

The power occupational activities

Allowing residents to experience normal life

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Background

People with Huntington's disease often move to a nursing home before their retirement age. **Residents miss the routine, challenge and sense of purpose that comes with work**, but also have a need for hobbies and relaxation.

The **resident's needs are at the core of selecting tasks**, including working in the (vegetable) garden, woodworking, collecting paper, baking apple pies for sale, keeping the premises clean, and packaging work through companies. **Structured** activities are offered year-round, every weekday. Participants work under **professional guidance**, using a step-wise approach with small, achievable steps. They do not receive a salary. Their reward consists of fun events that are regularly organized for and with them. Musical and creative activities offer relaxation.

Methods

Huntington Centre of Expertise Topaz Overduin offers both **recreational and occupational activities** to address these needs. The activities aim to provide structure, give meaningful purpose to the day, and enhance independence, skills, social interaction and autonomy. Occupational activities also aim to instil a **sense of contribution to society**.



Outcome

Currently, 40 residents with Huntington's disease or Korsakoff syndrome participate in the activities. This provides a **work routine**, meeting the need for **structure** in both groups. Staff report that residents enjoy the activities, which enhances their **self-confidence** and sense of **self-worth**. Residents involved in occupational activities are visibly satisfied and **proud** of themselves.

Conclusions

Occupational activities induce **positive behavioural changes**, with less complex and apathic behaviour observed by staff. Residents express **high satisfaction**, indicating a desire to participate in activities more frequently than currently feasible.

Scan the QR-code for a video on occupational activities at Topaz:



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