

13 Reminiscing Themes for Seniors

Sharing and recollecting memories with seniors in long term care helps them to affirm who they are and to maintain self worth.

It is also a stimulating mental activity, promoting good social interaction and strengthening friendships. Residents may benefit from listening to the wonderful and touching stories of their peers.

Reminiscing stories may be video recorded with the resident's permission and as per facility protocols. If this is not possible, chronicle the memories in a scrapbook to share with members of the families.

You may invite families of residents to join the reminiscing session and prepare a themed subject with half a dozen questions. Choose questions that stimulate the five senses; smells, taste, sounds etc. Reminiscing taps into memories from the past that most residents are able to recollect.

Reminiscing sessions give staff a better understanding of their clients' needs, leading to improved care.

Here are some subjects for reminiscing:

1. Technology: How technology changed our world in the past 60 years.
2. Teachers: The influence teachers have had on your life. Most people have strong memories of one or more teachers.
3. The 1960s: What were they doing? Which songs were they singing? Which TV shows did they watch?
4. Nutrition: What was the food like in the past? Did people go on diets?
5. High-School Days: Were there bullies? How about drugs, gangs, nerds, peer pressure, rock & roll, cars?
6. Winter comforts: What are the best comforts of winter? Food, clothes, activities?
7. Old Time Radio: Which radio ads do they remember best? Palmolive, Coty. How about radio plays? Avengers, Benny Goodman, Buck Rogers, Dad and Dave?
8. Bedtime stories: What were their favourite stories? Were there any stories they were afraid of?

Who told you stories when you were children?

9. Road Trip Memories: First time in a big city or first time on a farm. Did anyone say: "Are we there yet?"
10. Children's pastimes: What sort of games did they play? Great TV shows? Comic strips magazines? Movie matinees?
11. Medication: The most popular cough syrup, how often did people go to hospital, were babies born at home? Did home-made remedies work or were they just 'old wives tales'?
12. Vintage Hollywood Movies: Romantic movies, best thrillers, favourite stars.
13. Saturday Matinee Serials: Remember Zorro? The Adventures of Captain Marvel? Flash Gordon? Sherlock Holmes? How about the episodes which ended in scary cliffhangers?