CHAPTER 9

LEISURE COUNSELING

INTRODUCTION

The main purposes of this chapter are to help the reader to understand leisure counseling and how to use leisure counseling with elders. The chapter has been organized as follows: an explanation of key leisure counseling concepts and terminology; an overview of the history, background, and rationale for leisure counseling; a discussion of how to use leisure counseling with elders, including a detailed explanation of procedures to follow in conducting leisure counseling with elders; and a discussion of special considerations and concerns in counseling elders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, the reader will be able to

• define leisure counseling,
• describe the three major types of leisure counseling,
• determine which types of leisure counseling are most appropriate for different categories of older adults,
• identify at least five benefits of leisure counseling for elders,
• identify and describe (in correct order) the 11 steps of the developmental-educational approach to leisure counseling, and
• identify at least four special considerations in conducting leisure counseling sessions with elders.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this chapter, leisure counseling is defined as a helping process designed to facilitate maximal leisure well-being. Leisure education is also a process designed to facilitate maximal leisure well-being. However,
leisure education is more of a self-help process, whereas leisure counseling is an individualized or small group helping process guided by a leisure counselor. This chapter focuses specifically on leisure counseling.

Although four different types of leisure counseling are identified in the literature (McDowell, 1980), this chapter will examine only the three different types or approaches to leisure counseling discussed by McDowell (1976): (1) the leisure resource guidance approach, (2) the developmental-educational approach, and (3) the therapeutic–remedial approach. The step-by-step procedures of each of these different types of leisure counseling are discussed later in the chapter.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The first documented leisure counseling program was initiated at the Kansas City Veteran’s Administration Hospital psychiatric ward in 1957 (Olson & McCormick, 1957). The rationale for the early leisure counseling programs was that leisure counseling could be used to help reduce recidivism by orienting patients to better use their leisure time after discharge from the institutional setting. It was hypothesized that a prominent cause of recidivism was the inability of patients to effectively deal with the vast increase in unstructured leisure time after discharge from the institution. Therefore, it was hoped that leisure counseling could help reduce recidivism by preparing patients to more effectively deal with the increased leisure time they would face after discharge.

Overs and his associates (Overs, Taylor, and Adkins, 1977) developed the first leisure counseling service for elders in the early 1970s. Overs’ “Milwaukee Avocational Guidance Leisure Counseling Model” was not designed to be exclusively for elders, but rather sought to meet three human needs: (1) to help ease the transition from institution to community; (2) to facilitate developmental growth; and (3) to facilitate involvement in appropriate activity, especially for persons isolated from the mainstream of society. The Milwaukee Model was modeled after vocational counseling. Emphasis was placed on identification of recreational activity interests and awareness of available recreation resources. Attitudes and values related to leisure were not emphasized as strongly (Humphrey, Kelley, & Hamilton, 1980).

McDowell (1976) tested the effectiveness of a leisure counseling model in an experimental study that examined the effects of a leisure counseling program on the leisure attitudes, work attitudes, leisure self-concept, work self-concept, and leisure satisfaction of 40 adult mental health outpatients. The 40 subjects were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups and were studied over a nine-month period. The major findings of the study were that the leisure counseling program had a positive effect on leisure attitudes, leisure self-concept, and work self-concept.
McDowell’s study is significant for several reasons. First, the study provides concrete evidence of the positive impact leisure counseling can have. It should be noted that McDowell used a powerful Solomon Four Group design in this study, which lends even greater validity to the findings of the study. The study is also very significant in that it provides a clear rationale for leisure counseling services, especially if research on leisure and mental health is considered. As discussed in Chapter 1, leisure attitudes and self-concept are very important factors in determining psychological well-being. Keeping this statement in mind, and recognizing that McDowell’s study indicated that leisure counseling had a positive effect on leisure attitudes and self-concept, it appears that leisure counseling has great potential to have a positive impact on mental health. The potential of leisure counseling to positively affect mental health provides a clear rationale for the existence and growth of leisure counseling programs for elders and other populations as well. Furthermore, a recent study conducted in Canada (Nour, Desrosiers, Gauthier, & Carbonneau, 2002) indicated that a leisure education program for older adults who have had a stroke positively affected their physical well-being and total quality of life.

Leisure counseling has expanded rapidly through the 1970s and 1980s, as indicated by the extensive research and publications on this subject (see “other resources” at the end of the chapter). Leisure counseling can be especially beneficial for elders in several ways: (a) to help elders adjust to the increased leisure that retirement usually brings, (b) to help senior center or adult day care attendees to most effectively use their leisure time away from the center, (c) to help nursing home residents to most effectively utilize their unstructured leisure time in the institution, and also to prepare residents about to be discharged to make the best use of their leisure after discharge (so as to reduce recidivism), and (d) to help elders adjust to the changes in their life (and leisure) caused by death of a spouse.

Another benefit of leisure counseling is that it can help to increase positive attitudes toward leisure, thereby removing attitudinal barriers to participation in leisure activities. These attitudinal barriers include negative attitudes toward leisure, motives and needs, perceptions of personal freedom and control, lack of playfulness, and various personality traits (Backman & Mannell, 1986). A study conducted in a total-care facility for elders found that a leisure counseling program was more effective than a traditional leisure activities program in increasing positive attitudes toward leisure (Backman & Mannell, 1986).

Leisure counseling can also help elders to plan and organize their leisure, enabling them to create a desired sense of structure for their leisure, which can help to maximize their enjoyment of it. According to Ginsberg (1988), elders can draw on the skills they have used throughout their lives in planning and organizing their work, school, and home life in structuring their retirement leisure time. However, Thompson and Cruise (1993) caution that elders should not wait until after retirement to learn about the role of leisure in later life.
Yet another benefit of leisure counseling and having elders actively participate in the planning of their leisure time is that it encourages elders to be proactive and to take control of their lives. Bolton (1985) discusses the importance of feeling in control in order for elders to take action to replace negative habits with more healthy alternatives and thereby improve their leisure well-being and overall wellness.

The current leisure participation patterns of elders lend further support to the need for leisure counseling to help elders plan their free time and make better use of it. Research cited in Chapter 1 indicates that elders tend not to spend their free time in pursuits that they enjoy or benefit from the most. Social and active leisure activities are most beneficial and desirable, but older adults tend to spend most of their free time alone and in sedentary pursuits such as watching television. How elders utilize their free time has significant implications for physical and mental well-being. The following section describes three different approaches to leisure counseling for elders, all designed to help elders make better use of their leisure time.

**Using Leisure Counseling with Elders**

**The Leisure Resource Guidance Approach**

The leisure resource guidance approach is most appropriate in working with healthy elders who have a variety of leisure interests and merely wish to learn about programs available related to their interests. The resource guidance approach is most appropriate for clients who do not seek to expand their leisure horizons, but rather are seeking information on recreational opportunities available to them. The procedures of the leisure resource guidance approach are outlined below (based on McDowell, 1976):

1. Initial interview to get acquainted with the client
2. Administration of leisure interest inventories and collection of demographic data. Refer to the list of leisure interest inventories at the end of this chapter.
3. Analysis of data collected (preferably computer assisted)
4. Matching of client’s leisure interests and demographic characteristics with appropriate recreation program
5. Discussion of the results of data analysis with the client and referral to appropriate programs
6. A follow-up meeting with the client to examine the client’s satisfaction with the programs to which the client was referred
7. The counseling process is terminated once one has satisfactorily been matched with appropriate programs and is participating in one’s desired recreational activities.

In order to further clarify the leisure resource guidance approach to leisure counseling, a practical example is presented.
Example

Mrs. B has recently moved to Phoenix, Arizona, to retire. She is very satisfied with the variety of her recreational pursuits: tennis, swimming, square dancing, folk dancing, and theater going. However, being new to Phoenix, she is not aware of all of the recreational opportunities available to her related to the aforementioned interests. Mrs. B wishes to facilitate her adjustment to life in Phoenix by becoming involved in her favorite activities as soon as possible. Therefore, she has sought out a professional leisure counselor to help her learn of and become involved in appropriate programs. Mrs. B does not wish to become involved in a long process to examine and expand her leisure interests, but rather merely wishes to discover what programs are available to her in Phoenix.

The counselor meets with Mrs. B and explains the leisure counseling procedure to her. Mrs. B then completes several leisure interest inventories in order to clarify the nature and scope of her leisure pursuits. In addition, demographic data is collected such as income, transportation availability, residence location, educational background, marital status, and religion and ethnic background. This information, along with information gathered informally in the interview, is fed into a computer. The leisure counselor’s computer has an up-to-date database of recreational programs in the Phoenix area (including tennis, swimming, folk dancing, square dancing, and theater programs). The demographic data and leisure interests of Mrs. B are matched against the database, and a referral of appropriate programs is produced. The referral includes a list of appropriate programs, including phone numbers, names, times available, cost, and accessibility. The referral is then presented to and discussed with Mrs. B. An appointment with Mrs. B is set for two weeks later, to discuss Mrs. B’s satisfaction with her involvement in the programs to which she was referred. The counseling process is terminated once Mrs. B is satisfactorily involved in her desired recreational activities. However, the client is encouraged to periodically contact the counselor after terminating the process if the client has any questions or problems.

In summary, the leisure resource guidance approach to leisure counseling focuses on the dissemination of information on leisure resources. This approach is most appropriate for high functioning elders with well-defined leisure interests. This type of counseling can be extremely helpful for elders who have recently moved to a big city or who have recently retired and have inadequate knowledge of leisure resources available.

The Developmental–Educational Approach

The developmental–educational approach to leisure counseling is also suitable for high functioning elders, but it is a more involving process than leisure resource guidance leisure counseling. In the developmental–educational approach, the counselor works closely with the client to discover new leisure
interests and activities, in an attempt to broaden the client’s leisure horizons. An important objective of developmental–educational leisure counseling is to help the client identify an “ideal” leisure lifestyle and then assist the client to bridge the gap between his or her real leisure lifestyle and the ideal leisure lifestyle through goal setting.

Some of the other objectives of developmental–educational leisure counseling are

• to help one understand the importance of leisure in one’s life,
• to help one understand the effects of aging and social change on leisure, and
• to help one identify one’s attitudes and values toward leisure that serve as barriers to leisure fulfillment.

Developmental–educational leisure counseling efforts with elders should include the following steps (adapted from McDowell’s (1976) suggested leisure counseling process):

**Precounseling assessment.** In this step, the client completes leisure interest inventories and other relevant questionnaires that can be analyzed by the counselor prior to the first counseling session in order to expedite understanding the client’s leisure attitudes and behavior.

**Establishing rapport.** In this step, the counselor should attempt to develop a warm, trusting relationship with the client. In order for meaningful interaction to occur in which the client self-discloses a great deal, a trusting relationship is imperative. Thus, this stage of the counseling process should continue until the counselor feels assured that the client feels comfortable confiding in the counselor. If the counseling process skips to the next step before rapport has adequately been established, discussions are likely to be shallow and not very beneficial for the client.

**Defining concepts.** Some of the more important concepts to discuss and define in this step include leisure, recreation, work, and ideal leisure. Very often, counselors and clients define these terms differently. If these concepts are not defined and discussed at the beginning of the counseling process, discussions in the latter stages would be confusing. A counselor and client could talk about leisure, yet be talking about entirely different concepts (e.g., leisure as free time vs. leisure as a state of mind). Therefore, it is important to reach mutual understanding of key concepts with the client before proceeding further.

**Identifying leisure needs.** In this step, the counselor helps the client identify the relationship of basic human needs (the need for physical activity, social interaction, new experiences, etc.) to leisure. First, the counselor must
be assured that the client understands that the term need is being used to refer to a desirable component of one’s life, not an urgent want or lack of something desired.

Next, the counselor should help the client to identify and understand basic human needs most relevant to his or her life. Recreational activities in which the client is currently involved that meet these needs should be identified. The counselor should also help the client explore “ideal” means of meeting these basic human needs, identifying desirable recreational activities the client is not currently engaged in (or is not performing as frequently as is desired) that would meet the needs identified.

It is useful for the counselor to chart notes related to this stage as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need and Description</th>
<th>How Met (Real)</th>
<th>How Met Ideally</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity (doing enjoyable activity that improves flexibility, strength, or endurance)</td>
<td>Walking (30 mins./day)</td>
<td>Walking (one hour/day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennis (weekends only)</td>
<td>Tennis (90 mins./day)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dancing (twice/year)</td>
<td>Swim (20 mins./day)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Golf (three times weekly, four hours each time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dancing (two times weekly, two hours each time)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each need should be treated in depth, with real and ideal means of fulfilling the need listed in columns. Occasionally, clients claim that they are meeting their needs ideally and that they cannot think of any other ways to achieve their needs. In these situations, the counselor should use resource materials to stimulate the client’s thought on the topic. For example, some resources for ideas on how to meet the physical activity need are the local college’s physical education department course listings and descriptions in the college catalog, a sporting goods catalog, literature from the National Senior Sports Association, listing of clubs in the local phone directory, and listings of sporting events in the local newspaper.

Thus, this step helps the client to more fully understand the value and benefits of recreational activities. This step also prepares the client for the next step, goal setting. Once real and ideal means of satisfying needs have been identified, goals designed to bridge the gap between real and ideal leisure lifestyles are more apparent.

**Identifying leisure goals.** The purpose of the goal setting phase is for the client to set realistic goals for improving one’s leisure, both in the short range (within the year) and long term (beyond one year). Notes taken during the needs
phase should be referred to in order to facilitate the goal-setting process. Goals should be set for each need identified, based on the discrepancies between the how met vs. ideally how met columns. Goals should focus on bringing one’s real leisure lifestyle and fulfillment of needs closer to the ideal leisure lifestyle and ideal means of fulfilling needs. In order to encourage clients to set goals, emphasize that there are no risks in goal setting, that the goals are not set in concrete and can be changed.

**Obstacles to goal attainment.** In this phase, the counselor helps the client to identify potential obstacles to attaining the goals identified in the previous phase. The counselor and client also discuss how the obstacles can be overcome.

The purpose of this phase is to ensure that goals set are realistic. If goals are not feasible or challenging enough, they should be revised. Discussion on obstacles should focus more on internal obstacles (e.g., guilt, procrastination, motivation) that the client can act on to overcome, as opposed to discussing external obstacles which the client has little control over (e.g., weather, cost).

**Identifying performance criteria.** In this stage, goals are further refined so that each goal has clearly identifiable behavioral indicators that will serve as criteria for success in goal attainment. The key concern in this phase is to be sure that goals are stated in terms of observable, measurable behaviors and that the desired direction of change is stated.

For example, suppose a client identifies “to ski more” as a goal. After clarification of what is meant by “skiing more,” a clearer way to state the goal might be “to increase time spent skiing from 10 hours per month to 20 hours per month.” Similarly, performance criteria for the successful attainment of each goal should be identified, and each goal should be stated in measurable terms.

**Leisure alternatives and consequences.** In this step, alternative ways to approach meeting each goal are explored and evaluated. After examining the consequences of alternative means of meeting a goal, the most feasible alternative should be selected as an action plan for meeting the goal.

For example, if the goal is to increase time spent skiing from 10 hours per month to 20 hours per month, the alternative ways of accomplishing this objective should be examined. Some alternatives might be (1) make one three-day skiing trip per month, and ski six to seven hours each day; (2) go on four weekend ski trips each month, and try to ski approximately five hours each weekend; (3) go on five one-day ski outings, attempting to ski approximately four hours each day. The feasibility of each alternative should be examined, considering cost, travel time, physical conditioning, and other factors. Finally, the best alternative for meeting the goal should be selected.

**Disseminate information.** The purpose of this phase is for the counselor to provide the client with useful information on leisure resources that will
enable the client to enact their chosen alternatives for meeting their goals. The counselor should provide the client with agency names, phone numbers, program information, and other relevant information.

**Participation and evaluation.** The purposes of this phase are to ensure that the client does become involved in the recreational programs and activities identified during the previous phases and to evaluate the client’s progress in terms of goal attainment. As necessary, goals should be revised, or alternative means of meeting goals should be reexamined.

**Termination and follow up.** Once satisfactory progress toward goal attainment has been achieved, the counseling process should be terminated. The last session should summarize the counseling process in a manner that leaves the client with a clear direction for continuing to work to improve their leisure. Follow-up contacts should be made with the client after terminating the process in order to check on the client’s progress.

Thus, the developmental–educational approach to leisure counseling is an in-depth approach that attempts to help clients to expand their leisure horizons and improve their leisure well-being. This approach is most appropriate with high functioning elders who do not have specific leisure-related problems but wish to enhance their leisure.

**The Therapeutic–Remedial Approach**

In contrast to the developmental–educational and leisure resource guidance approaches to leisure counseling, the therapeutic–remedial approach is most appropriate for lower functioning elders or elders with specific leisure-related behavioral problems. Some examples of behavioral problems that can be related to misuse of leisure time are boredom, chronic television watching, social isolation, depression, and alcoholism. Therapeutic–remedial leisure counseling necessitates a close, empathetic relationship with the client. Topics such as leisure attitudes and self-concept, coping skills, behavioral problems and impairments, and support systems should be carefully examined. The therapeutic–remedial approach is similar to the developmental–educational approach in that it is an in-depth approach and should cover the 11 steps described in the previous section of this chapter. However, the therapeutic–remedial approach differs from the developmental–educational approach in that the counselor is more directive, and focuses more on the remediation of specific problems rather than the exploration of broadening leisure horizons.

Some important objectives of therapeutic–remedial leisure counseling are (McDowell, 1976)
• identification of leisure-related behavioral problems and their causes,
• identification of desired changes in leisure attitudes and behavior to alleviate the behavioral problems,
• development of an individualized program of recreational activities that will facilitate integration into leisure living in the community,
• initiation of involvement in activities with supervision,
• development of a positive self-image and positive attitudes toward community living (if the client is being prepared for discharge from an institutional setting), and
• development of community contacts that will enable the client to participate in community activities without supervision.

In summary, the therapeutic–remedial approach is a more directive approach that attempts to alleviate specific behavioral problems. Although it has several objectives that the developmental–educational approach does not, therapeutic–remedial leisure counseling would still follow the same 11 steps of the developmental–educational approach.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN COUNSELING ELDERS**

Leisure counseling with elders is different from leisure counseling with younger age groups in several respects. One consideration is the prevalence of the work ethic among elders. For some elders, the word leisure has a negative connotation. Strong negative attitudes toward leisure can sometimes be an obstacle to making progress. One approach to counteracting this problem is to give the client an exposure to the breadth and scope of recreation available to elders, possibly by showing slides, a videotape, or movie on this topic during one of the first few sessions. Doing so will give the client a more positive impression of leisure and recreation. Another suggestion is to strongly emphasize the specific benefits of various recreation activities, in order to help the client understand the potential benefits of leisure activity.

Another common problem encountered is short-term memory deficits. One way to alleviate this problem is for the counselor and client to take notes during the session and also to tape-record the session. The notes and tapes can serve as useful reference materials for the counselor and client during each session as well as between sessions.

Encouraging elders to participate in leisure counseling can be an especially perplexing problem. A helpful suggestion is to avoid labeling the process as leisure counseling but rather to name the program “leisure planning” or some other nonthreatening title. Another useful motivational technique is to play excerpts of a video or audiotape that demonstrate what leisure counseling is like and how it can benefit people.

The first step in beginning a leisure counseling program with an individual is to collect background information and conduct an initial interview. Based on the
interview and data collected, you must choose the most appropriate orientation (leisure resource guidance, developmental–educational, or therapeutic–remedial) to use. Although you would expect to utilize the therapeutic–remedial approach more in nursing homes and adult day care centers and the leisure resource guidance and developmental–educational approaches more with higher functioning elders in the community, there will be situations where a nursing home resident preparing for discharge needs nothing more than leisure resource guidance, whereas a healthy elder living in the community might need therapeutic–remedial leisure counseling.

The following is a list of suggested techniques and procedures to follow in counseling elders:

• Plan sessions to last between 30 and 45 minutes. Allow at least 20 minutes after the session for taking additional notes on the session.
• Conduct sessions a minimum of once a week, hopefully two or three times a week.
• Every session should have a clearly defined purpose that is clearly stated at the beginning of the session in order to orient both the counselor and client to the topic at hand.
• Note taking and tape-recording are helpful sources of information and are encouraged.
• Select a style of counseling most suitable to the situation. Be flexible enough to change styles (e.g., become more confrontive) if the original method chosen becomes ineffective.

It might be necessary and sometimes more desirable to conduct leisure counseling sessions in small groups instead of on an individual basis. As discussed in earlier chapters, the lack of recreation staff in some settings makes it almost impossible to devote time to one-on-one work with clients. Having to work in small groups can be a blessing in disguise if the clients feel more comfortable being in a group than being in a one-on-one counseling situation and if the dynamics of the group are good, making the sessions more enjoyable and enlightening for all. The following is a list of suggested procedures and techniques for conducting leisure counseling sessions in small groups:

• Ideal group size is six to eight persons.
• Try forming groups based on similar needs/circumstances so that group members will have more in common and relate better (e.g., widowers group, married couples group, men’s group).
• Politely yet firmly avoid/cut off storytelling; make it a group “rule.” If the sessions last only 30 to 45 minutes and one person tells a 20-minute story, not everyone in the group will have ample opportunity to express themselves.
• Try to keep participants focused on the here and now, their present feelings, and how past events affect their present leisure.
• Have group members sit close together in a circle in order to promote a feeling of psychological closeness and so participants can hear one another.
• Begin the sessions with a task (e.g., a written exercise) that everyone can participate in or a question that everyone can answer.
• Do not let one person dominate; redirect questions to other group members.
• Basically follow the same steps and procedures when working in a group as you would in counseling an individual. For example, if developmental-educational leisure counseling is most appropriate with your group, follow the same 11 steps, in the same order, as you would follow in counseling an individual.

One final tip that applies both to group counseling and individual counseling is to make the sessions fun. The sessions do not have to be all talk; they can incorporate some activity. Having refreshments can also make the atmosphere more relaxed. Remember that the means are just as important as the end product. If the sessions are enjoyable, participants will want to continue coming to the sessions and will benefit more from the sessions. Also, even though it will take more time, if you as the counselor will let the clients help themselves and struggle a bit to find answers for themselves rather than you giving them the answers, the clients will benefit more in the long run and will develop greater independence. After all, promoting independence is a key goal of any recreation program.

The following exercises are presented in order to help gain additional insight into how to conduct leisure counseling sessions with elders. The first one focuses on the goal-setting phase of the counseling process; the second one concentrates on the obstacles phase; and the last one is related to leisure counseling for small groups.

Hopefully, Exercise 9.1 will make you excited about leisure in later life as well as give you some insight into the goal-setting phase of the counseling process. Exercise 9.2 is designed to help you with the next phase of the counseling process, the identification of obstacles to goal attainment, and overcoming these obstacles.

Based on Exercise 9.2, how realistic do you think your leisure in later life goals are? Do any of them need to be revised in order to make them more feasible? Or, are they too easily attainable, and should you revise them to make them more challenging? If there were any obstacles for which you could not think of a solution, see if a friend or classmate can suggest some solutions.

Exercise 9.3 focuses on leisure counseling for small groups.
**Exercise 9.1**

*Personal Goals for Leisure in Later Life*

**Instructions:**

1. Under each category of benefits of leisure/leisure needs, list at least five leisure activities that you would like to participate in when you are 65 and older.
2. In the “Present” column, indicate current frequency of participation in each activity.
3. In the “Future” column, indicate your desired frequency of participation in each activity when you are 65 and older.

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<tr>
<th>Leisure Activity</th>
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### Exercise 9.1 (cont.)

**Leisure Activity** | **Present** | **Future**
---|---|---
**Relaxation:**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**Creativity:**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**Intellectual Stimulation:**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
**Exercise 9.2**

*Obstacles to Goal Attainment and How to Overcome Them*

**Instructions:**

1. Select five goals from Exercise 9.1 for which you have at least a few internal obstacles.
2. For each goal, list the obstacles that might prevent goal attainment. Focus more on the internal obstacles, not the external ones.
3. For each obstacle, describe possible solutions to overcome it.

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<tr>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Solutions to Overcome Obstacles</th>
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<td><strong>Goal #1:</strong></td>
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Exercise 9.2 (cont.)

Goal #3:
1. ____________________________
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2. ____________________________
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Goal #4:
1. ____________________________
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Goal #5:
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Exercise 9.3

Session Plans for a Leisure Counseling Group

Imagine that you are starting a new leisure counseling group in a retirement home. The group is high functioning and will be meeting for a series of ten 45-minute sessions. Prepare an outline for each of the first four sessions in this series. For each session, identify the purpose of the session, appropriate icebreakers/activities, written exercises to stimulate discussion, questions you could use, and anticipated problems and expected outcomes. Use a separate page for each session outline.

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SUMMARY

The aims of this chapter were to help you to develop a greater understanding of leisure counseling and how to use leisure counseling with elders. Realistically, it is quite difficult to conduct leisure counseling with elders, based solely on the information presented in this chapter. It is suggested that you attempt each of the three types of leisure counseling with fellow students, following the procedures and considerations discussed in this chapter. After some experience with fellow students, further training in counseling techniques, and using this chapter as a guide, you should well be able to conduct leisure counseling with elders.

Leisure counseling is a very important and useful skill in performing recreational work with elders. In almost all settings for recreational services for elders, leisure counseling has become a vital component of the program. Therefore, workers entering the field of recreational services for elders should be well informed and well trained in leisure counseling theory, procedures, and techniques. For further information on leisure counseling, refer to the “other resources” list at the end of this chapter.

REFERENCES


**OTHER RESOURCES FOR LEISURE COUNSELING**


LEISURE INTEREST INVENTORIES