What types of activities can be used to manage feelings of social isolation?

Provided by the New Mexico Medical Advisory Team Workgroup on Skilled Nursing and Long-term Care

The following activities could be considered based on the health status of individual residents, physician orders, and the level of care provided. All activities should include COVID-safe practices and physical distancing.

- Hallway ice cream socials and birthday parties
- Doorway exercises
- Doorway bowling and kickball
- Individual activity kits with word search, crossword, and other puzzles
- Books and magazines
- FaceTime and video calls with family
- Window visits with family and friends
- Mobile Parade - families with signs and balloons drive through the parking lot while residents sit on their balconies/windows and wave back
- Ice Cream Truck – A decorated cart with ice cream and treats, complete with ice cream truck music and a person playing the part of the ice cream truck driver through the hallways
- High School or Middle School Performers i.e. cheerleaders, band members, drama class who put on presentations at the windows, while socially distancing
- Hallway Hokey Pokey - doing the dance with the Right Arm in hall, Right Arm in room etc
- Hallway Chicken Dance - staff and residents being creative and funny, dressed up like a chicken (music can be played from YouTube)
- Concerts on the patio
- Religious services on tablet devices
- Walks outside
- Paper Airplane contest - the person whose plane goes furthest in the hallway wins the prize
- Calls with families on holidays or special days, with pictures sent electronically or through US mail
- Happy Hour with period or oldies music and alcoholic beverages or mocktails/smoothies using easy recipes found online
- Fresh cookies during hydration pass
- Cappuccino carts
- Armchair travel sessions with decorations, food, music, discussions and decorations, or travel experience through Planet Earth
- Board games
- Letters from/to the community
- Hallway traditional Bingo
- Daily call slow Bingo
• Book and magazine cart
• Wellness program focusing on boosting immune system – Aroma therapy, Vitamin C enriched meals
• Magazine hunt – look for items that are called out
• Challenging Trivia contests with prizes
• Structured smoke breaks
• Virtual reality glasses
• Relaxation/meditation program
• Karaoke
• Garden club - planted items for viewing spring growth outside the windows
• Themed food/beverage for any calendar event
• Resident council visitation by room
• Virtual or recorded musical and dramatic performances offered by volunteer performers
• Pet therapy at the windows
• Wii console games
• Beautician services

Additional references:

https://www.brownbarron.com/blog/2020/march/5-ways-for-nursing-homes-to-combat-loneliness-du/

https://www.nccap.org/covid-19-activity-director-resources