SCHCA

"From Compliance to Connection: Leading a Personalized Activities Program"

November 9th, 2026

Hilton Garden Inn

434 Columbiana Drive Columbia, SC

(6 contact hours applied for through the NCCAP-pending approval)

Speakers: Bryan Rife, ADC, EDU- Director of Education and Outreach NCCAP

&

Sean Elks, APC- Creative Arts Director and Register Behavioral Technician Cyzner Institute of Charlotte

Registration:	9:15-9:30	Registration
	9:30-10:30	**"Leading with Purpose, Integrity, and Professional Excellence"** ***Speaker: Bryan Rife***

Session Description: Authentic leadership begins with knowing who you are, understanding the values that guide your practice, and having the confidence and professional knowledge to lead with purpose. For Activity Professionals, leadership extends far beyond managing calendars, programs, and documentation. Effective leadership influences organizational culture, staff development, interdisciplinary collaboration resident quality of life, and the overall success of activity and engagement services. This engaging session explores the characteristics of authentic leaders while examining how professional development and NCAA certification as an Activity Director can strengthen leadership identity, credibility, knowledge, and confidence. Participants will explore how self-awareness, integrity, communication, accountability, vulnerability, and consistency shape their leadership presence and professional practice. This session will also examine NCCAP certification as more than a credential. Participants will discover how pursuing and maintaining national certification can demonstrate a commitment to professional standards, continued education, ethical practice, person-centered services, and lifelong professional growth. Whether participants are currently NCCAP certified or considering certification, they will explore how professional credentials can support their journey from simply managing an activity department to becoming a recognized leader and advocate for quality activity services. Participants will leave empowered to embrace their individual leadership strengths, invest in their professional development, and lead their departments with greater confidence, purpose, authenticity, and professional credibility.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least three characteristics of authentic leadership and explain how they influence trust, teamwork, resident quality of life, and organizational culture within long-term care settings.

2. Explain how NCCAP Activity Director certification can support professional competency, leadership development, continuing education, credibility, and commitment to quality person-centered activity services.
3. Apply at least three authentic leadership strategies—including self-awareness, accountability, effective communication, professional development, and advocacy—to strengthen their leadership role and positively influence their activity department and organization.

10:30-11:30 "**Creative Expression: Inspiring Connection, Purpose, and Possibility Through Creativity"** ***Speaker: Sean Elks***

Session Description:
Creative expression is more than arts and crafts—it is a powerful pathway for communication, identity, emotional well-being, social connection, and meaningful engagement. Activity Professionals have a unique opportunity to create experiences that allow residents to express themselves through art, music, movement, storytelling, drama, writing, sensory experiences, and other creative outlets.
This interactive session explores how Activity Professionals can move beyond traditional, product-focused programming and develop creative experiences centered on the individual rather than the finished result. Participants will discover strategies for adapting creative opportunities for varying interests, abilities, cognitive levels, and physical needs while encouraging choice, independence, and self-expression. The session will also challenge professionals to rediscover their own creativity and use it to develop innovative, person-centered programming that celebrates each resident's abilities, life experiences, and unique voice.

Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:
1. Identify at least three benefits of creative expression related to residents' emotional well-being, communication, social connection, identity, and quality of life.
2. Develop creative expression opportunities that incorporate resident interests, abilities, preferences, life experiences, and individual goals rather than focusing solely on a finished product.
3. Apply at least three adaptation strategies to make creative expression experiences meaningful and accessible for residents with varying cognitive, physical, sensory, and communication abilities

11:30-12:30 "**Regulations: What Is the Activity Department's Responsibility?" Understanding Compliance, Accountability, and the Activity Professional's Role** ***Speaker: Bryan Rife***
Session Description:
Regulations can often feel overwhelming, but understanding them is essential to providing quality, person-centered activity services. Activity Professionals play a critical

role in regulatory compliance, from completing assessments and developing individualized care plans to providing meaningful engagement, maintaining appropriate documentation, supporting residents' rights, and demonstrating that programming reflects each resident's interests, needs, abilities, and preferences.
This session will break down key federal regulatory expectations related to activity services in long-term care and explore what those requirements mean in everyday practice. Participants will examine the Activity Department's responsibilities before, during, and after a survey; discuss common areas of regulatory concern; and learn how documentation, interdisciplinary collaboration, resident choice, and individualized programming work together to demonstrate compliance. Participants will leave with practical strategies for moving beyond simply "meeting the regulation" toward creating an activity program where quality of life and regulatory readiness are part of everyday practice.

Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:
1. Identify at least three key federal regulatory requirements that directly impact activity services, resident engagement, quality of life, and the responsibilities of the Activity Department.
2. Explain the Activity Professional's responsibilities related to assessment, care planning, documentation, resident rights, individualized programming, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
3. Apply at least three practical strategies for maintaining ongoing survey readiness and demonstrating that activity services are person-centered, meaningful, individualized, and consistent with regulatory expectations.

12:30-1:00 Lunch

1:00=2:00 "**Beyond the Behaviors**
Understanding the Person, Discovering the Need, and Creating Meaningful Connections: ***Speaker Sean Elks***

Session Description:
What we often label as a "behavior" may actually be a resident's attempt to communicate an unmet need, emotion, preference, discomfort, or desire for connection. For Activity Professionals, looking beyond what a resident is doing and exploring why it may be happening can transform challenging interactions into opportunities for meaningful engagement.
This session challenges Activity Professionals to move beyond labels such as "aggressive," "wandering," "refusing," or "noncompliant" and instead view resident responses through a person-centered lens. Participants will explore potential triggers, unmet needs, environmental influences, life history, routines, abilities, and communication changes that may contribute to a resident's actions. Through practical examples and engagement strategies, participants will learn how individualized activities and meaningful connections can help reduce distress, support

autonomy, and enhance quality of life—particularly for individuals living with dementia or cognitive impairment.

Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least three factors that may contribute to expressions commonly identified as challenging behaviors, including unmet needs, environmental triggers, communication difficulties, and changes in cognitive abilities.
2. Analyze resident actions using a person-centered approach that considers life history, preferences, routines, abilities, emotions, and potential triggers before developing an intervention.
3. Apply at least three individualized activity and engagement strategies designed to respond to underlying needs, reduce distress, promote meaningful connection, and support resident choice, dignity, and quality of life.

2:00-3:00 "**The Dream Weaver: Creativity, Compassion, and Personalized Activities Transforming Individual Dreams, Stories, and Passions into Meaningful Experiences"**
Speaker: Bryan Rife

Session Description:
Every resident enters our communities carrying a lifetime of stories, passions, talents, traditions, relationships, hopes, and dreams. The role of the Activity Professional is not simply to fill time—it is to discover what gives each person meaning and weave those discoveries into experiences that create purpose, connection, joy, and belonging.
The Dream Weaver invites Activity Professionals to combine creativity, compassion, and person-centered practices to move beyond traditional activity programming. Participants will explore how life history, personal preferences, remaining abilities, cultural background, interests, and even unfulfilled dreams can become the foundation for individualized engagement. The session will demonstrate how everyday moments can be transformed into meaningful experiences without requiring large budgets or elaborate resources. Participants will leave inspired to become "Dream Weavers"—professionals who see possibilities, honor individuality, and create experiences that help residents continue to live with purpose rather than simply reside in a care setting.
Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least three components of a resident's life story, interests, abilities, preferences, and aspirations that can be used to develop meaningful, personalized engagement opportunities.
2. Develop creative activity experiences that incorporate compassion, resident choice, personal identity, and individual strengths while adapting to varying cognitive and physical abilities.
3. Apply at least three practical "Dream Weaver" strategies to transform everyday interactions and available resources into individualized experiences that promote purpose, connection, belonging, and quality of life.

3:00-4:00 "**Stress Management: Techniques for a Calmer, Healthier Life**
Finding Balance, Building Resilience, and Caring for the Caregiver" ***Speakers: Bryan Rife and Sean Elks***

Session Description:
Activity Professionals spend their days creating meaningful experiences for others while balancing resident needs, staffing challenges, documentation, regulatory expectations, family concerns, changing priorities, and the everyday demands of working in healthcare. When stress becomes constant, it can affect creativity, communication, decision-making, relationships, job satisfaction, and personal well-being.
This practical and interactive session focuses on recognizing stress before it becomes overwhelming and developing realistic strategies that can be incorporated into both the workday and everyday life. Participants will explore common sources and warning signs of stress, the connection between stress and professional effectiveness, and techniques for managing difficult moments with greater awareness and resilience. From breathing and grounding techniques to boundaries, time management, mindfulness, self-care, and reframing stressful situations, participants will build a personalized toolkit for creating greater balance. The goal is not to eliminate stress, but to develop healthier ways to respond to it while continuing to provide compassionate, person-centered care.

Learning Objectives
By the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:
1. Identify at least three personal and workplace sources of stress and recognize physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral signs that stress may be affecting well-being and professional performance.
2. Demonstrate at least three practical stress-management techniques that can be incorporated into the workday, including breathing, grounding, mindfulness, boundary-setting, and healthy coping strategies.
3. Develop an individualized stress-management plan that incorporates self-awareness, resilience, work-life boundaries, and sustainable self-care practices to support a calmer, healthier personal and professional life.

4:00-4:30 Wrap up and Evaluation

Speakers Bios
Bryan Rife, ADC/EDU, is a nationally recognized educator, speaker, and advocate for Activity Professionals who brings energy, creativity, and practical experience to the field of life enrichment and person-centered engagement. He currently serves as the Director of Education and Outreach for the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP), where he works to advance professional education, national certification, and recognition of Activity Professionals across the continuum of care.

With extensive experience in activity programming, education, leadership, regulatory compliance, and professional development, Bryan is passionate about helping Activity Professionals recognize the

tremendous impact they have on quality of life. His educational philosophy goes beyond simply filling an activity calendar. He challenges professionals to create meaningful opportunities for purpose, choice, connection, independence, and engagement based on the individual needs and interests of those they serve.

As a national speaker and educator, Bryan is known for delivering engaging, interactive presentations that combine practical strategies, humor, storytelling, and real-world experiences. His presentations cover topics including person-centered care, resident rights and choice, activity administration, regulatory compliance and survey readiness, leadership, stress management, quality of life, creative programming, and professional growth.

Bryan is particularly passionate about strengthening the professional identity of Activity Professionals and helping them understand that their work is an essential component of quality care. Through education and advocacy, he encourages professionals to become confident leaders, effective interdisciplinary team members, and strong voices for the individuals they serve.

In addition to his work in senior living and professional education, Bryan has an extensive background in community theater as an award-winning director, costumer, performer, and stage manager. His theatrical experience influences his creative approach to education and programming, demonstrating how storytelling, music, theater, and the arts can create powerful opportunities for connection and engagement.
Whether presenting to a small group of professionals or addressing a statewide or national conference, Bryan's goal remains the same: to educate, inspire, and empower Activity Professionals to move beyond simply providing activities and create experiences that give people meaningful reasons to engage with life.

Shane Elks, APC
Shane Elks, APC, is an NCCAP Activity Professional Certified (APC), Certified Sound Therapist, keynote speaker, therapeutic arts consultant, educator, and performing arts professional with more than a decade of experience using creative and expressive arts to foster engagement, connection, and meaningful therapeutic outcomes.

Shane’s professional experience includes serving as Creative Arts Director and Registered Behavior Technician at the Cyzner Institute of Charlotte, where he incorporated creative arts and behavioral approaches to support individuals with diverse needs. His work has spanned a variety of settings and populations, including assisted living, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, memory care, and youth education.

He is the Founder and Executive Director of Black Star Theater Company, where he continues his commitment to creating inclusive opportunities for individuals to experience the transformative power of the performing arts. Shane also serves as a consultant in Therapeutic Arts, helping organizations explore innovative ways to incorporate music, sound, movement, theater, and other expressive modalities into meaningful engagement.

As an Activity Professional Certified through the National Certification Council for Activity Professionals (NCCAP), Shane brings an additional understanding of person-centered engagement, quality of life, and the important role meaningful activities play across the continuum of care.

Shane is a member of the International Alliance of Holistic Therapists and regularly presents as a keynote speaker at healthcare conferences. His presentations combine education, creativity, practical application, and experiential learning, encouraging professionals to think beyond traditional approaches to engagement and recognize the arts as a powerful vehicle for communication, connection, self-expression, and well-being.

A graduate of The American Musical and Dramatic Academy, Shane has also completed studies through The British Center of Excellence. His extensive performing arts education includes studying with vocal masters associated with The Juilliard School Music Advancement Program and The Metropolitan Opera Guild.

Throughout his career, Shane has remained passionate about the intersection of arts, education, healthcare, and human connection. He believes creative expression can reach individuals in ways traditional approaches sometimes cannot, providing opportunities for people to communicate, participate, discover their abilities, and experience meaningful moments of connection.

Whether working with healthcare professionals, older adults, individuals with cognitive or developmental differences, young people, or performing artists, Shane brings creativity and purpose to his work. His mission is to help others recognize that the arts are more than entertainment—they can be powerful tools for education, engagement, expression, and therapeutic connection.