Turning off the Heat/Air Conditioning

This lesson plan focuses narrowly on a single issue -- remembering to turn off the heat or air conditioning when leaving your unit. It was specifically designed for buildings that use PTAC units (packaged terminal air conditioners), but can be adapted to apply to other types of space conditioning systems. The lesson centers around a craft activity where tenants create a fun “prompt” to remind them to turn off the PTAC unit. Due to the narrow focus of the lesson and the emphasis on prompts, the lesson may be ideal for tenant populations with severe and persistent mental illness.

Specific messages

- Independent living will involve paying an electricity bill
- You can keep your electricity bill low by using your PTAC unit correctly
- Turn off your PTAC unit when you leave for the day

Lesson Plan

- Introduction and ice-breaker: Things you associate with being hot or cold (colors, clothing items, songs, etc.): 5 minutes
- Discussion on PTAC units: What they are, what powers them (electricity!), how they can be adjusted or turned off: 5 minutes
- Craft activity: Residents decorate a magnet sheet with reminders to turn off the PTAC unit when they leave the room: 10-15 minutes
- Closure: Review lesson -- talk about what residents have learned: 5 minutes

Supplies Needed

- Magnet sheets
- Paint and paintbrushes
- Stickers
- Markers
- Paper decals with the key messages

A note on magnet sheets

Most or all PTAC units are magnetic, and the magnet sheet can be placed directly on the unit as a prompt. They can also be placed anywhere else magnetic -- doors, aluminum siding on windows, etc. Or signs can be made on regular hard-stock paper. Magnet sheets can be found at office supply stores for around $10 for a 4-pack of 8.5”x11” sheets. Each sheet can be divided into four rectangles to make a sign of the appropriate size.

***See examples of tenant created PTAC magnets on the next page!***
Living Green – Lesson Plan

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