

Department of Human Services (Victoria)

Active Support Fact Sheet

What is Active Support?

The Active Support approach promotes levels of resident participation in meaningful activities through effective engagement between staff and residents. The Active Support Model provides a framework in which staff plan with and/or for residents in respect of their involvement in activities of daily living within their home and the community.

The Active Support Framework ensures that the support that the resident requires to participate in the activity is identified, provided and reviewed in a planned context and that opportunities to undertake that activity occur.

Studies both in the UK and NSW have demonstrated that the use of the Active Support Model significantly increases levels of resident engagement in activities of daily life.

What will be different?

Nothing will change with regards to staffing and rostering arrangements in the house, only how staff time is utilised and how events are recorded in the house. Staff will continue to engage with residents on activities of daily living in the home and community. The Active Support Framework provides a structure to support staff to plan for activity, support requirements and organisation more fully and effectively. This does not mean that residents will be doing something all the time and some of the activities will be short in duration, like many household jobs.

Feedback from staff using the Active Support Framework has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have reported how exciting it is to see residents developing skills and the reduction in challenging and self injurious behaviours. Staff also reported that their communication with colleagues is more effective and that the Active Support approach helps in orienting new casual staff to the residents and their support needs. All houses visited spoke of the increased sense of team amongst the staff group and improved overall job satisfaction. Whilst they reported the paperwork was a slight additional burden all staff reported how helpful it was in assisting them to plan and review activities and support and demonstrate the gains made. Use of Active Support has also been shown to reduce accidents, a benefit for all staff and residents whilst assisting with Occupational Health and Safety obligations.

What if residents don't want to participate?

The Active Support Model works on a basic assumption that people would rather be involved in the aspects of daily living than not, this has been born out in studies in the UK of the Model. When people have the opportunity and the right support they will become involved even when they may not have previously.

There will be times when residents will not want to participate in an activity. Using some basic strategies staff will attempt to encourage participation and will record where activities are refused for group review later. Sometimes it may not be the activity but the timing of it or the approach to it that is causing the problem, through trial and observation these possibilities can be explored.

Records and Privacy

The Active Support Model requires recording of daily activity, opportunity and individual plans. These plans and daily recording against them enable staff to ensure that residents are receiving appropriate agreed opportunities and support and monitor participation. This helps inform the staff team how things are going and highlight areas for further development or discussion. Information used in the Active Support Model will not be different from that currently collected but rather documented in a new structure. All records will be kept in accordance with current Departmental Privacy Policy and the Health Records Act 2001 and the Information Privacy Act 2000*.

Field link: http://www.field.org.au/sector/case_study/documents/active_support.pdf