

The Residents Your Calendar Misses

An ADN field guide to Doug Geiger's four original printable tools

START WITH THE RESIDENT, NOT THE ATTENDANCE SHEET

Doug's companion tools ask a valuable question: who is absent because they cannot attend, and who is absent because programming does not meet their interests? Use the worksheets as conversation and planning aids, not as a substitute for individualized assessment, care planning, or required documentation.

01 Who's at the Edges?

Review two weeks of attendance. Before categorizing someone, ask the resident (or use an appropriate communication approach) what they want, what barriers exist, and whether meaningful engagement already happens outside groups.

02 One Activity, Three Ways

Choose one upcoming event. Plan a group option, an in-room option, and a voluntary resident leadership option. Adapt each to individual preferences, access needs, and capacity.

03 Resident Roles

Invite residents to select, reshape, decline, or invent roles. Offer meaningful responsibility without assuming that younger age, disability, or apparent alertness determines someone's interests.

04 In-Room Kit

Ask permission and preferences first. A visit may involve conversation, music, sensory-friendly engagement, a shared interest, or quiet company—not necessarily a bag of supplies. Let the resident guide the length and format.

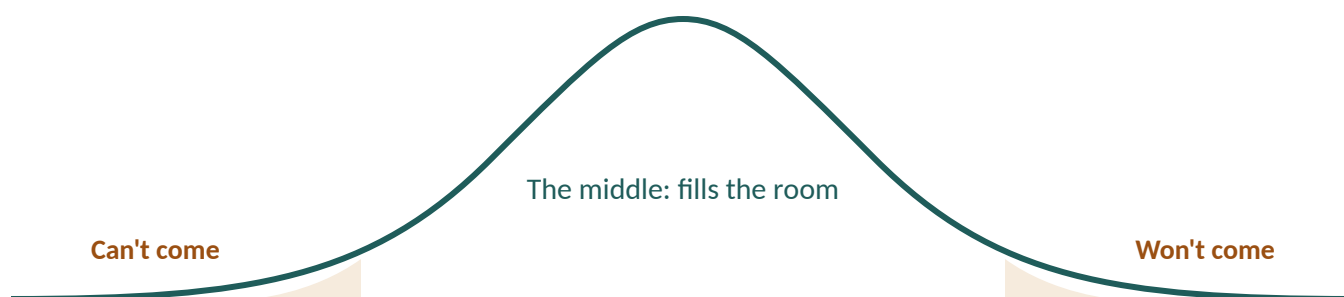
BEFORE YOU USE THE PRINTABLES

Protect resident information; use initials on portable worksheets and store completed copies appropriately. Check diet orders, allergies, infection-prevention practices, consent, and sensory or communication needs. Record the resident's response and any follow-up—not merely that an item was delivered. A five-minute suggestion is not a measure of meaningful engagement.

ABOUT THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW The next five pages reproduce Doug Geiger's original companion-pack introduction and four worksheets without altering his wording. This ADN guide is supplemental editorial guidance. Original tools © Doug Geiger, shared under CC BY 4.0. dougmyselfout.com

The Edges of the Bell Curve

Four one-page tools for reaching the residents your calendar misses



A note from Doug

I'm a nursing home resident, and I chair my building's Activities Committee. Most calendars are built for the middle of the room, for good reasons. These tools are for the people at either end: residents who can't come, and residents who stopped coming. Each page takes about fifteen minutes and goes with one step from the article.

What's inside

1. Who's at the Edges?

Find the names missing from attendance.

2. One Activity, Three Ways

Give one event a way in for everyone.

3. Resident Roles

Jobs that turn a seat into a purpose.

4. In-Room Kit

Bring the event to residents who can't come.

This pack is free

If it helps your department, see Support this work on page 3.

Who's at the Edges?

Pull two weeks of attendance. List every resident who came twice or less. For each one, ask a single question: can't come, or won't come?

Can't come
Bedbound, in pain, advanced dementia, overwhelmed by crowds. The fix is bringing the activity to them.

Won't come
Alert, bored, programmed below their level. The fix is a role, a challenge, or a say in planning.

Resident (initials)	Times came	Can't	Won't	What gets in the way	One thing to try
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		
		☐	☐		

Patterns I notice

One Activity, Three Ways

Take one event already on the calendar. Plan the version for the room, then add a way in for each edge.

Activity

Date and time

In-room version

For residents who can't come

What goes in the bag? Who delivers it? What's the five-minute version?

Group version

The event as planned

Where, when, what happens. What do residents do, not just watch?

Leadership version

For residents who won't come

What job could a resident own? Who will you ask, and when?

EXAMPLE FROM OUR BUILDING

Pretend Cider Mill Visit

In-room

A cup of cider, a donut, and a small pumpkin delivered with a photo of the courtyard setup.

Group

Courtyard and dining room dressed for fall. Donuts, cider, slushies, and pumpkin decorating at three tables.

Leadership

A resident helps plan decorations and leads the big pumpkin carving the day before.

Check before the day

- ☐ In-room bags have a person and a time assigned
- ☐ The resident leader was asked, not told
- ☐ Diet orders checked for any food going to rooms

Resident Roles

A seat is an invitation to watch. A role is a reason to come. Offer these to residents who've stopped attending, and let them pick.

☐ **Host**
Welcomes the room and introduces the activity.

☐ **Greeter**
Meets residents at the door and finds them a seat.

☐ **Caller**
Runs bingo, trivia, or the game of the day.

☐ **Scorekeeper**
Tracks points and announces winners.

☐ **Teacher**
Shares a skill from a past career or hobby.

☐ **Planner**
Sits on the activities committee and plans events.

☐ **Room Visitor**
Brings the in-room kit to a neighbor and stays to talk.

☐ **Reporter**
Writes up events for the newsletter or board.

☐ **Decorator**
Designs and sets up the look for an event.

☐ **Tester**
Tries a new activity first and says what to change.

Sign-up

Resident	Role	Starts

In-Room Kit

When a resident can't come to the event, the event comes to them. Pack one bag for each resident on your "can't come" list from Tool 1.

What goes in the bag

- ☐ The event's treat, if the diet order allows
- ☐ A piece of the event's decorations or craft
- ☐ The event's music, ready to play
- ☐ A photo of the event in progress
- ☐ Anything the resident leader made for it

At the bedside

- ☐ Ask first: "Would you like a visit from the party?"
- ☐ Stay at least five minutes, seated at eye level
- ☐ Ask what would help them come next time
- ☐ Log the visit and their answer below

Delivery log

Resident (initials)	Event	Delivered by	What would help them come next time?