

The Importance of Technology in Long Term Care –

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As TR professionals, we have many tools at our disposal that allow us to develop strategies for working with any individual. One important tool that we have available is Technology. It can come in many forms such as: ipods, tablets, laptops, and others that are designed specifically for older adults. With the use of these items, we can open new doors for our residents.

Technology may be scary to some, but the avenues it allows us to explore are virtually limitless and can benefit our residents in many ways. Technology can be used in any setting within long term care including our rehabilitation residents and Dementia care. Technology allows us to have music, photos, internet access, games, and more at our finger tips in a moment's notice, making it easier to program on the go, increase staff participation, and help bridge the gap in the varying generations that we serve.

Programs such as “Music and Memory” and “It’s Never 2 Late” focus on utilizing technology with older adults. Along with these, there are additional programs you can initiate, with little computer experience, to raise your resident’s quality of life to the next level. Some ideas on how to use technology in your community include:

- Have devices available for residents to use independently.
- Organize a local school or volunteer group to do an intergenerational program.
- There are many apps and games that can assist with sensory programming
- Create playlists, photo albums, and sensory games to promote engagement among residents who do not do well in group settings or to help re-direct behaviors.

What is listed above is just a start to what you can accomplish. Some may think, can I afford this? Devices range in price, but they are easier to get now than ever before. Each community has different needs, and it is important to consider your options before purchasing. If funds are an issue, try to fundraise or see if donations are an option; with the rate technology changes it is easier to come by used or refurbished devices as well.

Lastly, I would enjoy hearing your thoughts, ideas, or questions on how to continue to incorporate technology into long term care. Please contact me at tcoffman@srcare.org if you would like to share.