

Guidelines for Making Activity Mats

General Information:

Activity Mats are designed to safely stimulate, soothe agitation, and provide distraction for patients who have Alzheimer's, dementia, memory loss, or behavior issues. Each mat is unique and incorporates strips of different textured materials sewn together to fit on a lap. They sometimes include features such as pockets, loops, button holes, stretchy bands, zippers or ribbon. The activity mats intent is to help the patient find comfort by keeping their hands busy. Spectrum Health Hospice provides activity mats to patients who may benefit from having this tactile form of stimulation.

Directions

Activity mats are most often placed on patient's lap although sometimes on a tabletop. There is no set size as laps come in different sizes. Each mat has a top with a non-slip fabric backing.

Activity Mat top

- **Use easy to launder fabrics.** Use fabrics that can be laundered or at least can be hand washed and drip dried.
- **Use textured fabrics.** Incorporate fabrics with varying textures such as faux fur, knobby weaves, Dotted Swiss, faux leather, embroidered raised designs, knitted/crocheted strips, etc. Bright colors are encouraged.
- **Borders.** Adding a satin border to the Activity Mat is recommended which gives a comforting touch often reminding many of blankets from childhood.
- **Add features.** Add features such as ribbons to be tied and untied, a pocket; button holes of various sizes; loops of ribbon to place fingers in and out; a zipper to be zipped and unzipped; lace sewn and raised along a fabric edge, objects (i.e. small teddy bear) and other creative ideas.
- **Size features correctly.** Keep in mind the hand and finger size of adults, both men and women when adding loops, button holes, etc. so they can easily maneuver these things. Also remember many patients have arthritic conditions.
- **Do not include small items** that could be accidentally swallowed such as buttons.

Activity Mat Fabric Backing

- **Use easy to launder fabrics.** Use fabrics that can be laundered or at least can be hand washed and drip dried.
- **Use non-slippery fabric.** The backing fabric works best if it has some nap or grip to it so it stays on the patient's lap.
- **Between top and bottom mat pieces:** Add light weight fabric batting to help stabilize mat.
- **Sew Spectrum Health label on the back.** Sign your first name in ball point pen on the white Spectrum label. This is a tradition that quilters use and we use it on all of our

handmade items. Patients enjoy seeing the name of the seamstress as it makes a more personal connection.

Drop-off:

You may mail or drop off your finished activity mats on weekdays between 8am -9pm at the Spectrum Health Rehabilitation and Nursing Center located at 750 Fuller NE Grand Rapids 49503. You may leave them with the receptionist at the front desk who will notify our hospice volunteer coordinators. If you would like to make different arrangements, please contact us at 616.391.4240. If you have any questions please contact us at the same number or email us at hospice.volunteers@spectrumhealth.org.

Thank you for helping us provide purposeful handmade items for our patients.

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