists on a daily basis encourage all of the residents I have cared for over 16 years to be involved in activities that are productive and have a meaningful purpose
- ✚ This old-time dance project meets the value of Diversional Therapy through the use of mental, social, physical and cognitive activities.
- ✚ The Dementia Model of Care – There is no better 'staying well' model in implementation of prioritised activities than music and dance. Slowing down the progression of Dementia can be achieved by keeping these residents happy, mentally stimulated and feeling part of doing an activity that brings the utmost joy. This project of mine certainly ticks all of these boxes.

Reference to the regulatory compliance specific to the author's field of practice

This program I have implemented has met the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of a diversional therapy programme. It certainly promotes the goals and expected outcomes for all unique individuals who participate in this program. I am continually aware of introducing new programs and improving upon the quality of life for the residents in my care. Accurate documentation is always carried out following the policies, procedures and guidelines of my organisations. This program has been accepted by all facilities and is within their budget requirements.

This "Realistic Aged Care Old-time Dance Program" has opened up the doors for me in promoting and networking with many Aged Care Facilities in Toowoomba and outlying areas up to 2 – 3 hours away. I have been asked to teach existing Diversional Therapist on how to successfully program and meet accreditation requirements.

I have met all the accountability guidelines, where I work every second weekend AVEO, Freedom Aged Care, Bridge Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350 and also my permanent position as a teacher in the Aged Care/ Leisure and Health industry.

Discussion to include how the project has informed the applicant's own professional development and the resultant impact on the organisation or community environment. Also discuss how the project has impacted on the author; what changes might be adopted as a result of this project, how might future practice be informed as a result.

The great success of this project has been a wonderful team effort and to me personally, very rewarding and heart-warming. Every successful program I have introduced over the past 16 years working in the Diversional Therapy world, has taken me on a new journey. I would love to add to my knowledge base and I do have the confidence to help other Diversional Therapists on how to simply program. All of the Wesley Mission employees have been very grateful for the time I have spent with them in guiding them with what programs work. This project has brought the utmost happiness to all residents, staff, family and friends who have chosen to attend. I would love to have a goal in my life to travel around Australia promoting and sharing what has worked for me as a Diversional Therapist.

No Diversional Therapist has to be skilled in the area of dance or music to be able to successfully implement this program. The impact on myself has been one of pure joy, reward and I feel totally blessed to have the honour and privilege to meet the needs of individuals in my care with some form of a complex need.

Through networking and marketing Diversional Therapy throughout the State of Queensland many more facilities are wanting this project to be implemented into their organisations. This simple way of be able to put a smile on many resident's face is truly worth observing.

With the success of this program I would love to have this published in the Diversional Recreation Therapy Australia newsletter, as a way of sharing this with others. The more we communicate the importance of Diversional Therapy, the well-being and health status of each individual will be enhanced.