

Liz Postlethwaite

# Treasury of arts activities for older people

50 activities, long and short, for use in any setting with older people



**The Baring  
Foundation**

**Small Things**

## About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation was established in 1969 as an independent funder. It tackles discrimination and disadvantage through strengthening civil society in the UK and abroad. The arts are one of the Foundation's three funding strands.

Since 2010, this has focused on the arts and older people. An account of this work can be found on our website in *Towards the end* at [www.baringfoundation.org.uk](http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk).

## About the author

Liz Postlethwaite is a theatre maker and creative producer. She undertook professional training at Contact Theatre through their Young Directors' programme, and at Middlesex University, RESAD Madrid, and GITIS Moscow. From this starting point she began a creative journey, which has now lasted for more than twenty years. She has a particular interest in the way that an open, creative approach can be beneficial in a plethora of different contexts. From imaginative adventures with the youngest children to artistic discovery with older people living with dementia at the end of life – she has a wide range of experience developing and delivering projects in theatres and creative spaces, but also in hospitals, schools, gardens, blocks of flats... Anywhere that the spark of imagination is given space to ignite endless possibilities. She has particular expertise in work with, by and for older people and regularly presents, teaches, and writes on the subject as well as developing and delivering a range of creative projects with older age as a focus.

She is Director of Small Things Creative Projects whose work currently focuses upon The Storybox Project. This a creative storytelling project which uses imagination and play to engage, enliven and empower people living with dementia alongside the people that support them. She is a fellow of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the RSA, a member of the British Permaculture Association, and an accredited Relational Dynamics Coach.

[www.smallthings.org.uk](http://www.smallthings.org.uk)  
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– long and short –  
for use in any setting  
with older people

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# Foreword

This little book is truly a cabinet of wonders. Do not be deceived by its simple descriptions of creative activities. Each one is a door onto experiences that might take you in all sorts of unexpected directions.

At the same time, these ideas have been tested day after day, sometimes for years. They work. They offer fun, discovery and delight. They fire the imagination. They have been invented by artists who love working with people and who have generously shared some of their best tricks. It is a precious gift because seeing what others do, picking up things you like and adapting them to your own situation is vital to developing a participatory art practice.

We are very grateful to all the artists who have contributed to the collection and especially to Liz Postlethwaite for her creativity in presenting it all so clearly. We hope that you enjoy reading about them, but mostly that you will try these activities and make them your own.

**François Matarasso,**  
**Chair of the Baring Foundation Arts Committee.**

# Contents

## Introduction

### Using this Treasury

**Thinking about...** working with older people

**Thinking about...** working in different settings

**Thinking about...** working with people living with a dementia

## Tasters

Music	8 Beat	16
Performance	My story	18
Movement and dance	Flight attendant	19
Performance	This is not a pen	20
Performance	Clapping games	22
Performance	Surprise	23
Performance	1 to 10 game	25
Performance	The name dance	26
Performance	Teaching the unteachable	28

## Activities

Music	Teaching and arranging a song	30
Stories and poetry	Poetic snapshot in five lines	31
Miscellaneous	Concertina houses	33
Visual art	Personalised memory map collage	35
Stories and poetry	One photo, one object	36
Visual art	Fantasy Film flowers	37
Visual art	Colour emotions	39
Music	Group percussion improvisation	40
Performance	The gossip game	42
Visual art	Pressing nature into clay	45
Stories and poetry	Digital travellers	46
Stories and poetry	Arts from the armchair	48
Music	Rhythm and pulse	50
Performance	Walking in space	53
Visual art	The big draw	54
Miscellaneous	Digital life stories	57
Visual art	Leaves of time	59
Miscellaneous	Everything stops for tea	61
Visual art	Large scale animals	62
Music	Creative iPad improvisation	64
Visual art	Nature collages	67
Miscellaneous	Hand massage	68
Stories and poetry	Life maps	69

	<b>Workshops</b>
Miscellaneous	Make a pop-up Posh Club <b>73</b>
Performance	Comedy with care <b>74</b>
Movement and dance	Join the dance <b>75</b>
Stories and poetry	Riverside stories <b>77</b>
Performance	Snap characters <b>78</b>
Miscellaneous	The creative space <b>80</b>
Performance	Juggling games <b>83</b>
Miscellaneous	Nature and nurture <b>84</b>
Stories and poetry	Day's end <b>86</b>
Visual art	Mindfulness through art <b>89</b>
Miscellaneous	Create a miniature seaside <b>91</b>
Visual art	Armchair arts: Lady Burlington <b>93</b>
Stories and poetry	Creative befriending <b>94</b>

	<b>Launchpads</b>
Performance	The change train game <b>98</b>
Music	Group lyric writing <b>100</b>
Miscellaneous	Mapping the island <b>103</b>
Stories and poetry	Important events <b>105</b>
Performance	We're in the lounge <b>106</b>
	Selected resources <b>108</b>
	Themed menus <b>109</b>
	Alphabetical index of activities <b>110</b>
	Contributors <b>111</b>

# Introduction

We live in changing times. Year on year our society in the UK is getting older. By 2040 one in twelve of us will be over 80, and the number of us who are aged over 65 will rise from the current number of 10 million to 15.5 million, with round 1.3 million of these people predicted to be living with dementia. In this context, it seems unsurprising that the cultural sector, and the participatory arts in particular, increasingly embraces and celebrates the possibility of work that specifically targets older people as participants, collaborators and creators.

Excitingly, it is increasingly recognised that the arts, and participatory arts in particular, have the potential to play a meaningful and significant role in embracing the challenges and opportunities that this changing demographic may bring. Whether we are thinking about older people living with dementia, those facing loneliness and isolation, or the 'young old' who are engaged, fit and well and looking for new ways to enliven and enhance their retirement, it is now understood that the arts and culture can play a crucial part in maintaining and improving the quality of life and wellbeing for many people in later life.

For those of us working in the participatory arts, there are ever-increasing opportunities to engage ourselves in this new and growing field and this *Treasury* is a celebration of that great opportunity and possibility. Whether you are an artist who is just starting out in this area, or one who has been working with older people for many years, it is hoped that it will serve as a source of practical ideas and inspiration. And that it is a book that will not just sit on a shelf but become battered, bruised and well thumbed in a manner fitting to a frequently used and trusted guide.

All of the activities that are included have been kindly shared by artists and organisations with a particular passion for and experience of work with older people. It is thanks to their generosity sharing their time and ideas that this *Treasury* has been possible.

# Using this Treasury

This Treasury contains fifty activities created specifically with older people in mind. It is a selection of ideas and inspiration built upon a strong foundation of knowledge and expertise that is hoped will in turn enrich and inspire your own practice. Feel free to use them and to make them your own. It is intended that they will offer a range of starting points, whilst also acknowledging that every group, setting and context is different and what works in one place will not work somewhere else, or even work again in the same place on a different day! Everything you will find has been tried and tested but will have the most resonance when used as a starting point to complement your own practice. It is hoped that you will use them as a point from which to explore the possibility of the unexpected, and trust that the most magical things that you will create and learn will happen as a result of your own experiences and discoveries along the way.

For ease of use, the contents are divided into seven distinct sections:

## Thinking about...

Mini-guides that begin to explore different challenges and possibilities of working with older people.

## Tasters

Shorter activities that are a good way of trying something new, or dipping into an unfamiliar art form. Most take 15 minutes or less.

## Activities

Longer activities that explore a theme or art form in more depth but that still stand alone. They work well on their own or as part of a larger project or workshop.

## Workshops

Fully planned workshops that include a range of different activities around a theme or art form. These generally take 45 minutes or more.

## Launchpads

Activities that serve as a great starting point for generating ideas or work as the foundation of a wider project.

## Resources

A selection of links to information that may help you to develop your skills further.

## Themed menus

Menus that draw together groups of activities to identify those particularly suited to specific contexts, for example large groups, one-to-one and dementia-friendly.

**For reference:** the assumption is made that all groups taking part in these activities will be made up of eight to ten people. To check if they are suitable for larger or smaller groups, please check the **themed menus**.

# Thinking about...

## working with older people

It is a brilliant development that it is increasingly common to come across creative projects specifically targeting older people. Be it a music project collaborating with a professional orchestra or a craft project in a local church hall, it is now much easier to find participatory work focused on this area. But what do we mean when we talk about 'older people' and are there specific things to take into consideration when working with them?

### The only guarantee is diversity

Whether we define older people as being 50 and upwards, or something older, the age range can be 30, 40 or even 50 years! This is long enough to encompass several different generations and an almost infinite range of interests and experiences. Even if you choose to focus upon the more vulnerable or isolated, for example people living with dementia, or those who are living in financial hardship, the only assumption you can make is that there will be something unique and different about every single group and individual that you work with.

### Looking forward as well as back

Although there can be real richness in working in a way that focuses upon memory and history, it is important to acknowledge that trying new things and having new experiences is just as important for most people in later life. It is essential to value and celebrate the lived experience of each person that you work with, whilst also recognising that this work should not take a solely reflective stance. A desire to engage in new and different ways has value and power at all stages of people's lives, even for the most vulnerable or frail older people who may be moving towards the end of life and where the form of engagement may manifest itself in ways which may be much harder to quantify and define.

### Observe needs but don't focus on them

It is important to acknowledge that as people get older there may be access needs which become more common and have the potential to hinder an individual's capacity to engage and enjoy if they are not observed and addressed. For example hearing loss, reduced mobility and energy levels are factors you may want to consider, as well as

more specific needs such as dementia. However, never allow these to become the prevailing force or focus of an activity. In some cases there may be hurdles to be crossed, but with sensitive observation and creativity they need never be insurmountable barriers to participation, fulfilment and fun.

## The quirks and possibilities of context

You may find yourself working in familiar settings such as galleries, theatres or community venues, but this work may also take place in places that feel less familiar like care homes, day centres and hospitals. Whilst these may bring new challenges and restrictions, they also bring opportunity and possibility, especially if you are open minded to the possibility of exploring how your own practice might be shaped and enriched by the new contexts you find yourself in.

## The scope of aim and aspiration

It is important to have a clear aim for each project and/or workshop as you would do for any piece of work. Interestingly this overreaching objective is likely to go beyond the age of participants, and may be very similar to the aims that you have in other projects that you work on with different participant groups. For example, to create a specific piece of work, for participants to develop a new skill, for a specific health or social benefit to flourish... Age should be no restriction to the scope or possibility of this.

## Why are you here?

Alongside all other considerations that you make when working with older people, always keep sight of your own practice as an artist, and your aims and aspirations for engaging in a specific project or piece of work. Observing and nourishing what you do and why you do it is crucial because this is what gives you the energy and creative drive to keep doing what you do to the best of your ability. It is also particularly powerful to observe and reflect on this when you are working in contexts where the participants' needs may require more focus, energy and sensitivity, for example when working with older people living with dementia, or for those at the end of life.

# Thinking about...

## working in different settings

It is possible that when working with older people, in particular with those at highest risk of social exclusion and isolation, that you may find yourself working in settings that are new and unfamiliar. Whether this is a hospital ward, a care home, or a day centre the best approach is to treat each setting as unique with its own challenges and possibilities. To support this kind of open and responsive approach, here are some things that you might want to consider.

### Take a collaborative approach

Every project, activity and residency is a collaboration between you as the artist / facilitator, the older people that you are working with, and the people that support them. Ask yourself what this collaboration will look like in each setting that you work in, what each collaborator will bring with them, and what each will take away. Also acknowledge that collaboration built on trust and shared understanding forms the perfect foundation for work that allows people to take risks, try unfamiliar things and feel the thrill of experiences that are new and unexpected.

### Identify a project champion

Who is the project champion in each setting? They will be your key contact in the work that you are doing, and the success of this relationship will probably also be reflected in the success of the project as a whole. They may be a scheme manager or coordinator, but more often than not they will be an activity coordinator or care worker who is directly engaged with the older people in that setting. Their expertise about how the people and place tick will be invaluable, and will be a depth of knowledge that you could never discover on your own.

### Take time to visit

If possible visit a new setting as least once before you start working there. This is the best way to get a feeling of what a place is like, and the challenges you may encounter there, as well as the opportunities.

## A sense of rhythm

Each place has its own rhythm and routine and it is generally most productive to embrace it. Could you work the daily distribution of tea and biscuits at 3pm into the end of your activity? If there is a staff change-over, is it better to work before or after it, rather than trying to run through it? Observing and respecting things like this can really help your work feel 'part' of a setting, and make it a success.

## A place to work

Take time to find the best place to work – often this is not the same as the main social space such as the lounge. Ideally find a space that is self-contained but where people can come and go easily. It is also good if that space is somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed. If the 'perfect' space does not exist, think creatively to see which space will work the best, and do not be afraid to suggest and try using an area that isn't usually used for this kind of activity.

## Time to huddle

Try and promote the idea of having a 'huddle' with the staff who will be supporting you before and after each session. This need not be longer than five minutes on each side of your activity but is the best way to brief them on what is about to happen, and then to reflect upon how the session has gone. It is a relatively short investment of time which can be a really effective way of helping partners to feel genuine ownership of a project, and for their expertise and ideas to be integral.

## Time to reflect

Build a habit of reflective journaling and do it after every session before you leave the space or setting. Create a simple form that you use every time which records what went well and what wasn't so successful. Also allow plenty of space for participant and staff reactions, creating a snapshot of personal experience in terms of what people said and did. It should not take longer than five minutes, but is time well spent as it is a great way of recording your journey and the progress that you have made.

## Circle time

Always work in a circle if you can, with or without a table, even if it involves more time preparing the space. Circles are equal and open, and they go a long way to creating an atmosphere that people can get involved in. They also allow everyone to be physically close to each other so you can reach out if you need to, and so that you are already loosely connected even before you start.

## Encourage active participation

If you want to encourage active participation rather than people simply observing and watching, then a smaller group is best, especially in settings where people need more support to take part. Eight to ten is an ideal group size, although for some settings this may need to be even smaller.

## Work together

It is always best to try and work with at least one other person. This means that you can bounce ideas off each other, and one of you can focus on working with the whole group whilst the other can offer one-to-one support where necessary. Some groups may need even more support and you may even need to work on a one-to-one basis for people to get the most out of the session.

# Thinking about...

## working with people living with a dementia

In the UK there are currently 800,000 people with dementia which is set to rise to one million by 2025.

225,000 will develop dementia this year – that's one every three minutes.

This means that as an artist working with older people you are likely to work with people living with dementia, especially if you work in care homes where 70 per cent of people have dementia or severe memory problems. At the end of this section you can find ideas of more formal ways to learn about dementia but to support this, here are some creative suggestions for approaching work in a way that is inclusive to people living with dementia.

### Dementia as a spectrum

Dementia is not a single condition but describes a range of different brain disorders which trigger a loss of brain function. It manifests itself very differently from person to person, and from dementia to dementia. In response to this, it is essential to approach each person you work with as an individual, and to aspire to work in ways that are inclusive to all, regardless of where they currently are on their dementia journey.

### Focus on the person

A person is always much more than their dementia. Look beyond their diagnosis to explore and celebrate everything that they are. Remember that life continues when somebody has been given a dementia diagnosis, and that regardless of how somebody may change they are still the person they always were.

## Focus on capacity not loss

Somebody living with dementia may struggle with short-term memory, or have difficulties with language BUT still love singing, be a brilliantly imaginative collaborator, or may create glorious results experimenting with paints and colour. Focus on capacity and its possibility rather than loss and the things that people can no longer do.

## Be in the moment

Participation in the moment is just as valid as any other kind of participation. An experience can be meaningful and rich, even if somebody's recollection of it will be short-lived.

## A chance to try new things

It is true that routine and repetition can be really important for people living with dementia, but that is not to say that they lose the capacity to try and enjoy new things. In fact the two go brilliantly hand in hand. Creating a rhythm and repeated structure in what you do is an excellent starting point from which you can introduce and explore new things.

## An open approach

Factual knowledge about dementia is of course really important, but equally important is an open approach based upon a foundation of generosity, empathy and fun. It is always possible to increase and build your knowledge but anything that you learn will be much more powerful and useful if it is driven by a curiosity inspired by a desire to engage, and to be with others in a more effective and inclusive way.

## Stimulate all the senses

In this context a multi-sensory approach is particularly important. It allows people to engage in many different ways and to focus upon taking part in a way, which reflects personal capacity. Could you structure an activity or workshop so that it stimulates as many senses as possible?

## A sense of expectation

Go into each workshop and project with a sense of expectation that great things can and will happen, even if you aren't sure what they will be at the outset. Create a structure that supports this, as well as being flexible and brave enough to improvise and go off on a tangent if this better reflects the mood of the moment, or the direction that your participants are taking at any given moment of time.

## Ever changing sense of being

We all change from minute to minute, day to day, week to week... But this sense of change may be even greater and swifter for people living with dementia. This may mean that something that works brilliantly one day may fall flat on a different occasion or in a different setting. Accept this change by sharing and embracing the moment, whatever that means on any given day.

## Capacity to engage

Regardless of how far on people are on their dementia journey, the capacity to engage is always present. Tread sensitively to discover how this capacity changes and to understand what you need to do to enable it in different groups and individuals.

## Places to learn more

The Alzheimer's Society website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Arts 4 Dementia: [www.arts4dementia.org.uk](http://www.arts4dementia.org.uk)

Dementia Friends: [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk)

Dementia Positive: [www.dementiapositive.co.uk](http://www.dementiapositive.co.uk)

The NHS website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

*Dementia Reconsidered*, by Tom Kitwood

*Where Memories Go*, by Sally Magnusson

*Forget Memory*, by Anne Basting

*Contented Dementia*, by Oliver James

# Tasters

Shorter activities that are a good way of trying something new, or dipping into an unfamiliar art form.

Most take fifteen minutes or less.

# 8 beat

## Music

15–20 minutes

### You will need:

**Optional:** Various hand held instruments, such as drums or tambourines

## Dementia-friendly



Upbeat  
Energising  
Fun

Music can be explored in many ways: by playing instruments; making sounds with the voice; playing objects; and listening to sounds and recorded pieces of work. 8 beat is great as part of a wider workshop and is an activity which enables participants to join in by using an instrument or clapping their hands, encouraging group interaction.

### To begin:

Sit in a circle with your instrument, or clapping hands, and everyone playing a steady pulse (a regular beat like a ticking clock). The leader can click the pulse or play it on an alternative instrument, e.g. a cowbell if everyone has a drum. The leader must also count out loud (i.e. 1, 2, 3 etc up to 8) whilst playing the pulse.

The leader asks everyone to choose a number between 1 and 8. The leader then starts the pulse and counts out loud. Participants play a beat (just one hit or clap) on the number they have chosen. This pulse keeps travelling around and the leader keeps counting aloud to establish where in the cycle they are.

The leader then stops counting the pulse out loud. To help everyone, the leader could perhaps just count out a loud beat 1. Eventually the leader stops counting altogether. The leader can ask questions: *Who plays on the same beat as you? Listen and watch this person to help you. Who plays just before you? Watch this person to help you play your beat correctly.*

Finally, when the group is confident you could get them to close their eyes whilst playing to really concentrate on the cycle whilst counting the pulse in their heads – this is tricky.

### You could also:

Make it easier by starting with a 4-beat cycle, or make it more challenging by expanding to longer beat cycles. Odd number cycles are also more difficult, for example 7- or 9-beat cycles. Be adventurous and try a 16-beat cycle!

### Credit:

Emma Williams,  
City Arts



# My story

Performance

15 minutes +

Creative  
Thoughtful  
Gentle

This exercise requires participants to be able to tell a simple story to a partner, remember that story and then repeat their partner's story to another person or, perhaps to a whole group. Best done in a comfortable area where the participants can sit and talk freely. The chairs may have to be arranged so all the group can hear and see each other.

## To begin:

Split the group into pairs, perhaps putting people together who are less familiar with each other.

Tell them to take it in turns to introduce themselves and then tell a simple, true story about an event in their lives to their partner. Keep it simple. Examples of what to talk about could be given so people aren't thinking for too long, for example: how they came by their name, where they bought the shoes they're wearing, what their last day out was. Give them only a few minutes so that the story doesn't become too complicated or detailed. The listener can ask questions if they feel they need more information.

After time is up, they can swap round and do the same thing again.

When time is up a second time, explain the next stage.

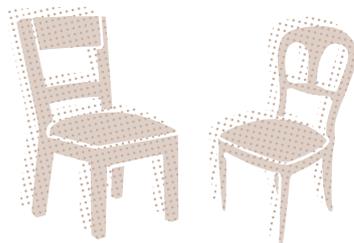
## To finish:

Each participant tells their partner's story, with as much detail as they can remember, either to the group as a whole or, if that is too scary, to a different partner.

The aim, however, is to tell the story as if it happened to them/it is their own story.

**Remember:** The key here is to genuinely try to tell the story as if it's their own. If someone forgets a detail or two, they can invent something. Be creative. This isn't a memory test!

This exercise is a very simple way of getting people to share their stories. They shouldn't feel too self-conscious as they're not speaking about events from their own lives. The topic of the story is purposely banal so that the tellers don't feel they have to talk about things they don't want to.



Credit:

Robin Simpson

# Flight attendant

## Movement and dance

5–7 minutes

### You will need:

Chairs  
(for those less able to stand)

Optional: Ankle bells

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



Energetic  
Challenging  
Fun

This exercise is suitable for all levels of mobility depending on whether you choose the standing or seated option. It can be useful to help with spatial awareness.

### What to check with participants:

Do they feel able to stand or would they prefer to participate from seated?  
How high can they comfortably lift their arm?

### To begin:

Ask standing participants to place their feet in a soft 'V' position and bring their hands in front of their chest, palms facing down, elbows pointing to the side (Kathak first position – 'utpatti'). Ask seated participants to place their feet comfortably on the floor and position their arms as above.

Then extend the right arm to the front diagonal, away from the body aiming for the corner of the ceiling, and return to 'utpatti'. Repeat with the arm at shoulder height, and finally pointing diagonally down to the floor. Finish by placing the wrists together, palms facing each other, hands cupped and reach up above the head for two counts, stamping the right and then left foot, to finish the count of 8. Then bring the arms down.

Repeat all of this with the left arm (extending diagonally up, shoulder height, then down towards the floor, returning to 'utpatti' each time). Again, finish with a flower movement ('kran'). Place the right wrist over the left wrist above the head then twist as though pulling a coconut and then bring the arms down.

### Then:

If participants are able, you might mirror the movement of the arms with the legs. As the right arm reaches out, point the right leg diagonally to the right, keeping the toes on the floor. Repeat this for all three arm movements. Complete the flower movement with a stamp of each foot. Repeat on the left hand side, with the left leg mirroring the left arm.

### You could also:

Use ankle bells (ghungroos) to give a nice added stimulus of sound which can be particularly good when working with individuals with dementia.

Add an emotion or story to help with quality of movement.

Ask participants to follow the line of their arms with their gaze, taking the eyes to wherever their hand is in space.

### To finish:

Run through the whole movement sequence several times to give participants a chance to practise the movements. You might then want to perform the sequence with music and perhaps add movement suggestions from participants onto the end of the sequence.

### Credit:

Archita Kumar,  
Akademi

# This is not a pen

## Performance

10 minutes +

### You will need:

A space to work in a circle

An everyday item, such as: a pen, a comb or a mug

Playful  
Accessible  
Fun

This activity is good to start a session as a way to bring the group together and set a tone for having fun and using imagination. It is also really adaptable. You could start with any everyday object.

### To begin:

Introduce the object to the group. Explain that you are going to pass it around the circle, but when a person gets the object, they're going to imagine it is something else. They must then introduce the object to the group, saying: **"This is not a pen, it's a... CAMERA"** (for example), and then demonstrate using the pen as a camera. You might want to give another example: **"This is not a pen, it's a BABY"**. Again, demonstrate holding the pen like it is a baby. Reassure people that there is no right or wrong and that they don't need to plan what to say but just go with the first thing that comes into their head.

### Then:

Once everyone has had a turn and the pen has been passed around the circle, explain you are going to repeat the activity. This time, everyone is going to join in with the person who is leading and support their idea. For example: **"This is not a pen, it's a CAMERA"** might lead everyone to spontaneously start posing for a photo. Someone might call out, **"I don't want to be photographed"**; someone else might start tidying their hair, etc. The whole group can join in, in any way they like. Reassure people they can use the same idea for their object as the one they came up with in the first round if they want to.

If people are struggling to come up with an idea, prompt them by asking, for example: *Could it be something from the kitchen cupboard? Could it be something you might find under the bed? Could it be something in the garden?*

### You could also:

Play the game again, but this time ask people to join in for longer and encourage them to move about, so for example: **"This is not a pen, it's a BABY"** might mean that everyone comes over to coo over the child, or maybe a smaller group starts pretending to fuss over another baby. The room could turn into a crèche.

### To finish:

Thank everyone for being playful and using their imaginations. This game could lead into another game, improvisation or story-based activity that encourages people to make things up and see where their imaginations take them.

### Credit:

Andy Barry



# Clapping games

## Performance

Up to 20 minutes

### You will need:

Chairs for everyone

## Dementia-friendly



Physical  
Energetic  
Focused

This is a very simple game that is good to play as a warm-up. It's a bit like playing catch, but without using a ball! It's a good way to get a group connecting with each other and feeling more alert.

### To begin:

Tell everybody that you are going to pass a clap around the group. You then turn to the person next to you and clap your hands together once in their direction. That person does the same to the person next to them, and so on, until the clap has gone all the way around the circle and has returned to you where it began. If you like, you could do the same thing again in the opposite direction to make sure that everybody understands how to play.

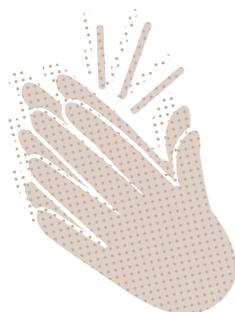
### Then:

The next step is to pass the handclap randomly around the group. To do this you must make eye contact with somebody else who is playing the game (they can be sitting anywhere; it doesn't need to be the person next to you) and then clap your hands once in that person's direction. That person 'catches' your handclap, and chooses somebody else in the circle to pass it on to, always establishing eye contact before passing the clap on.

Think of this game as similar to throwing a ball around the room. The handclap should always be 'caught' by someone and then passed on to someone. As a group, you should be able to follow the handclap around the room and know who has 'got' it at any point!

### You could also:

Get the players to call out the name of the person they are throwing the handclap to as they pass it on. You could also try picking one leader to clap out different rhythms for the group to listen to and to copy together. How about knocking knuckles or tapping nails on tables or even clicking fingers instead of clapping?



### Credit:

Sara Cocker and Lowri Evans,  
Small Things Creative Projects

# Surprise

## Movement and dance

5–10 minutes

### You will need:

A bag of scarves  
(one or two per person)

Soft music without lyrics

Chairs for everyone

## Dementia-friendly



Quiet  
Relaxing  
Gentle

This gentle and relaxing activity gets everyone focused – first on themselves and their breathing – then on their connection to the group. It's good for bringing everyone together and also a good, safe warm-up.

### To prepare:

Tie all the scarves together to make a long rope. The more beautiful, colourful or textured they are, the more impact they will have. 'Float-y', translucent scarves will move best. The track or music medley you choose should be long enough to last the entire exercise.

### To begin:

Everyone should be seated in a circle for this activity. Take the first scarf out of the bag and start to pass it around the circle. Each person should continue passing the first scarf to their neighbour until everyone is holding one segment of the scarf/rope.

### Then:

Begin by just breathing together. Then, on the exhale, add just a little look down and on the inhale a slight look up. This could start with just the eyes and get a little bigger with each breath. It should be very gentle and connected to the breath.

You might like to ask: *Can you describe the feeling/texture of the scarf? (When passing the scarf around the circle) What does the movement of the scarf remind you of? (During the unfolding of the scarf at the end)*

### You could also:

Make the movement bigger on the exhale by following the head downwards and starting to roll down the spine, moving the scarf to touch your knees, then rolling back up on the inhale and lifting the scarf up to shoulder height. Repeat, challenging the group to try to touch their shins on the exhale and reach their arms up to eye-height on the inhale. A final challenge could be to touch your toes on the exhale and lift arms above your head on the inhale.

It can also work to experiment with other movements. Have the group lift their arms one after another to make a wave-like motion with the scarf.

### To finish:

Ask everyone to untie their scarf and continue with individual movements, for example: twist the spine to move the scarf from side to side; make a figure of eight with the scarf; write their name with the scarf; throw the scarf in the air; throw the scarf to a friend.

You could also ask everyone to crumple the scarf into a tiny ball in their hand and place their hands in the centre of the circle, palms facing up. Everyone then slowly opens their hands and watches the scarves open like flowers.

### Credit:

Jennifer Essex



# 1 to 10 game

## Movement and dance

Up to 20 minutes

### You will need:

Chairs for everyone to sit in a circle

## Dementia-friendly



Vocal  
Energising  
Physical

This is an easy way to warm up voices, to generate energy, spark conversation and even get into character. Quite simply, you all sit in a circle and count slowly from 1 to 10 out loud together.

### To begin:

Tell the group that you are going to count out loud from 1 to 10 together. First, warm up voices and build energy by changing the volume of the count. Start quietly and get louder as the numbers increase.

The group can start with their hands on their knees for number 1 and as the volume increases raise their arms higher, until they are all in the air for number 10. It is good to celebrate the loudest number with a cheer and wave in unison. This is a good visual aid for anyone who can't hear very well, as well as incorporating a physical element to the activity.

### Next:

Once you have established this with the group you can try counting backwards from 10 to 1 and decrease the volume. If your group are finding the activity too challenging, you could try it holding hands to keep everyone engaged and connected.

### You could also:

Try adding an emotion to your count. The more distinct and clear the emotion, the better. You could talk about what might make you feel that emotion and listen to all the different responses. That can also help people make sense of the exercise.

Use the 1 to 10 scale as before, but this time 1 is the slightest emotion and 10 is the strongest emotion. See how the emotion affects voice and body language. After you have counted up and down you could take it in turns to look at each other's reactions. This can be a great way to ease a group into the world of make-believe before making up stories and scenes together.

### Credit:

Sara Cocker and Lowri Evans,  
Small Things Creative Projects

# The name dance

## Movement and dance

25–30 minutes

### You will need:

CD player or iPod and speaker

Music playlist

Informal  
Collaborative  
Fun

### Suggested rhythmic music:

Star Scat,  
by Caravan Palace

Beyond the sea,  
by Bobby Darin

Lovely day,  
by Bill Withers

Happy,  
by Pharrell Williams

### Suggested slower music:

Love is in the air,  
by Tom Paul Jones

Down in the river,  
by Mountain Blue

Feeling good,  
by Nina Simone

This exercise is a great ice-breaker at the beginning of a session, particularly if it is a new group. It introduces people to one another, affords a sense of what interests them, and values participant contribution and the idea that dance can come from the everyday.

The first part of this activity can be used in isolation as a refresher for people's names – as an opening ritual. It is suitable for all physical abilities and has been enjoyed by many different groups, including intergenerational ones. This activity works well in a circle either standing or seated.

### To begin:

Invite the group to use any part of their body to make a gesture or action that relates to them in some way. It might be something they like doing, such as gardening or reading. It might be something they like eating, or a move from their favourite dance, or it might just be related to how they're feeling that day. Demonstrate your own gesture to the group, saying your name at the same time, and at the same speed as the movement – the group then repeat your '**dance name**' with you, while saying your name. That move has your name as its title from now on.

Go round the group and share all their movements. Then repeat the **dance names** again until everyone is familiar with them. Finally ask the group to choose five **dance names** that they like.

This step is better done in silence, so everyone can hear; however once you have done this it can be good to introduce some music, and suggest a count for each move. You can use any music you like. You might also like to ask participants for their favourite song/dance on a slip of paper and store that in a box, or bag, as a resource for later.

### Then:

The person who has nominated each dance move decides how many times this move should be repeated (it is best to keep the number of repetitions low at first!). The group repeats the dance moves – calling out the **dance name** as they go. Once they feel confident that they know the **dance names**, you can move to the next step.

Split the bigger group into two or three groups (it is best not to have groups bigger than six) and make a new dance by shuffling the moves around and making a new sequence. It might help to write the **dance names** (or draw a symbol representing the move) on individual post-it notes. These can then be 'shuffled' like cards and laid out in a random order to give the dance a new shape. Rehearse the dance and try it to different pieces of music. It is important to think about the 'transitions': how one move moves into the next one. Perform for the other groups.

### To finish:

Share all the dances that the group has created.

### Credit:

Moving Memory Dance



# Teaching the unteachable

## Performance

20 minutes

(depending on group size)

Fun  
Anarchic  
Upbeat

A great game to use at the early stages of a workshop or as part of a longer project. It is really good fun and can be an easy way of getting people to relax and to tell stories physically.

### To begin:

Explain that each person needs to think about a specialist skill that they possess. This can be anything they want. The only restriction is that it should be something that they would not be able to do at that moment in time in the room that you are working in. Apart from that, anything goes!

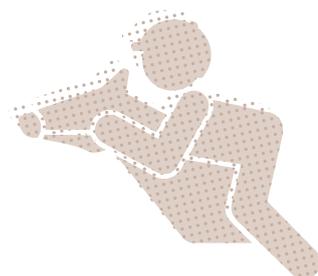
Divide your group into pairs. You can let the group do this themselves, or you can do it for them. It can be nice if people are encouraged to work with members of the group that they do not know so well. Tell the group that their task now is to teach their specialist skill to their partner. They need to teach it by showing how it is done! So if their specialist skill is horse riding, they will need to act out all the different stages of the skill, so that the person they are working with can learn it.

### Next:

Once everybody has taught and learnt a skill, you can move onto the next stage of the game. Each person is going to teach the skill that they have been taught to everybody else in the group. For example, if you have been taught to ride a horse, you would have to show your new skill to the rest of the group. Go around the group and give everybody the chance to teach.

### To finish:

Congratulate everybody on the new skills they have learned, and invite them to congratulate each other by giving a round of applause.



### Credit:

Liz Postlethwaite

# Activities

Longer activities that explore a theme or art form in more depth.

These work well on their own or as part of a larger project or workshop.

# Teaching and arranging a song

## Music

**15-30 minutes**

### You will need:

A selection of songs  
A large board to write or pin the printed lyrics on  
Print-outs of the lyrics

**Optional:** A microphone

## Dementia-friendly



Energetic  
Responsive  
Relaxing



There are many ways to share songs, facilitate sing-alongs and teach songs. This method is a way that we have found successful over and over again. The activity can be both energetic and relaxing, and will depend on the way it is delivered, as well as the repertoire. It is person-centred so led by the needs, ideas and ability of the participants.

### To prepare:

Choose a song to sing. Perhaps start with one the participants know and later introduce some less familiar ones. Old Jazz standards work well, such as *Fly me to the moon*, *Summertime*, and *You are my sunshine*.

### To begin:

Sing the song once so that the participants get familiar with it and enjoy it. Then say the words line by line and ask the participants to repeat after you. Next sing the lyrics line by line and ask the participants to repeat after you. Finally add movements to each line in order to help memorise the lyrics and embody the song. Ask the participants to decide which movement to add for each line – it will engage them on a personal level and they will feel part of the creative process.

### Then:

Try adding short improvisation elements such as short melodies, rhythm patterns and sounds that everyone can repeat after you. Make sure you do simple patterns that are easy to repeat. Invite participants to improvise and then ask the entire group to repeat their improvisation in the same way you have demonstrated.

You could also add clapping, body percussion or percussion to mark the beat and the offbeat. Why not divide the group in to two? One side can mark the downbeat (with a foot stamp for example) and the other group can mark the offbeat (with a clap for example).

Remember that this activity is fully adaptable to suit every group's ability. You might only do the first bits of the activity the first time, progressing to the more complicated aspects as the group become more confident.

### To finish:

Decide with the group how to arrange the song. *How do they want it to start? Will there be solos? Harmonies? Percussion? Body percussion? When will the clapping start? What dynamics will the song have (playing with volume and speed)? And how do they want to end the song?*

### Credit:

Noga Ritter,  
Live Music Now

# Poetic snapshot in five lines: writing a cinquain

## Stories and poetry

20-25 minutes

### You will need:

Flipchart or whiteboard

Marker pens

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



Co-creating these short poems instills a sense of pride, helps to focus the mind, encourages social interaction, expands vocabulary and may encourage reading and performance.

A cinquain (from the old French) is a five-line form of poetry governed by syllable length and purpose. A cinquain can be written on any subject. This approach is based on the rules invented by American poet Adelaide Crapsey (1878–1914).

### First line:

Two syllables to name the subject, for example “statue”

### Second line:

Four syllables to describe what the subject looks like, for example “softened white stone”

### Third line:

Six syllables, for the action or purpose, for example “standing silent and tall”

### Fourth line:

Eight syllables to express feeling or emotion, for example “recalling ancient memories”

### Fifth line:

Two syllables, an echo of the first, for example “stillness”

Thus:

Statue  
Softened white stone  
Standing silent and tall  
Recalling ancient memories  
Stillness

### To begin:

Decide on a subject/first line for the cinquain. A picture or object can be used to trigger ideas, or something from the environment, the view from the window, the weather outside, etc.





Then, providing prompts for each line (e.g. think of some words that might describe what this subject looks like, what this subject does, how this subject makes you feel...), gather responses/ideas and pool them on the flipchart or whiteboard.

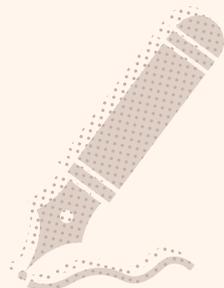
Choose from the responses words that work best and have the right syllabic count. Make a collective decision on which words to use for each line.

The fifth line (which should echo the subject line) can come out of a discussion around names and roles. We all have a name but we might also be known as something else. For example, I can be both '**Cheryl**' and '**Poet**', or someone else might be both '**Father**' and '**Husband**' or '**David**' and '**Doctor**'. The echo can reflect a certain quality of the subject. For example, '**statue**' becomes '**stillness**'.

**You could also:**

Once the form is understood, the group can work in pairs to create more cinquains about other subjects.

This can be practised for fun at home.



**Credit:**

Cheryl Moskowitz,  
Arts 4 Dementia

# Concertina houses

## Miscellaneous

90 minutes

### You will need:

#### Construction materials:

Paper

Scissors

Glue

A3 coloured card

#### Collage materials:

Scrap paper

Coloured paper

Tissue paper

#### Drawing and writing materials:

Colouring crayons

Pens

Pencils

## One-to-one Dementia-friendly



Relaxing  
Reflective  
Focused

### Credit:

Sarah Snook,  
Acta

This activity is about sharing stories and creating new ones. It can be adapted to meet a variety of needs, though some dexterity is required for collaging.

### To begin:

Fold a piece of A3 card horizontally into three and then cut the top of the card to make an outline of a roof and chimney. Open out the folds so you have six house shapes in a row (three on the front and three on the back). This may be something that you do with your group, or it may be appropriate to prepare in advance. If you are making them in advance you will need to prepare enough houses for each person in the group to have one. It is also good to have a couple of spares.

Using the collage materials and drawing materials, invite participants to decorate the front of the house based on a remembered place they have lived. On the other side, invite them to write a memory from when they lived there. When everybody has done this, use the houses as a starting point for conversation.

### You might like to ask:

*Tell us about a place you have lived.*

*Where did you grow up? What did it look like?*

*What are your memories of the place? Who else was there?*

*If you looked out of the window, what would you see?*

*Is there a landscape you remember? What did it look like?*

*What happened there? What could happen there?*

### You could also:

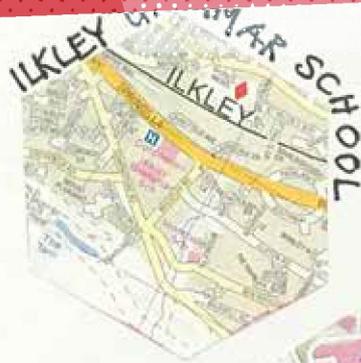
Think about decorating the other houses in the concertina. On one you could invite people to draw/collage a remembered place/landmark such as a gate, a tree, a bench etc. Then they could write about what they remember happening there. *Why do they remember it? Why is it special?*

And on the third section, participants could draw/collage a remembered landscape, supported by similar memories about why this is a special place. They could then:

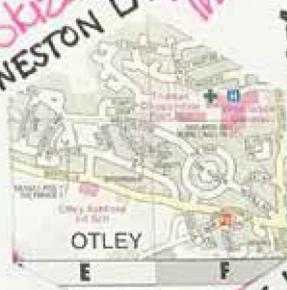
- write a story inspired by this landscape
- draw a map based on a journey to this place
- write about a memory of their time there with someone else.

### To finish:

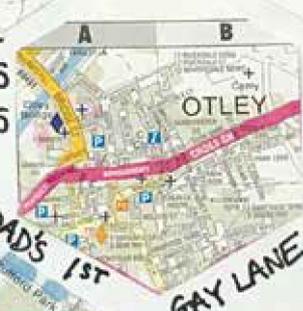
These concertina houses are now small treasure chests of memory and creativity which could be the foundation for further creative exercises that you could do over subsequent weeks. Why not combine key elements from the group's houses to create a story? Or use the landscapes that have been created as a basis for creative writing?



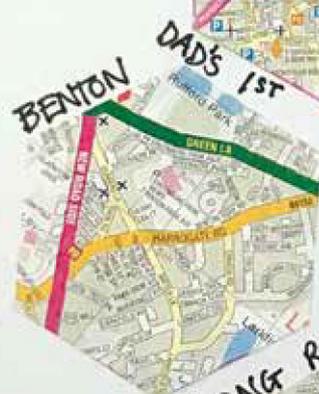
Skizz, Boo, Fledge, Clothes peg  
NESTON LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
The Bodicea of Otley.  
rose can



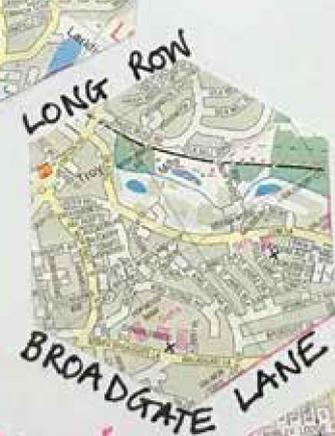
"KYLEMORE"  
Little round window with a square inside.  
Like the abbey in Ireland with the nuns still growing We fished.



BRIDGE STREET SURGERY  
Cars in the Lix



YEADON AIRPORT  
TARNS AND STICKLEBACKS.



Thea  
Mary Jo  
Catherine

Salty bacon & macaroni  
cheese with  
butterbeans

Agnes  
Roy Robert  
Gillian Alan



# Personalised memory map collage

## Visual art

60–90 minutes

### You will need:

#### Maps

(a large selection from the local area and wider area)

#### Scissors

#### Glue

#### Cardboard shape templates

to draw around, such as: hexagon, triangle, heart, circle

#### Paper (no smaller than A3)

**Optional:** magnifying glass

## One-to-one



Enabling  
Reflective  
Informal

Collage maps are made up of places that are significant to you. For example, where you were born, places you've lived, where your first job was. They are a great informal activity which enables conversations to take place naturally.

### To begin:

Explain the brief to the participants, which is to look through the selection of maps, finding places of significance to them. These could be the place they were born or married, places where they lived or studied, places they have been on holiday or where their children live, etc. As people think of and find places on the maps, encourage them to talk a little about why it is a significant place for them. A magnifying glass will come in handy here as indexes on maps can be in miniscule print!

Once people have chosen places, invite them to draw around each place they have found on a map using a shape template, and then to cut them out. Hexagons work well as they tessellate, but hearts, triangles or circles look good too.

Once all the shapes are cut out of the maps, ask participants to arrange them on the paper until they are pleased with how it looks and then glue the shapes down. They could also write notes about the different places next to them but this is not essential.

### To finish:

Invite participants to explain to the group why they have chosen the places they have included in their collage. You could also compare the different collages and see what similarities and differences there are.

#### Credit:

START

# One photo, one object

## Stories and poetry

**30 minutes**

+ 15-20 minutes for sharing

### You will need:

A4 paper

Pens and/or pencils

Safe  
Relaxed  
Open

This is a creative exercise for writers which works particularly well with older people's groups, especially if you have a group that is regular and fairly consistent, or if you are working in a residential setting. If you are working on a series of workshops, this exercise fits in nicely around workshop three or four.

### To prepare:

In advance of the session, ask each participant to bring along one photo and one object. They should be personal and something from the past, but not have too much meaning. The photo should be printed out and the object should be small enough to fit in your hand.

Older people often have interesting tales to tell, and yet reminiscence work can carry a range of pitfalls – some people have had difficult lives and may not want to relive any aspect of their past. However, this activity removes this personal aspect by using the photos and objects of others to revive the past. Interesting discussion and creative work can come about without the risk of getting too personal. The activity works particularly well with a group of people who are starting to get to know each other but don't know each other very well yet. Or they might think they know each other, but this exercise can be an entry point into shared memories, shared interests and shared creative ideas.

### To begin:

Make sure everyone has a photo and an object – if you are in a residential setting participants can always go back to their room and get something, but if not, it is often useful to have brought along a couple of photos and objects yourself. Then seated around a table, or in a circle, each person hands their photo to the person on their left, and their object to the person on their right. Each participant should now have someone else's photo and a different person's object.

Each participant then creates a short piece of flash fiction (300-500 words) or a short poem using both the image in the photo and the object as inspiration. Give them around 10-15 minutes to complete this, plus additional time to read over and quickly redraft.

If there are people who don't feel confident writing like this, you can put them in pairs (as long as they don't have their own object or photo within the pair) and they can create a story or poem verbally to present to the group.

### To finish:

Invite the participants to read out their work to the rest of the group, with some discussion time left afterwards.

### Credit:

Kim Wiltshire

# Fantasy Film flowers

## Visual art

### Flexible duration

Depending upon group size

### You will need:

**Thin wire** which is easily manipulated and twisted

**Wire cutters**

**Fantasy Film** in a range of colours

**Fantasy Film thinner** (if needed)

**Dry oasis**

**A4 paper**

**Permanent markers**

**Green flower or pot tape**

### One-to-one

### Dementia-friendly



This activity is flexible depending upon the size of your group, and is also accessible to people living with dementia. The flowers are repetitive and simple to make, but result in an aesthetically pleasing outcome.

### To prepare:

Cut your wire into pieces of approximately 15cm in length. You will need 12 pieces per Fantasy Film flower.

### To begin:

Explain to the group that you are going to create flowers. In the first instance people will make one flower but if people enjoy the activity they may want to make more. Ask them what shapes make up a basic flower, e.g. petals, leaves, stamens, stems. As a group, draw out the shapes of these onto pieces of A4. The petals can be any shape from a droplet to a heart shape. You could also use photographs or print-outs of flowers for inspiration.

Follow the shape drawn on the A4 piece of paper for the petal, leaf, stamen and stem, using the pre-cut pieces of wire and then twist your two open ends together. Make sure that all of the ends of the wire are twisted together so they make a full shape. You may want to make the twisted end quite long so you have something to hold when dipping your wire into the Fantasy Film. (Make sure your wire shapes will fit into the Fantasy Film tins you have bought as the tins vary in size – you may need to adjust the wire shape so it fits into the tin.)

### Then:

Dip and scoop your wire shapes into the Fantasy Film (like you are taking sugar out of a sugar bowl). The Fantasy Film will stretch and stick to all sides of the wire if it is properly connected (as advised above). You can repeat this process a couple of times if it hasn't worked but not when the Fantasy Film has dried.

When each wire shape has been dipped, stick it into the dry oasis to dry for approximately ten minutes. Once you have dipped all of your flower shapes into the Fantasy Film and they are fully dry, you twist the parts of each shape together. To protect your hands from any sharp pieces of extra wire, wrap the stem in garden tape.

When you have finished, make sure the tin is fully closed, as it will quickly dry up if any air gets into it. If the Film feels thick and isn't sticking to your wire, you can also purchase Film thinner, which you can mix in. Remember you can purchase both Transparent and Opaque Fantasy Film which will create different effects!





**You could also:**

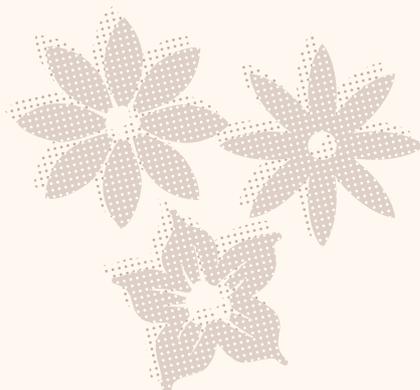
Make a single Fantasy Film shape and attach it to a brooch or why not create a bouquet of Fantasy Film flowers using an assortment of colours?

If you are working in a large group, you could work in teams to make a collection of Fantasy Film Flowers. One team could be making petals, the other stamens and so on. This way you can create more flowers over a shorter amount of time.

Remember Fantasy Film is waterproof so you could make these and attach them to bamboo or kebab sticks and push them into the ground outside. The sun will also shine through Fantasy Film and reflect the colour beautifully.

If you have some additional time, why not paint specific details or shading on top of the Fantasy Film using a paintbrush and acrylic paint? Why not try and create a new shape? Such as a butterfly, dragonfly or bee? Or could you think of something else that you could create using Fantasy Film?

Add a couple of drops of scented oils to the Fantasy Film and then dip your wire to make a scented flower!



**Credit:**

Claire Ford

# Colour emotions

## Visual art

**30–60 minutes**

### You will need:

Paper

Paint (acrylic or poster)

Paint palettes or plates

Paint brushes

Pot of water to clean brushes

A list of emotions, such as:  
happiness, sadness, love, anger,  
fear, contentment, joy

**One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly**



Calming  
Exploratory  
Curious

What you are going to do here is painting and mark-making, but the idea is to try and represent an emotion with colour. Try and be responsive and go with the flow. The exercise gives people a clear way to express themselves so you may find that people who have very little language left are very clear and definite in their decision making.

### To prepare:

Cover the table that you will be working around with paper, preferably lining paper but newspaper will do. Be aware if you do use newspaper that for some people the words and images can be distracting. Put a selection of different paint colours on a plate or palette, leaving space between each colour and put a piece of paper down for each member of the group.

### Then:

Invite each member of the group to take a word from the list and then to use the paints to represent it. Encourage people to work freely – this may be helped if the people that you are working with are reasonably confident using paint. If people are struggling to come up with ideas, you could make it simpler by asking questions, such as: “Which one of these colours makes you happy?”

### To finish:

Use the paintings as a starting point for discussion. What are the different emotions that people have represented? Which representations are particularly striking? Which are as you might have imagined, and which are less familiar?

### You could also:

Group together all the work which uses the same emotion as a starting point and explore the different ways this emotion has been represented by different people.

### Credit:

Verd de gris

# Group percussion improvisation

## Music

30–45 minutes

### You will need:

A lead instrument

A selection of smaller percussion instruments

## Dementia-friendly



Relaxing  
Energising  
Hypnotic

In this group improvisation there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to play. Participants are encouraged to listen and communicate with others in the group using their instruments.

### To prepare:

For the lead instrument, choose something loud and deep enough to control the music if necessary – cajons or djembes are ideal. For the smaller percussion instruments, allow enough for people to have a choice but use whatever you have available. If you have a good variety of instruments to choose from, pick some different sounds, e.g. wooden, metal or shaker, and one or two louder/deeper drums. You could also use chime bars and bells if you have them. Good pitches are C D E G A.

### To begin:

Set out chairs in a circle and arrange the instruments in the centre or on smaller side tables, making sure they are easily accessible. As people settle, ask them to pick an instrument. Explain that there is no right or wrong way to play; they should just listen and react to what is happening around them, and see what happens ...

### Then:

As people begin to experiment and play, look out for little rhythmic ideas and pulses you can pick up on as leader; these might be as subtle as a tapping foot or finger. Also try to spot moments of interaction between players and little motifs that you can copy and echo.

Don't be afraid of silence – allow time for music to happen. It may also seem or sound a little chaotic at times but this is fine. As facilitator you should keep what you play simple – your aim is to support the group's music rather than to dominate it. Listen to what is going on and react accordingly.

When the music stops, allow several moments of silence for someone to start something new. Encourage players to swap instruments whenever they like. If people don't swap themselves, try asking everyone to pass their instrument to the person on their right and then begin again.

### To finish:

Allow the improvisation session to come to a natural end. At this point (where appropriate) ask participants to comment on how they felt/ what they enjoyed/noticed during the music. You may also add your own observations. For example, you could comment on the musical ideas you heard and picked up on, musical conversations you observed, or any other significant interactions or moments in the music.

### Credit:

Andrea Vogler



# The gossip game

## Performance

**1 hour**

**You will need:**

Name badges

Notepads

Pencils

**Optional:** hats, blindfolds and a PA system for the Town Crier

Fun  
Immersive  
Active

Like anyone who grew up in this small town, you have some filthy secrets. And you really need to dish the dirt on your childhood rival before someone outs you. This game is for up to 25 people and can be played anywhere.

**To prepare:**

As facilitator you take on the role of **Town Crier**. Part of this role is to prepare for the game, which should take about half an hour. To do this, you need to create a list of information about all the 'characters' in your game. For each person in the game you need to decide the following:

1. Their secret **LOVER** in the town, with whom they are having a secret affair
2. Their childhood **RIVAL** in the town, whom they want to denounce for their sins and have banished from the town
3. Their **FILTHY SECRET**

Write all of this down in your little black book, and then put this information into a letter for each person that tells them who their **LOVER** is, who their **RIVAL** is, and the **FILTHY SECRET** of another person in town. This will take about 30 to 45 minutes to prepare.

**Setting the scene:**

Bring the group into a large, open space where you are going to play. There needs to be enough space for people to move around, and you may also want to lay some seats out for people to use.

Explain that they are now citizens of a small town give them each a name badge: **The Actress**, **The Bishop**, **The Carpenter**, etc. In well-equipped games you will also give people a hat suitable for their role.

You will also give them each a letter which tells them: their **LOVER**, their **RIVAL**, and the **FILTHY SECRET** of someone else (neither their **LOVER** nor **RIVAL**).

Explain that the main action of citizens is to gossip and swap **SECRETS** to try to dig the dirt on other citizens, especially their **RIVAL**.

If you have more facilities, you could have a microphone connected to a PA and perhaps some music.





### How to play:

The game is divided into sections representing day and night. The game usually starts on '**Monday morning**' and finishes on '**Sunday morning**' if not before. Through each day, citizens gossip and swap **SECRETS**. At night, they rest and are silent (and may be asked to wear blindfolds). Letters can be written by citizens at any time and hand-delivered to other players. At the end of each day, letters can be posted via the **Town Crier**, which will be delivered to citizens the next morning. Letters of denunciation can be only be written to the **Town Crier**.

### Aim of the game:

The first aim for citizens is to denounce their **RIVAL** so they are forced to leave town and then to denounce the most other citizens by the end of the '**week**', without being denounced themselves.

They can denounce citizens by writing a note to the **Town Crier**, which must be signed. They must tell the **Town Crier** the title of the **CITIZEN**, the title of their secret **LOVER**, and their **FILTHY SECRET** – e.g. 'Dear **Town Crier**, **the Actress** is having an affair with **the Electrician**, and not only that, she is a **Communist!** Love from **the Bishop**'.

The first citizen any **CITIZEN** can denounce and have banished is their **RIVAL**. After that they are free to denounce and have banished anyone else they like. Of course, willy-nilly denouncers risk being identified by other players as tattlemouths and poison-tongues...

Every morning, the **Town Crier** reads out all the signed letters of denunciation. Any that are successful, e.g. eligible target (always the **RIVAL** for the first by any citizen), identifying their **LOVER** and their **SECRET**, result in the shameful banishment of the denounced citizen. No comment is given by the **Town Crier** on the truth of accusations unless they result in successful banishment.





# Pressing nature into clay

## Visual art

60–90 minutes

### You will need:

Air drying clay  
Acrylic paint  
Sponges or paintbrushes  
Rolling pin  
Cloths  
Plastic knives  
Cookie cutters  
Leaves and flowers

**Optional:** magnets, string for hanging, brooch backs, felt for coasters and glue

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



Relaxing  
Concentrated  
Sensory

This tactile and sensory activity is suitable for many different groups and people. It creates a rewarding end product in the form of a beautiful impressed clay tile or coaster using natural plants.

### To prepare:

Gather your leaves and flowers for printing with. Leaves with prominent veins will make a good print. Plants that have a scent like lavender, mint, basil or rosemary are also good. Depending on your group, you may go outside and pick these together, or it may be more appropriate for you to bring them along.

### To begin:

Roll out your clay on a cloth until roughly 1cm thick. Then take your leaves and flowers and lay them on top of the clay, spaced apart and in a pattern. Use the rolling pin to press them into the clay. Then paint over the top of the clay and the leaves. You could use different colours to make it a more interesting surface.

While the paint is drying, you could use the activity to inspire conversations about gardens and nature, asking for example:

Do you enjoy gardening?

What do you like growing?

Have you visited any famous gardens?

For example, Kew or the Chelsea Flower Show?

Do any of the plants you are using have other uses?

For example, in cooking?

### Then:

When the paint is almost dry, use a thin point or knife to peel off the leaves and flowers leaving the beautiful impressions behind in the clay. You can paint the impressions or leave them plain. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes or just freestyle with a plastic knife. These could be used for coasters or hanging decorations (make sure to add a hole for these!). You could even try making fridge magnets or brooches.

### Credit:

Emily Hall

# Digital travellers

## Stories and poetry

30–35 minutes

### You will need:

Computer or iPad with internet access

Large sheet of paper (lining paper is ideal or a flip chart)

Marker pen

### Optional:

Projector (so that larger groups can look at the pictures and explore the places)

A4 card (for postcards if you would like to write them)

Images of iconic holiday destinations and/or travel brochures

## One-to-one



Curious  
Conversational  
Focused

It can be lovely to talk about other countries, and places you would like to visit. This activity takes that one step further by visiting iconic locations on Google Streetview. If you are working around a single computer this activity works best with smaller groups.

### To begin:

Ask the group to think about places that they would like to visit on a dream holiday – for some groups you may want to have some images or travel brochures to leaf through to get the conversation started. What are the iconic places that people have dreamed of visiting? And what are the places that they have actually visited?

As people come up with ideas write them down on a large sheet of paper so that everybody can see them. Encourage people to explain why they would like to visit a certain place.

If conversation dries up, it may help to throw in some ideas. It helps if the locations are quite specific, for example: the Taj Mahal, the Eiffel Tower, Mount Everest...

### Next:

When you have come up with a long list as a group, decide (in a way that works for your group) which three places you would like to visit most.

When you have picked the three places highlight their names on your list and then explain that you are going to visit those places on your computer. Use the website [www.instantstreetview.com](http://www.instantstreetview.com) to find your first location and then invite the group to look around. Show the group how they can explore the location on the screen. You may want to do this to start with; then give other people a go if they feel confident to try. Once you are comfortable looking around, start to talk about the place. Write down everything that is said to create simple pieces of creative writing.

In each location, you could ask:

*What can they see? What could they hear? What could they taste?*

*What could they smell? How would it make them feel to be there?*

### Then:

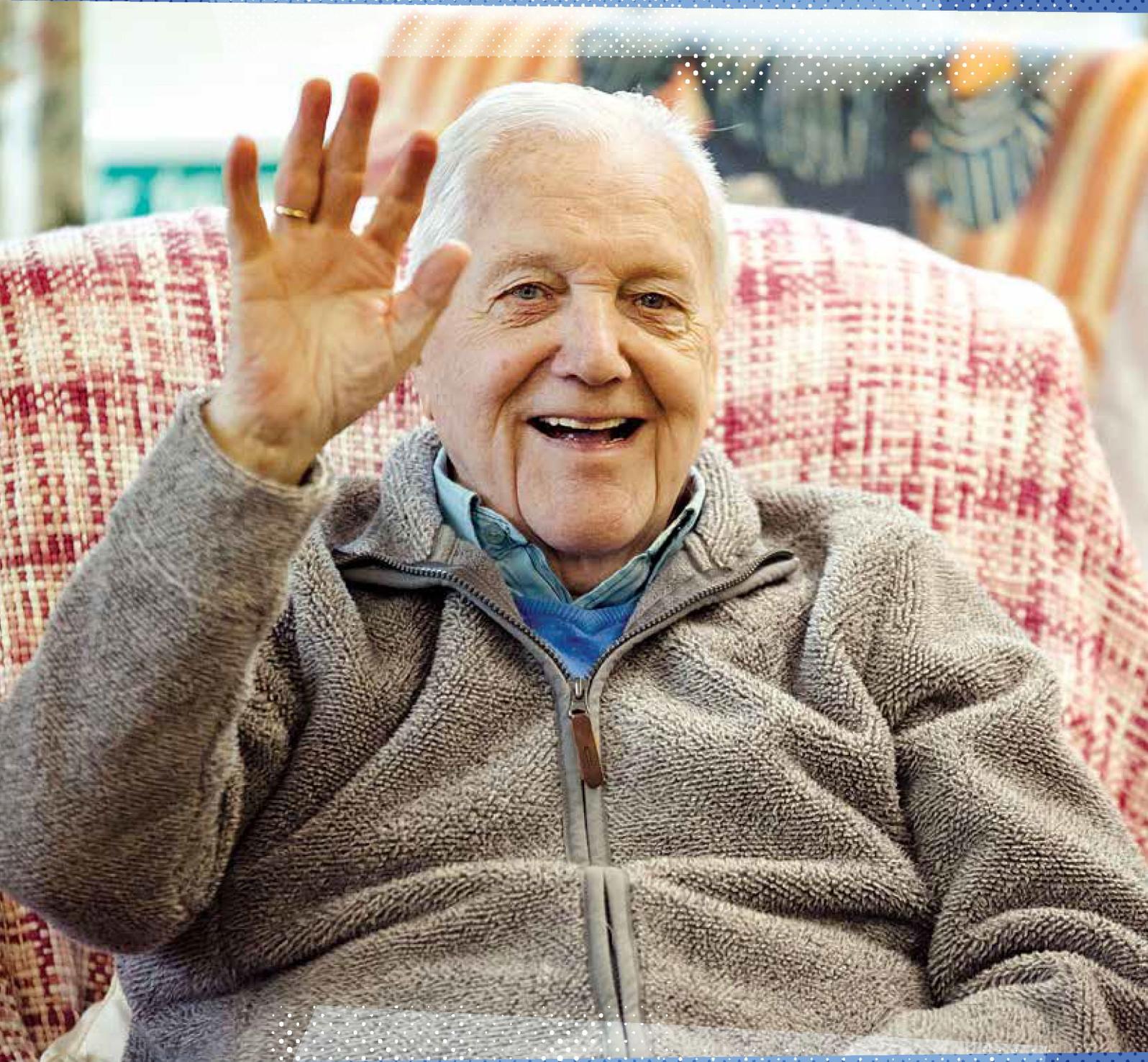
Go through these questions for each location, really encouraging people to explore and to 'look around'. Once you have visited your three places you may want to visit more. You could also choose to return to one of the locations and to write a postcard home from that place as a group.

### To finish:

Read back any creative writing that the group has created. Thank the group for taking part in the journeys that you have made.

### Credit:

Liz Postlethwaite,  
Small Things Creative Projects



# Arts from the armchair

## Stories and poetry

**30-40 minutes**

**You will need:**

Printed pictures of paintings

Printed crib sheets (see right)

Pens

Clipboards

(or something to rest on)

**One-to-one**

**Dementia-friendly**



Thinking  
Challenging  
Interesting

Great for large groups working in pairs with a story sheet to guide them through the picture. As a group work through a picture together to start with to get the imagination flowing and then split up into smaller groups or pairs. Participants can choose the picture they are interested in and then work from a crib sheet of questions or just free flow their story.

**To prepare:**

Select your paintings and print out copies. You can find a whole range online. They could be famous paintings but anything which tells a story – look for images with people or animals. You can use real pictures if you are in a gallery setting.

Prepare your crib sheets. Questions could include:

*Can you give the people in the picture a name? How are they connected to one another? Where are they? Why are they there?*

It is good to have about six questions, which prompt the group to create a story. Make sure there is a space under each question for the participants to write their answers.

**To begin:**

Consider how you will arrange the group, for example: as a whole group, or in pairs or small groups, and lay out chairs accordingly. You might like to mix people up a bit to work with people that they may not know so well but it is also important to make sure that people have the support that they need to participate fully. If you do not have sufficient support for those who need it, then keep the group together and sit in a circle.

**Then:**

Do an example picture with the whole group so they understand how the activity works, and to start getting people warmed up creatively!

Show the group a picture of a painting that you have chosen as the starting point. You could do this as a projection, or as a print-out. However you choose to work, make sure that you have sufficient example copies so that everybody can see one and look at it closely.

Start by using the prepared crib sheet and ask the group the first question. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers in this activity – anything goes!





First of all, see if the group can give the people in the picture a name. Get everyone's opinion and jot down the ideas. Then repeat the chosen names back to them, for example: 'So we have Margot and Frank ...'.

Now try to decide how they are connected to one another. Work your way through your crib sheet, remembering each time you ask a new question to repeat back to them what they have invented so far, so you can begin to build a story.

**Next:**

If you feel that the group is confident, you might like to split up into pairs or smaller groups. It is important when doing group work like this that there is enough support in the room.

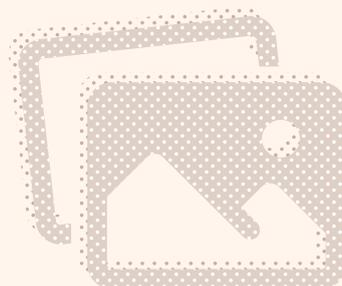
Once in pairs or small groups, place more pictures on to a table and ask people to choose a picture to use. Then hand out the crib sheets. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers and that their stories can be as far-fetched or as simple as they like. As people are writing, make your way round to check that everybody is on the right path, maybe making helpful suggestions to stretch and build on their stories.

**Then:**

Groups can, if they want to, share their stories with the wider group. Encourage the participants, where possible, to stand and share their stories as this adds to the drama. They can hand their picture round the group and then take it in turns to share parts of their story. As a facilitator you may need to support this process by repeating sections of the story as you go through. Or you could offer to read stories for people who don't want to, but who would like to share their work.

**You could also:**

Depending on your group, you could re-read some of the stories and add sound effects. Or some groups may like to take the 'best' story and act it out, using the picture as the point that they start from. If you have time, you could also continue the exercise by swapping pictures and seeing how different stories can be when created by new 'writers'.



**Credit:**

Theatr Clwyd

# Rhythm and pulse

Music

20 minutes

You will need:

A space for up to 20 people

Dementia-friendly



Friendly  
Exploratory  
Relaxed

This activity aims to enable participants to explore group percussive music making, as well as discovering and refining their internal and external pulse, rhythm and timing. It aims to bring a group together in a musical and group dynamic/social sense. The session is made up of a set of informal, fun but challenging short percussion games.

## To begin:

Start the first exercise which is **Call and Response**.

Explain the reasons for the activity: that it will help them to play together as a group, exercise their replication skills, help them play in-time/together, and give them an understanding and 'feel' for 4-beat rhythms.

Explain how the game will work: **'I'll clap a rhythm, you clap it back'**. Then set the pulse – a light, steady stamp of your feet.

Clap your first rhythm, starting simple; then invite the group to clap it back using a gesture to signal this. You may want to clap a rhythm a couple of times until the group are comfortable with it.

Then clap another, getting more difficult/intricate as you go. Repeat until the group have noticeably (individually and collectively) achieved the aims.

Always end the exercise with positive comments, but explain how the exercise could be improved. Try it again if necessary.

## Then:

Start the second exercise: **4 Beats of Fame**.

Explain the reasons for the activity: **4 Beats of Fame** will give you an opportunity to try out your own rhythm, give you a personal understanding of four beats of music, encourage working as a team to stay in-time, and give you a chance to briefly 'be the leader'.

Then explain how the game will work: **'I'll clap a rhythm, you clap it back. The next person along in the circle claps a rhythm and we all clap it back, and so on around the circle'**. Assure the group that this is nothing to worry about: **'Your rhythm can be as simple or as complicated as you like. If you're stuck, simply clap on each of your '4 beats of fame'**.

Set the pulse – a light steady stamp of your feet. Clap the first rhythm – simply clap the 4 beats, to emphasise simple is fine. Invite the group to clap it back using a gesture to signal this, and then gesture to invite the next person in the circle to take their turn. The group clap back. Positive words of encouragement after everyone takes their turn will help participants feel supported.







Once everyone has had their turn, stop. Again end with positive comments but explain how the exercise could be improved and try it again if necessary.

See if the group would like to do more and if so, try **'8 Beats of Fame'**!

**Then:**

Start the final exercise, a pulse, coordination and movement game.

Explain the reasons for the activity: that this game will help them link their internal (in their head) and external (physical) pulses; help their skills in keeping a steady pulse as a group; help their transitional/multi-tasking/decisional rhythm skills and physically warm them up.

Then explain how the game will work: **'We'll stamp out four beats together, stepping forward on 1 (left foot forward), forward on 2 (right foot forward) back on 3 (left foot back) and back on 4 (right foot back), taking you back to your starting position'**. Demonstrate this, counting 1-2-3-4 for every step you take and loop/repeat in-time.

Invite the group to join you, informing them that if this is too physically demanding, they could nod their heads, sway their hips, or just count out loud on each of the beats instead.

Once the group are all in-sync, ask them to clap on beat 1 whilst continuing to step the four beats. Continue in a loop until everyone is stepping, counting and clapping together. Then try another number, for example: clap on beat 2 instead. Try multiple numbers for example, as you're stepping, **'clap on beats 2 and 4'**, trying a variety of combinations.

Continue until the group have noticeably (individually and collectively) achieved the aims. For the final time, end with positive comments but explain how the exercise could be improved. Try it again – this time invite participants to have a turn in leading, trying their own combinations.

**To finish:**

Thank the group for their participation and ask for feedback about:

*What could be done differently?*

*What did you enjoy?*

*Did find anything particularly difficult?*



**Credit:**

Sage Gateshead  
Silver Programme

# Walking in space

## Performance

Up to 30 minutes

### You will need:

Masking tape

Silver foil

White bin liners

Permanent marker pens

Pen and paper to write down ideas

## Dementia-friendly



Playful  
Imaginative  
Fun



### Credit:

Jen Harris,  
Small Things Creative Projects

Sometimes diving in and doing something really, really silly can be a great starting point for improvisation. This silliness of the initial activity makes people relax and feel at ease, and frees them up to be free, creative and playful in any subsequent role play.

### To begin:

Use tin foil, white bin liners and black markers to make astronaut costumes for a couple of group members. Really go to town, wrapping them up and decorating them in preparation for a trip to space!

### Then:

Use these costumes as a starting point for role-play and improvisation. As facilitator take on the role of an interviewer and set up the scenario that you are going to ask the astronauts and their engineering team (other members of the group) about the voyage that they are going to take in space. The key to this is keeping the mood light and playful, and taking every answer and comment that is given as a stimulus to continue your improvisation.

As people share ideas, it can be great to ask somebody to act as a reporter to write things down so that you can finish the activity by reading back a summary of what has been said and created.

### You could ask:

How do they feel about the voyage ahead?

Where will they be travelling to? What preparations have they made?

Have they been into space before? If so what was it like?

What are their main fears about the voyage?

What do they think it will be like? What are they looking forward to?

What will they miss from earth?

Any other questions that the group come up with...

### You could also:

Stage a space walk across the room. Ask one of your astronauts if they would like to walk in space then think about how they would move as they cross the room. How would it feel to walk in space? How would that affect you physically? Think about how these factors would affect their movement.

### To finish:

Ask questions about being out in space. What would you see out in space? What would you hear? How does it feel when you are walking? And how does it feel when you reach your destination?

# The big draw

## Visual arts

3 hours +

### You will need:

Lining paper  
(or other large paper)

Pens

Pencils

Rubber stamps

Stencils

Pastel sticks

Masking tape

Clear sticky-back plastic

Bingo dabber pens

## Dementia-friendly



Fun  
Celebratory  
Hands-on

This live drawing event can be aimed at anyone who wants to get involved in drawing a huge, collaborative, colourful picture. Everyone is welcome and the activity is open to all ages and abilities. It is particularly accessible for those living with dementia.

Set up a 'Big draw' space by putting together several tables with room for participants to sit round comfortably. Cover the tables with a big sheet of plain paper. This could be made from several strips of lining paper stuck together, or a thick paper tablecloth.

Choose a word. This could be your theme for the activity, or it could be the name of an event or even the name of your setting/group. Draw out this word in big block capitals across the centre of your paper using a pencil. If you are not confident doing this free hand, print out large letter templates and trace round them. The magic of **The big draw** is that your central word will 'appear' as the white space around it is filled in. If you are worried about people filling in the letters you can cover them in masking tape or sticky back plastic cut to the right shape.

### Then:

Put lots of different drawing supplies on the table and invite people to come and fill in the blank spaces. Bingo dabbers are a great tool for people with very limited dexterity to join in. Support them to hold the dabber and add dots to the paper. A big white page can be a little bit intimidating for some people. Using rubber stamps to kick-off the drawings can be a fantastic way to get people started. Once you've added a few stamps encourage people to elaborate round them.

### You could also:

Use the activity as a starting point for a community drawing which is a great way to bring people together. It only takes 30 seconds to add a doodle to the sheet, so leaving the drawing in a communal space for several hours or even a few days is a simple way to get people interacting.

If you are in a care setting, invite visitors to contribute to the drawing with residents. Sharing a small creative activity together is something people may not have been able to do for some time.

If you have chosen a theme word, you can use it as an opportunity to talk about the theme. For example, if you have used the word travel you could ask:

What would you pack in your suitcase?

Where would you like to travel to?

How would you get there?

What would you see when you got there?







Select some songs that match your word and start a gentle sing-a-long one while everyone is working. If the atmosphere is very industrious, *Whistle while you work* is a fun, well-known tune to get people tapping their toes!

If you want something that will last a bit longer, use white fabric and fabric pens instead of paper. Once the drawing is finished you could turn it into a banner or wall hanging.

**To finish:**

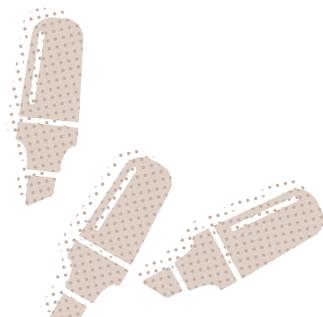
If you have used masking tape or plastic film to protect your letters, peel this off gently. Draw round the letters in a dark colour to help them 'pop'.

Display the art work in your setting. If you have used lining paper, add a strip of parcel tape or gaffer tape round the edge, punch several holes with a hole punch and thread through string or zip ties to create a sturdy frame to hang your drawing.

Use the finished piece as a conversation starter:

*What things can you see on the page?*

*Which is your favourite part?*



**Credit:**

Creative Ageing  
at The Courtyard

# Digital life stories

## Miscellaneous

**1 hour x 4 sessions**

### You will need:

iPad or tablet  
(with stylus if available)

Book Creator App

Being able to work one-to-one  
(with enough family members,  
volunteers or staff members  
to help)

### One-to-one



Relaxing  
Reflective  
Personal

This activity is good for communication and relationship building, and for creating something with a legacy. It can work over a number of sessions and is particularly good when you are working one to one.

### To prepare:

Invite participants to think about or prepare objects or artefacts relating to their lives (for example: photographs, pieces of music, old letters, favourite objects, family trees or anything that is important to them) ready for the activity. In the meantime, download the 'Book Creator' App (either the free version or the full version).

### Session 1:

Welcome everyone and explain that you are going to create personal **Digital life stories** using an App called '**Book Creator**'.

The first session is a chance to get to know the individual and to develop overall confidence using the **Book Creator** App.

Spend time taking a photograph of the person for their front cover. Add a soundtrack to their book too, perhaps with their favourite pieces of music.

Photograph the objects they have brought to the session and add them to the book, using text and sound for captions.

You could also spend time in this session designing the book and how it will look, thinking about colours and borders.

### Sessions 2, 3 and 4:

These can be led by the individual you are working with.

*What do they want their book to say? What is the purpose of their digital life story? Is it for their grandchildren? Is it to act as a communication aid? Is it to have all of their favourite things in one place?*

This will then inspire what goes into the book next.

Make a list of other things they would like to add into their book. This could include music and video clips, maps, photographs, sound clips of family members or stories or extracts taken from other apps such as Ancestry (to add a family tree for example). Take into consideration the needs of the individual. If they are living with dementia, make sure the forms you choose are accessible to them (if they are non-verbal, visuals and sounds will work better than text).

Once you have collated all of the information you want, your digital book can then be saved as an e-book, printed out or put onto a DVD as a short film. Most people prefer both so the hard copy supports the digital elements.





## How to use the app

These are the basic functions.

1. Tap on the App '**Book Creator**' to open the App on your iPad or Tablet.
2. Tap on '**New Book**' top left and then choose what type of Book you would like to create (portrait, square or landscape).
3. Tap on the **+** (top right).

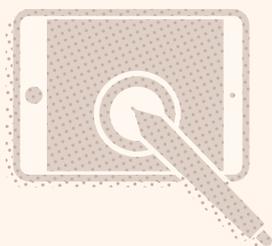
This is where you can add photos that have already been taken, take new photos, add drawings, add text and add sound (Voice, Music, Podcasts etc.)

Tap on your **chosen subject** and then the App will instruct you on the next stages of the process.

4. Tap on the **(i)** (top right) to:
  - delete anything you have previously added to your page
  - change the page colour
  - edit the layout.
5. To add a new page, select the arrow (right hand side of your page). At the top of the App it will say how many pages you have in your Digital Book. You can navigate through your book using the arrows.
6. To re-scale or move a photo, sound clip or drawing: tap on your selection on the page and a blue line and dots will appear. Grab and drag one blue dot at a time and you will be able to move your image. You can also use a pincer movement to rotate your image. There is an undo button (top left) of the App if you want to go back a step.
7. Press on '**My Books**' (top left) at any time to save your book. This is where you can then send it / print it / export it and publish it online when you are finished.

### Tip:

Use a stylus on the iPad screen for individuals who have never used an iPad. This will help with issues that may arise when just using a finger.



**Credit:**

Claire Ford

# Leaves of time

## Visual art

1 hour

### You will need:

Paper  
Paint palettes (one each)  
Acrylic or watercolour paint  
Paint brushes  
Pots of water to clean brushes  
Wax candle  
Leaves

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



Creative  
Relaxing  
Gentle

This activity encourages everyone to enjoy the creative process, drawing and painting in response to the beauty of the natural world. It will help them to develop their own creative interests and encourage them to become aware of artists' work and art experiences that are available every day.

### To prepare:

Cover a table with plastic to protect the surface. Squeeze a selection of acrylic paint colours on to the palettes, leaving space for colour mixing or hand out the watercolour paints.

Lay out the leaves on the table so that they are easy to see, and reach.

### Then:

Invite each participant to look at the leaves on the table, taking note of the different shapes and tones of green. All then play a quick drawing game, first drawing a leaf with the eyes closed and then drawing two-minute leaf sketches.

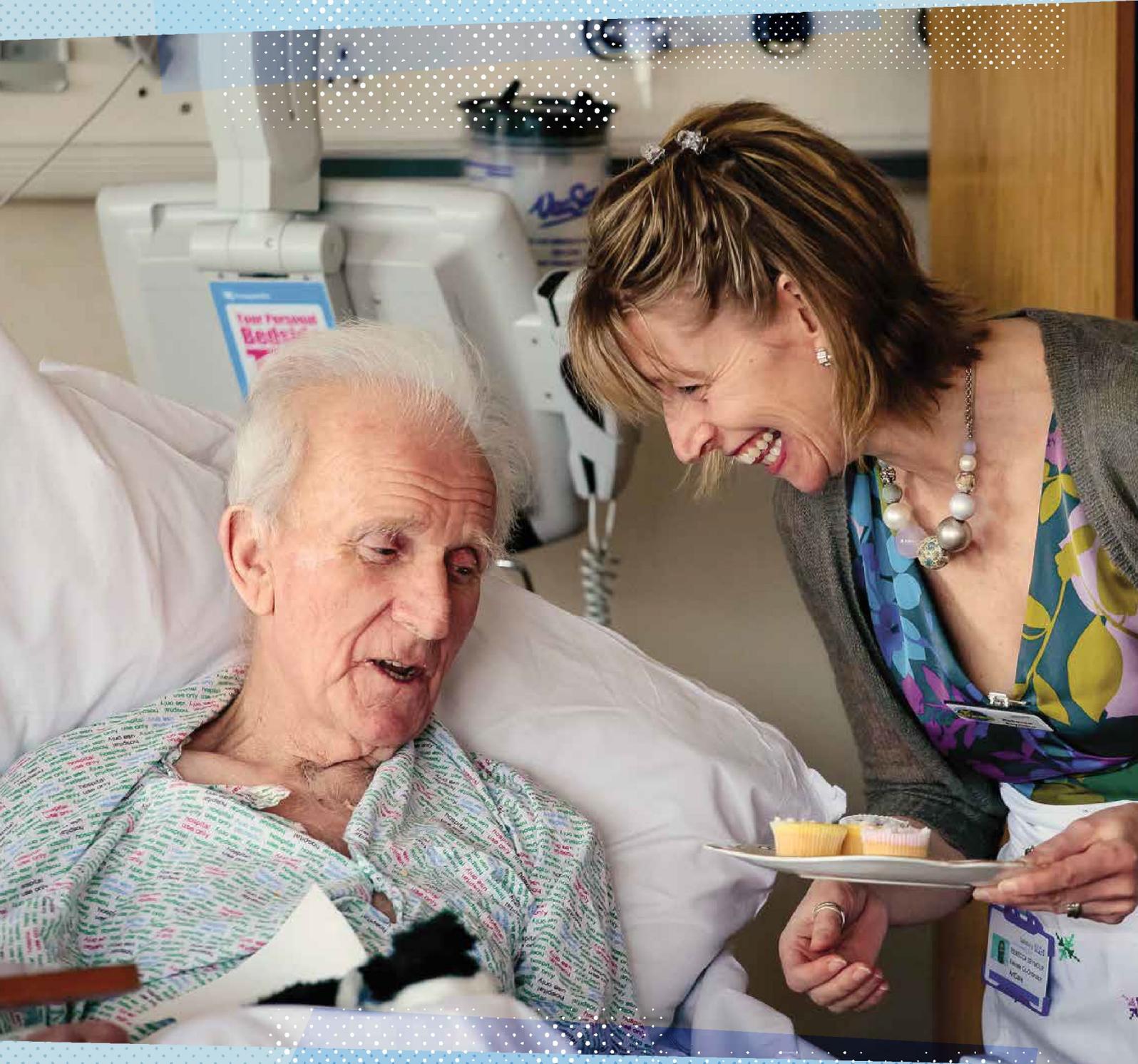
Participants then choose a leaf, put it under the paper and rub the wax candle on top, leaving the pattern of the leaf in wax on the paper. Then use watercolours to paint over the leaf. The wax will resist leaving a leaf skeleton on the paper. It is up to each participant how many leaf rubbings they do – some people may only do one but others may want to do more.

Finally, ask participants to pick a favourite leaf and use the paints to represent it. Encourage people to work freely and support them to colour mix and choose their composition.

### Credit:

Artcore





# Everything stops for tea

## Miscellaneous

### 30–60 minutes

(depending on group size)

#### You will need:

Vintage china

Table cloths

Small cakes and scones

Sandwiches

Tea

Milk

Sugar and sweeteners

Bunting

Tea trolley

A cheerful, outgoing host

Music (live if possible, but recorded will also work)

## Dementia-friendly



Joyful  
Energising  
Uplifting

A vintage tea party seems to work on every level and with every age group from children to frail older people. The tea party, in whatever setting, brings people together in a social context. Live music with songs from eras and genres relevant to the participants triggers stories and memories and encourages people to eat, drink and forget their troubles and lifts their spirits.

#### To prepare:

In most settings it is best to decorate and lay out a tea trolley and display the vintage china. The wheeling in of the trolley makes for a special moment – particularly on hospital wards. Make pots of tea; use milk jugs and sugar bowls. Display cakes etc on pretty plates and use serving tongs. Make sure you cater for dietary requirements.

#### To begin:

Approach people one by one. Serve people individually and take time to talk to each person. Encourage conversations to continue between participants as the trolley moves on.

Have a live musician (preferably a singer) who can stroll and sing while the tea is served. Encourage people to join in singing and make requests. Look for the quieter people and gently draw them in. If no live music is available, make Spotify play-lists drawing on favourite eras and genres of music of the participants. Lyric sheets can be used if you want to support people to sing along (14 pt minimum font size). Stories and memories will often be triggered by the music.

Take time to assist with feeding and drinking if needed. The most important thing is to make people feel special. If you are in a hospital, check patient lists for diabetics, puréed food and Nil by Mouth.

#### You could also:

Could you make the vintage tea party a regular event? A weekly/monthly get-together could be advertised beforehand, and participants could be involved in planning a menu and making cakes.

#### Credit:

Elevate

# Large scale animals

## Visual art

**3 x 90 minutes  
or a half day**

### You will need:

Carpet tubes (sourced from your local carpet store for free)

Large pieces of cardboard

Old newspapers (lots!)

Masking tape

PVA glue

Scrap fabric, wrapping paper or decoration of choice

Old tablecloth (or something similar to protect your working area)

## Dementia-friendly



Fun  
Creative  
Uplifting

A wonderful and crazy group activity with dramatic outcomes. Loved by all, young and old alike. A cheap and accessible art activity which creates lots of laughter, social interaction and joy.

### To prepare:

Choose the animal (or other creature) to be constructed and collect a range of visuals to aid construction. Elmer the elephant is a good choice! Also note that this activity could easily be adapted for those not wishing to get messy or who prefer to work 2D. For example, patchwork animals with watercolours or pens is an alternative that works well.

### To begin:

Decide upon the size of animal that you would like to make, then cut legs and other shapes you will need, e.g. ears, tail, trunk, body.

Next, **construct!** It can be good to start with the legs especially if it's an elephant! A lot of team work will be required here.

Once you have the core structure, add the other body parts. Ensure all aspects of your model are sturdy and that the masking tape is doing its job. Check that it is able to stand independently and tweak if not.

Stuff the whole structure with scrunched up newspaper; this will help with the final shape.

### Next:

**Paste!** Now you have your animal constructed, it is time to get messy. Cover your structure in papier mâché (PVA glue, newspaper strips and water). Leave to dry if possible though you can start to decorate if your session is short.

### Then:

Your wondrous creature should now be standing proud awaiting decoration and colour. How you do this is up to you. You could use:

- scrap fabric squares
- wrapping paper or similar (not the very shiny kind however though as it takes more time, glue and the finish is disappointing)
- acrylic paints.

Add the finishing touches, e.g. eyes, eyelashes.

### To finish:

Give your new friend a name and display it for all to enjoy.



# Creative iPad improvisation

## Music

1–30 minutes

### You will need:

An iPad with music app

One-to-one  
Dementia-friendly



The benefits of making music that is familiar and meaningful to people with dementia are well known. Equally valuable though, is creative improvisation: making up new music that is truly owned by the participants and brings everyone taking part into the moment, together. Improvisation offers us an alternative way to build a relationship with people, in particular those living with dementia, and creates a different kind of stimulation. Research has shown that when we improvise it activates a different part of our brain to when we sing a familiar song. Being able to do both then is surely a good thing.

### To prepare:

There are a huge number of music apps available, so experiment! One that we regularly use and know to work is **Thumb Jam**. This divides the screen up into a musical scale with a large range of scales, keys and instruments to choose from. It works well using instruments with quite a lot of sustain (the hammer dulcimer, Hang and Rhodes are beautiful) and using pentatonic scales. There is a user guide to Thumb Jam on their website but it really is simple to use!

It can help if you prepare a couple of simple songs before the activity starts.

### To begin:

Choose a song from your and your participant's mutual repertoire. A simple chord progression works well. *I can see clearly now* by Johnny Nash works well for example.

Using *I can see clearly now*, pitch the song in C and accompany using chords C, F, G and B flat. Set Thumb Jam to a C pentatonic scale so that any notes can be played against any of the chords in the song's sequence.

### Then:

Demonstrate different ways to play the app, for example: using two or three fingers at once to create chords, playing long notes and short notes, exploring the octaves. Use words for clarity but not if they create confusion. Use positive body language and facial expressions to encourage and affirm participation.





Stop singing but continue with the chords (or even just use C and F) to create space for your participant's improvisation while still supporting them musically, underpinning their improvisation with rhythmic playing.

**You could also:**

Try the following techniques.

**Mirror**

Copy what they are playing with your own voice.

**Follow**

Are they speeding up or playing more slowly? Gently or with energy? Are they moving around the scale or focusing on a few notes? Try and capture the emotion and style of your participant in your own voice as you continue to support them using simple chords.

**Experiment**

Can you abandon the chords altogether and simply wait for your participant to play and then play a similar phrase back to them in call and response?

**Choice**

Offer a choice of different instrument sounds, but don't over complicate things if it will cause confusion or break the moment.

Gently come back to the chords and lyrics of the song and bring the song to a close when you feel from your participant that it is time to end or to move on to something else.

There are many different ways that this interaction could evolve – this is just one example idea of many. The most important thing is to watch for the subtlest responses and to adjust your own music-making accordingly. The improvisation section may be very brief but that's OK.



**Credit:**

Rhythmix,  
'Wishing Well' Programme



# Nature collages

## Visual art

30–45 minutes

### You will need:

A selection of seasonal flowers, leaves, seeds and any other natural materials

White sheet of A4 card (one each)

**Optional:** iPad or digital camera and laptop

## One-to-one Dementia-friendly



Gentle  
Calming  
Tactile

This gentle and tactile activity uses natural materials to create simple collages. It is an accessible and creative activity to start a session, or a nice activity in its own right. You may decide to collect the materials for the activity on your own, or it could be something that members of your group would like to do on a walk or in the garden.

### To begin:

Lay out a range of the natural materials that you have collected and a piece of card for each person in your group.

Invite people to pick the items that they would like to use and to lay them out on their card to create a collage.

Leave the items unstuck so that people can keep adding and taking things away until they are happy with them. It can be nice to play some gentle music whilst people are working on their collages to set the mood.

### Then:

As people reach a point in their collage where they are pleased with the results, ask them if you or they can take a picture of it on an iPad or camera.

Look at the photograph together. *What do they like about the collage? Are they happy with it or is there anything that they would like to change?* Look at the image next to their collage and invite them to change and move it until it is how they want it to be.

When they are happy with what they have created, photograph it again and save the image.

They can then return the materials to the table and try making another collage if they would like to.

### To finish:

Print out all of the images so that everybody can look them, or if that is not possible, look at them together on your iPad. If you have a projector you could also project the images so that everybody can see each other's work on a larger scale.

Talk about the different ways that people have used the resources, and about which elements of the different collages people particularly like.

### Credit:

Nicky Colclough,  
Small Things Creative Projects

# The hand massage

## Miscellaneous

10–20 minutes

### You will need:

E45 cream

Essential oil, such as:  
rose, lavender or sandalwood

## One-to-one Dementia-friendly



Calm  
Still  
Quiet

This one-to-one activity uses touch and is appropriate for people living with a range of dementias. It is a safe way to have physical and emotional contact. It can take place at home, in a care setting, during a creative workshop, before personal care and bedtime and is a wonderful way to have non-verbal communication.

### To prepare:

Prepare the massage cream. Drop a couple of drops of essential oil into the E45 cream, always making sure the person you are about to massage is not allergic to the cream or essential oil. Play music in the background – it will help alter the mood in the space, in you and the person living with dementia. You could also spray a little diluted essential oil or use a diffuser. Before you start, slow down and take a breath.

### Then:

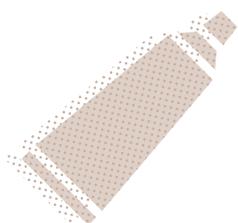
Sit in front of the person, look them in the eye, read their body language and let them read yours. Be open. Place a small amount of the cream on to your hand and smell it, demonstrating that it has a scent. Waft your hand gently under their nose, allowing them to smell it; then watch and listen to their responses which will indicate whether or not they like the scent. It is important that they engage in the process and that this is not 'being done to them'.

Gently rub the cream on your hand, showing them your intention is to massage their hand. Offer to place cream on their hand and let them smell it.

Gently begin to massage their hands: palms and back. Massage in a circular motion, all the time reading their face – looking for joy, listening to them if they speak, gently agreeing or smiling or laughing. When you have finished one hand, ask if they would like the other hand massaged too – don't force them to have it massaged.

### To finish:

Say thank you to them for sharing the moment. At this point the person you have been with might instinctively take your hand and massage your hand – if they do let this happen. At the end thank them for spending some time with you. Put the cream away slowly, stop the diffuser (if used) and turn the music down slowly. Say goodbye or sit and have a chat with them if they are awake!



### Credit:

Arti Prashar,  
Spare Tyre

# Life maps

## Visual art

30–60 minutes

### You will need:

Blank sheets of paper  
(preferably A3 or A2)

Coloured pens

### One-to-one



Reflective  
Exploratory  
Creative

Picturing life's journey can help participants remember the past in a creative way. This exercise invites people in the later stages of their lives to imagine what a 'map' of their life looks like. It invites reflection and asks individuals to revisit their triumphs and challenges, as well as celebrate how far they've come. Drawing and writing skills are engaged.

### To begin:

Ask people to take a sheet of paper and explain that they are going to create a 'map' of their own lives. First, ask them to draw a path from one side of the sheet to the other. The path should have as many twists and turns as possible! It can be a trail through a desert or a path through mountains. Invite people to choose a terrain that appeals to them and to fill in a few details. Are there a few sand dunes and palm trees? Maybe there are mountain peaks with snow on them? Anything is possible.

On the far left, at the beginning of the path, they should write **BIRTH**. On the far right of the path they should write **THE PRESENT**.

### Next:

Invite people to think about the different stages of their lives. Begin with **CHILDHOOD**. At the beginning of the path, ask them to draw themselves as they saw themselves then. *What does the pathway look and feel like? Are there other people in the scene? What is the weather like?* Invite people to draw and write whatever comes into their minds and to use their imaginations.

The next phase of life is **SCHOOL YEARS**. Again, invite people to draw this phase of their life on the next stage of the path. Let people know they can write some key words if they wish. *What are the main thoughts and feelings they associate with their time at school? What are they doing?*

The next phase of life is **LEAVING SCHOOL**. Again, invite people to draw or write their thoughts and feelings about the period of life when they left school and went out into the world. This period might be slow and steady or it might involve a lot of change. *What different skills and activities were people engaged with in the world of work? What relationships started to emerge?*

The next phase of life we call **MIDDLE LIFE**. This is when things have settled and people start to put down roots. People might be getting married and starting a family. They may still be exploring and going on adventures. People can define this middle stage of life as they wish.





**LATER LIFE** is the time before the present when people are maybe retired or are entering into their autumn years. *What does the terrain and weather feel like? What is significant?*

Invite people to reflect on what they've drawn and think about their high points. *What were their moments of greatest happiness or achievement?* They could draw those moments or represent them in some simple way. Then they might like to think about the biggest challenges that have faced them on life's journey. *Where do they appear on the map?*

As you are working you could play music relevant to each life phase. If you have a laptop in the room with online access, you can ask people to suggest a song or piece of music they associate with a particular phase and you can play that in the background whilst people are drawing.

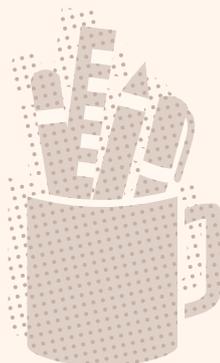
**To finish:**

Invite anyone who feels like it to share their life map with the group and to describe their journey. *What have they noticed about what they've drawn? Are they surprised by anything? Were some parts of the map much easier to draw than others? Were there any gaps?*

Be aware that this exercise can potentially stir up darker feelings, as well as positive ones. Reminiscence can also involve reflecting on painful or sad times as well as happy ones. People should feel free to share as much as they feel comfortable with and in general should be encouraged to reflect on their achievements and the things they're most proud of or happy about. Everyone's journey is unique.

**You could also:**

If people are happy to do so, you could create a gallery on a wall of all the life maps. These could be without names. This exhibition could be a real celebration of what people have lived through, experienced and survived.



**Credit:**

64 Million Artists

# Workshops

A range of different activities  
around a theme or art form.

These generally take 45 minutes or more.



# Make a pop-up Posh Club in ten easy steps

## Performance

**3 hours per club**

### You will need:

A posh ballroom

Stage

Lights

Sound

Gold chairs

Sandwiches, cake, tea and coffee (and maybe something sparkly to drink)

Elegant  
Celebratory  
Wild

With all the redundant shops on the high street needing a new purpose, Duckie Says Make a Pop Up Posh Club in Ten Easy Steps.

### To-do list:

1. Book your local church hall, vacant shop or community centre and re-vamp it as a glamorous performance palais and dancehall with styled vintage grandeur.
2. Scam a few bob off the Big Lotto. (NB: get someone brainy with an English degree to write the funding spiel; you need say four grand to kick off.)
3. Hand make gold, shiny, irresistible posh invitations.
4. Stand outside Marks & Spencer in evening wear and hand invites out and glad hand the eighty and ninety-somethings.
5. Beg and borrow loads of vintage crockery from the local charity shops, e-bay and closed down cafés.
6. Persuade your young mates to dress in formal black tie or little black dresses and shiny shoes to serve, host and dance.
7. Hire the best Elvis Impersonator, soul diva and amateur dance troupe in your manor.
8. Get the lairiest personality in your estate to be the hostess, no-one shy need apply.
9. Play ballroom, rock'n'roll, disco and lovers rock between the acts and encourage action on the dancefloor.
10. Press the Flesh. Talk. Welcome. Make friends. Rock out. And repeat weekly.

**Credit:**

Duckie

# Comedy with care

## Performance

40–60 minutes

### You will need:

A good quality portable music amp, with inputs for a microphone to stream music through an iPod or CD player

**Microphone and stand**  
(a cordless microphone is easier to pass around)

Theme tunes from comedy shows and any other comedic music you would like to use, either on a playlist on an iPod or pre-recorded onto CD

## Dementia-friendly



Fun  
Stimulating  
Upbeat

A fun activity exploring comedy and laughter with older people which stimulates memories, encourages connections between participants and promotes wellbeing.

### To prepare:

Set up the sound system, microphone and stand and a horseshoe of chairs in front of them. As participants arrive, gently welcome them to the space.

Your pre-recorded comedy songs can be playing. These could include Morecambe and Wise's *Bring me sunshine*, Ken Dodd's *Happiness*, the *Benny Hill* theme tune, *The laughing policeman* by Charles Penrose, *The bee song* by Arthur Askey, or *Right said Fred* by Bernard Cribbins.

When the group are settled, stop the music and explain that you are going to be talking about comedy. *Who makes us laugh? What makes us laugh?*

### To begin:

Encourage participants to think about how it feels to laugh and about the sound of their own laughter. Explain that you are all going to share the sound of your own laughter with the group.

Start with yourself: say your name and share your laugh. Go around the group, encouraging them to say their name and share their laugh. Ensure each participant has their moment to laugh and that each laugh is celebrated and appreciated.

Then invite participants to talk about their favourite comedians. Share familiar catch phrases, such as *Just like that* (Tommy Cooper); *Oh you are awful but I like you* (Dick Emery). Then play the theme tune medley and encourage participants to sing along or join in with movements.

Use all of these things as a starting point to encourage each participant to talk about things that make them laugh.

### You could also:

Pass a microphone around for people to share a joke or talk about something funny that they have seen or that has happened to them.

If people want to, they can stand up and tell their stories from the front where the microphone stand is.

### To finish:

Encourage a group sing-a-long of *Bring me sunshine*, and/or have another round of a song that you sang earlier in the session.

### Credit:

Women & Theatre

## Movement and dance

**1 hour**

### You will need:

Printouts of the painting  
*Les plaisirs du bal*,  
by Antoine Watteau

Music to play on a CD player,  
iPod or radio

Props, costume pieces, fancy  
dress costumes

Paper fans (or A4 Paper and  
materials to make and decorate  
the fans)

### Dementia-friendly



Active  
Interactive  
Upbeat

# Join the dance: movement inspired by art

Although this is a physical workshop, most of it could be done sitting down for those unable to stand. It also works really well in intergenerational settings. It can create a real party atmosphere but also allows space to focus on a piece of art and to discuss it.

### To prepare:

Print out copies of the painting *Les plaisirs du bal* by Antoine Watteau, enough for one each in the group. You may also want to project the painting onto a screen. (Available here: [www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection/151-200/les-plaisirs-du-bal](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection/151-200/les-plaisirs-du-bal).)

### To begin:

Hand out copies of *Les plaisirs du bal* to each member of the group and ask them to look closely at the painting. Explain to the group that you are going to start by talking about what is going on in the painting. Focus on asking key questions, encouraging the group to look closely at the picture. Ask participants to share their personal responses, experiences and memories in response to the painting.

### You might like to ask:

What is going on in this painting? What can you see that makes you say that?

Does this image remind you of any parties you have been to in the past? How it is similar; how is it different?

Can you see people having conversations in this painting – what might they be saying?

If you were a character in this party scene, who would you be?

### Then:

Use the painting as inspiration to recreate your own dance party. Ask the participants to look at the painting and pick out a few gestures and movements made by the figures. Play music and take it in turns to lead and copy the gestures around the group. This can be done seated or standing up.

Using any props, costume pieces, music that you have available, encourage the participants to create new movements and ask the group to share memories of their favourite dance moves.





**You could also:**

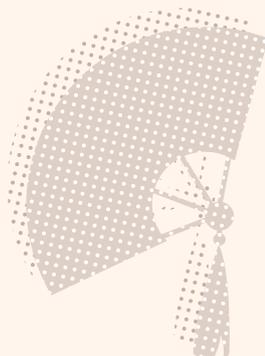
Follow this up by thinking about the language of the fan. Look at the painting and ask the participants to spot all the fans and to look at how they are being held. Provide ready-made paper fans or ask the participants to create and decorate a concertinaed fan using A4 paper.

Once everyone has a fan, explain to the group that a fan was a key tool of communication in the 1700s. Use your own fans to communicate messages with each other using the code below and invent new movements to help you communicate:

- fan on right cheek = yes
- fan on left cheek = no
- fan slowly = I'm married!
- fan hanging down = stay friends.

**To finish:**

Ask the participants how we might use fans to communicate today.



**Credit:**

Dulwich Picture Gallery

# Riverside stories

## Stories and poetry

**30 minutes**

### You will need:

A long piece of lining paper, laid on the floor or on a table so that everybody can see it

Coloured pens and pencils

Paper boats

Shells and pebbles

## Dementia-friendly



Creative  
Imaginative  
Focused

This activity was originally developed as part of *Hull City of Culture 2017*. It took inspiration from the river, which is so central to life in Hull. It works well as the culmination of a workshop on a watery theme and is a simple way of creating imaginative writing together.

### To prepare:

Begin by drawing the shape of a river across your lining paper. Then place the paper boats on top of the river and the shells and pebbles at the bottom of the river. Leave space in the middle of the river to write down any stories that are told.

### To begin:

Explain to the group that you are going to start at the banks of a river, explore the riverbanks, the docks, the water, its passage out to the sea and the waters beyond. As people talk about the river, write down all of their stories and ideas on your lining paper.

### You might like to ask:

What can you do on the river or by the river?

What is it like by the river when it rains? What is it like on a sunny day?

What might you see on the river? Who might you meet by the river?

What would it be like to swim in the water? How does the water move?

What animals might live on the riverbanks? What animals might live in the water?

And any other questions that the group come up with...

### You could also:

Choose a character that you might meet next to a river and draw a picture of them as described by the group. Then ask questions to find out as much as you can about them. What are they called? Where do they live? Do they like the water? What is their job? What kind of person are they? What do they think of the river?

You could also choose a place you might visit next to the river and then ask questions to find out as much as you can about that. What is this place called? What kind of place is it? Who might you find there? What would you see there? What would you hear there? How would it smell? What things would be happening there? As people answer, write down all of their ideas on your lining paper.

### To finish:

Read back the different things that have been written on the lining paper to create a simple piece of creative writing. Ask the group if they can come up with a name for the piece of writing they have created.

### Credit:

Sara Cocker and Rachel Watson,  
Small Things Creative Projects

# Snap characters

## Performance

**40–90 minutes**

(depending on numbers and abilities)

### You will need:

Images of people or places, linked by a theme, such as: work, circus or holidays (one image for each member of your group plus a couple of extras)

A selection of hats, props or costumes that complement the theme of the images

Pen and paper

## Dementia-friendly



Engaging  
Supportive  
Lively

Through image games and interaction, become a character and engage in a collaborative journey. This is a great activity to introduce role-play, which is suitable for all abilities with the necessary support.

### To begin:

Print out two copies of each image then spread them face down on a table.

Invite participants to turn over one photo, then another and try to get a match! If they don't, turn both cards back face down and try again. When somebody does get a match invite them to keep hold of that image.

When everyone has collected an image ask them to match it to the hats and props you have, and they can begin to be a character. For example, a bakery might have a baker's hat and a rolling pin.

Once everyone has found the props and costumes for their character, then they need to select a couple of things their character might say. Perhaps collect up to three phrases for each character writing them down as you go for the participants. There may also be an opportunity to collect memories here as the participants might want to talk about stories and memories that are triggered by the costumes and props.

**Remember:** it is good to ask questions in a way that refers to all of people's senses, for example: *What did it look, sound, smell, feel, taste like?*

### Then:

As the facilitator, take a journey around the place you have created meeting all of the residents! Allow each participant their turn to interact or 'perform'. Think about stimulating the development of characters, and also about scenarios and settings that link them. As you 'meet people', others in the room may contribute or contradict – allow them to chip in but remember that all answers are correct; one person's idea or memory doesn't have to be the same as another's. These differences could even be used to stimulate the story that you are creating further by encouraging participants to explore the differences in character.

It is a great idea to document the journey or story so you can read it back at the end of the session and possibly, with consent, take photographs. This could be something that you do, or even better, nominate somebody in the group to take this responsibility.

### To finish:

Read back what has been created. This is always a nice way to end, as is thanking the participants for their contributions to the story and performance.

### Credit:

Steve Fairclough



# The creative space

## Miscellaneous

**1 hour**

**You will need:**

Paper and pens  
Inspiration props  
Song lyrics  
Percussion instruments

## Dementia-friendly



This activity invites creativity into any room, whether it's an old classroom, an empty office or a rehearsal room. As a collective, the room can be decorated in such a way that it is exciting and inspires creative outputs. Pick a theme, a colour and a song and decorate the room accordingly together with the participants. The Creative Space is the starting point for a supportive, welcoming and creative environment sparking people's imaginations.

**To prepare:**

If you can, decide together with your group on a theme in advance of your session. If you have not met the group before, think of a theme that relates to the time of year or a special event, for example: the theme might be the colour 'yellow'.

Next, collect different items which represent the theme. Multi-sensory items are advisable. Think about colourful fabrics, yellow fruit, flowers, pictures of yellow landscapes, and songs about yellow. Set up these items around the room around a central space where participants are invited to sit with the facilitator. Or some groups may prefer to set the space together. If this is the case when people are invited into the space, they are invited to position the different props around the room and to dress the space as they want it to be.

**To begin:**

Welcome participants into the creative space. Welcoming people warmly and calmly is essential. Give them time to take in the space and all the inspiration props.

Then invite people to sit in the centre of the room and do some gentle breathing and posture exercises. For example, sitting straight on a chair, feet parallel on the ground, breathe in for 4, hold for 4 and breathe out for 4. Follow this with some simple vocal warm-ups. For example, try to make your voice travel from blue to yellow.

When the group is ready, begin passing around the different inspiration props. Take the time to chat to individual participants about what the props remind them of and how they feel about the colour yellow.



**Next:**

Write a group sensory poem inspired by people's reactions and responses to the theme. Write down everything that people say in reply to your questions to create a simple poem. Whilst you are doing this, leave plenty of time for storytelling and conversations. Read the poem back to the group.

**You might like to ask:**

What does yellow make you feel like?

What does yellow smell like?

What does yellow taste like?

What does yellow look like?

What does yellow sound like?

**Then:**

Create a song!

Then all work together and to create a song from the sensory poem. This could be done with a guitar or piano, or simply by the poem being read out and adding a simple rhythm and simple percussion instruments as accompaniment.

Offer people song lyrics and simple percussion instruments to sing/play along to a song inspired by your theme.

If you can't play an instrument, you can use backing tracks found online.

**You could also:**

Invite people to dance or move to the song you have created. They could use the fabrics or other props to add to their movements.

Add other arts elements to the activity, such as painting with yellow paints, inspired by different yellow pictures.

**To finish:**

Share and celebrate the art work that has been created in the session. This could be by reading back a poem, singing a song, looking at paintings... It is important that everyone is given the opportunity to feedback on the session and that their contributions to the poem and song writing process is celebrated. You could also ask the group to reflect on the session and if there is another meeting, to think about a theme for next time. How about a different colour?

**Credit:**

Maggie De Ruyck,  
Leeds Playhouse



# Juggling games

## Performance

45–50 minutes

### You will need:

1 small juggling ball per person

## Dementia-friendly



Fun  
Light  
Active

The game is suitable for all, and can be adapted to the needs of the participants. You will need at least two members of staff to lead the session. We have found a ratio of 1:8 workshop leaders to participants works well, but some people with more complex needs or restrictions may need extra support in the sessions. We highly recommend inviting family members and other staff to join in to support.

### To begin:

Let each person hold onto a juggling ball, feeling its weight, squeezing the ball and rolling it between their hands.

Then throw and catch the juggling ball with two hands, starting low and then higher.

Try and see if you can clap your hands before you catch the ball.

You could also throw the ball from your left hand to your right and back again varying the height and speed of the throw and try balancing the juggling ball on different parts of your body: your head, elbow, back of your hand, on your foot, the top of your head.

### You could also:

Try holding onto the ball by squeezing it in various places e.g. in your armpit, behind your knees, in your elbow, under your chin.

Try squeezing the ball under your chin and then letting it roll down your chest into your hands.

Or start with everyone sitting in a circle. The workshop leader has two balls of two different colours. One ball is passed to the left and the other to the right, The ball can be tossed, rolled or handed to the next person. You can encourage the passing to become as elaborate as possible – try balancing the ball on the arm or knee, or passing the ball under your leg or around the back. Turn it into a race to see which of the coloured balls completes the circle first.

### Credit:

Upswing

# Nature and nurture

## Miscellaneous

**30–60 minutes**

**You will need:**

**Smoothie-making ingredients**, such as: fresh fruits, yoghurt, honey, soya milk (depending on allergies and dietary requirements)

**Morning/afternoon tea ingredients**, such as: herbal tea and biscuits

**Craft items**

**Pre-made lavender bags and dried lavender**

**Natural objects** for the table centrepiece and/or for use on the 'roaming aroma trolley', such as: pot plants, flowers in a vase, tangerines, small pumpkins, squashes or gourds, essential oils

## Dementia-friendly



Lively  
Sensory  
Social

This was devised in response from requests from care staff in a home specialising in dementia care. Staff wanted a regular social activity that would have health and well-being elements and could engage the more withdrawn residents within the home. It is based around a table set up with inviting multisensory natural objects including flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables. By inviting people to come and join the group for a fresh fruit smoothie or herbal tea and biscuits, participants are drawn to the activity without asking the questions *Why am I here?* or *What are we doing?*

**To prepare:**

Lay the table attractively for tea using a nice table cloth, china cups and saucers, silver platters or cake stands. We also love using doilies to add an extra elegant touch! At this point you can encourage participants to help as they will enjoy watching or helping with setting up the table and this will evoke familiar social- or family-related memories and associations.

**Then:**

Make the smoothies and share. Pour herbal tea and taste the biscuits. Enjoy socialising together and sharing the ritual of morning tea. Discuss the smells, the tastes, etc.

Pass round the herbs, rub the leaves and smell them. *Do people like the smells? Do certain plants, e.g. lavender remind them of anything or bring back memories?* Hold the squashes and feel their texture and how heavy they are. Peel the tangerines (good physio for the fingers!), smell the scent that is released as you peel the fruit, and enjoy the taste. Admire the colours and shapes on the table. Talk about gardens, woods, parks and forests – bring the outside in!

**Next:**

Introduce a simple craft activity like making lavender bags. You can buy pre-made bags online. Use dried lavender or lemon balm and encourage the participants to fill the bags and tie them up firmly. The finished bags look and smell lovely and can be taken away by participants, attached to their hand bags or walking frames, spreading the lovely aromas around the home.





Finish this group activity with a sing-along, singing seasonal and nature-related songs, for example: *The holly and the ivy*; *Daisy, daisy*; *Are you going to Scarborough Fair?*, etc. It doesn't matter if you don't know all the words; your participants probably will. You could get a member of staff or relative who plays a musical instrument to come and help with this element. Another way to involve sound in this activity is to play recordings of bird songs to the group and listen and discuss.

**To finish:**

Don't forget that care home residents often enjoy helping out and can collect up plates or help wipe the table. Involvement in familiar everyday tasks provides reassurance, stimulation, motivation and a sense of achievement.

You could also try creating a 'roaming aroma trolley' for after the main session is finished. This is an optional extra part of the activity or is an alternative way of running the session on a more 1:1 basis rather than with a group. Take a two-tiered hostess trolley, and pile it up with attractive multi-sensory natural objects, such as potted plants, fruits and bunches of dried herbs. Then wander around the setting, stopping to show people the objects and letting them hold them and engage with them and you in verbal and non-verbal ways.



**Credit:**

Alison Teader

# Day's end: sharing bedtime poems and songs

## Stories and poetry

**Around 30 minutes**

### You will need:

**Poems, songs or stories**  
(see suggestions below)

**Objects relating to bedtime**,  
such as: soft toys, a hairbrush,  
hand cream, lavender spray,  
cocoa

**Nightwear for yourself to wear**,  
such as: a dressing-gown  
and slippers

## Dementia-friendly



Energetic  
Challenging  
Fun

### Song suggestions:

**Lullabies**, such as: *Bye baby bunting*, *Diddle, diddle dumplin* or *Rock-a-bye baby*

### Poems suggestions:

*Bed in summer*,  
by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Young night thoughts and  
The land of nod*, from *A child's  
garden of verses*

**Night-related songs**, such  
as: *Shine on harvest moon*,  
*Stardust* or *Dream a little  
dream of me*

### Credit:

Ken Cockburn,  
Scottish Poetry Library

Originally developed by Ken Cockburn a poet, translator, editor and writing tutor based in Edinburgh. Ken has worked as a poet across the UK in many different settings, including as a Living Voices facilitator at care homes in Perth & Kinross. This night-time activity could work with smaller and larger groups depending on setting and staffing. It is ideal for use in residential settings.

### To prepare:

Decide if you would like to set up a display of your selected objects, which could include any books you're going to read from, or alternatively if you would like to reveal the objects one by one as the session develops.

Make sure the room isn't too bright: draw some or all of the curtains, switch on some lamps, and avoid harsh overhead lighting. If possible, have participants wear their bedclothes for the session.

Play songs from the playlist as participants gather.

### To begin:

Explain to the group that you are going to read some poems, songs and handle objects relating to bedtime. Encourage participants to join in with pieces familiar to them, and to contribute their own poems, songs, stories and memories. If their contributions mean you don't get through all the material you have prepared, that's fine!

### You might like to ask:

*What was your evening/bedtime routine as a child?*

*If you have children, what was their evening/bedtime routine?*

Think about things like the evening meal, homework, playing (outside or inside), watching TV, washing, pyjamas and nightdresses, saying your prayers.

*Do you have any favourite bedtimes songs or poems?*

### You could also:

Tell a bedtime story, either one of your own favourites, or perhaps one you told to your own children.

### To finish:

Read a piece that will ensure a suitably relaxing end to the session.



Little Beggar Dog

ARTHUR RUSSELL  
PIANO SOLO  
CHARLES WILLIAMS  
THE DREAM  
OF OLWEN

THE TALE OF THE SQUIRREL NUTKIN

BY FRIX POTTER



# Mindfulness through art

## Visual art

50 minutes

### You will need:

Picture of a painting or photograph, and photocopies for participants

Examples of objects, fabrics, smells, sounds or props that can be found in your chosen painting/photograph

Craft materials (depending on which activity you choose to do)

## Dementia-friendly



Relaxing  
Mindful  
Focused

This dementia-friendly activity can be adapted to suit the interests and ability of the group that is taking part. It works well in residential settings as well as with community groups, and is flexible to engage groups of varying sizes.

### To begin:

Gather the group together and ask them to sit down – they can sit in a circle or facing the session leader. Explain to the group that you are going to start by asking everyone to focus on their breathing. Ask the group to do the following for 3–5 minutes:

- breathe in and out slowly
- breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth
- try and let go of any thoughts and focus just on the breathing in and out
- feel your breath as it enters and leaves your body.

### Then:

Hand out your chosen picture of an artwork or photograph to the group. Explain to the group that you are going to be mindfully focusing on the picture and you are going to ask questions to help them focus.

Start by asking the participants to spend a couple of minutes looking at the picture, and to think about what they think is going on in it. This exercise can take between 5–10 minutes. Give the participants time in between each question to focus and relax into watching the picture. Remind the group throughout to focus on their breathing as this will help them to concentrate and feel mindful.

### Next:

Ask participants to look at the picture, and choose an area of the picture they would like to focus on – this can be anything: an object, a person, the sky, the ground, etc. They should concentrate on their chosen item, relax into watching it for as long as their concentration allows. Stress that they shouldn't worry if they lose concentration, but just focus back on the one item in the picture.

Ask them to explore every aspect of their item's shape, design, size, colour, etc. *What do they notice?* Remind them to think about breathing in and out slowly; this will help them to focus. After a couple of minutes invite the group to start to look outwards and bring in the rest of the picture, until their focus is on looking at the full painting again.





Ask the participants to share how they are feeling after the exercise and to share what they could see in the picture. *What did they choose to focus on and why? Did they notice anything unusual?*

**Then:**

Explain to the group that they are going to explore the picture using the five main senses: sight, touch, sound, smell and taste. For each sense, start by looking at the painting and then follow the different activities as listed below.

**Sight**

Look at the picture. *What different colours have been used?*

*Can you each choose one colour in the picture? Focus on that colour for a minute.*

*Think about all the different spaces in the picture you can see that colour. Is it used in any surprising places?*

Ask the participants to share what colours they chose and what they discovered.

**Touch**

Find some examples of materials, or objects shown in the picture. (This can be anything that is found around the home/accommodation.)

Pass around the example objects and ask the group the following questions to help them explore the picture through touch.

*How does the object feel in your hands? Is it heavy or light? Rough or smooth? Hot or cold?*

*Have you used this object/material before? How is this material/object used in the picture?*

**Sound, smell & taste**

Ask the group to focus on the picture and to place themselves inside the picture. Then ask the following questions to help them explore the painting.

*What sounds/smells/tastes might you find if you were inside the painting?*

*Are there many sounds/smells/tastes? Or just one?*

*If you moved to a different part of the painting would you discover different sounds/smells/tastes?*

*Choose one sound, smell or taste: how does it makes you feel?*

If you have any examples of sounds/smells/tastes associated with the picture, pass them around the group, and ask the participants if they think the sounds/smells/tastes fits the painting.

**You could also:**

Use your chosen picture to inspire a simple craft activity. Activities that work well include making scented herb bags, salt dough decorations or collages inspired by the original image. Round off this activity by sharing the work that has been created and by talking about which section of the painting/photo inspired it.

**Credit:**

Dulwich Picture Gallery

# Create a miniature seaside

## Miscellaneous

**45-60 minutes**

### You will need:

Plastic trays, like litter trays  
(one each or per small group)

Shells

Pieces of driftwood

Pebbles

Cocktail umbrellas

Pieces of old rope

Sand

### For the sea:

Blue fabric or plastic

### For the boats:

Corks, cocktail sticks,  
white sticky labels

### For the messages:

Miniature glass bottles  
and strips of paper

Relaxed  
Intergenerational  
Conversational



### Credit:

Lizzy McBain

This workshop was part of an Intergenerational Arts Club – a project for older people and pre-schoolers. It is accessible to all and there are plenty of tactile materials and activities. It is a relaxed way of supporting people to create together across generations.

### To prepare:

Lay out all the materials on tables with space for sitting around. Place a tray for everyone to work on either individually or in pairs.

### To begin:

Start by saying to everyone that they are going to make their own seaside. Then give them sand and blue fabric or plastic to create the sea and a beach on their tray – you may do this as individuals or in small groups. Pass materials around for participants to add their own features.

When they are finished, use these scenes as a starting point for discussion. As people share ideas and create stories, jot them down in a notebook or on a piece of paper.

### You might like to ask:

*Is there anywhere you have visited by the seaside that you would like to create?*

*Do you have any seaside memories?*

*What sort of beach do you prefer? Pebbled, sandy, rocky, etc.*

*What makes a perfect seafront? E.g. fairground rides, fish & chips, ice cream, donkey rides, Punch and Judy.*

*Is there anywhere by the sea that you'd like to visit?*

### You could also:

Write down any stories and memories that emerge during conversations in your notebook.

Share old pictures and postcards of the seaside as inspiration or discussion prompts.

### To finish:

Ask everyone to write or suggest a message to put in a glass bottle to bury in their sand for someone else to find.

Then ask everyone to share their beach and talk about it to the group.

Finally read out any memories and stories that you have collected in your notebook during the session and ask the group to come up with a name for the piece of writing that has been created.



## Visual art

**30 minutes to 2 hours**

(depending on the group)

### You will need:

Flipchart

Permanent markers

Kaleidoscopes

Coloured balloons

Sticky tape

Scissors

Card and paper, in different patterns, textures and colours

PVA glue

An image of the artwork  
*Portrait of Lady Burlington*  
by Michael Craig-Martin

### Optional:

iPads with the Armchair Gallery app installed

## Dementia-friendly



Calm  
Exploratory  
Engaged

### Web links for downloads:

**Armchair Gallery app:**

[www.armchairgallery.co.uk](http://www.armchairgallery.co.uk)

### Artwork:

[www.chatsworth.org/art-archives/devonshire-collection/paintings/digital-portrait-of-lady-burlington](http://www.chatsworth.org/art-archives/devonshire-collection/paintings/digital-portrait-of-lady-burlington)

### Credit:

Claire Ford,  
City Arts

# Armchair arts: Lady Burlington

This activity is based on an activity in the Armchair Gallery, an app developed by City Arts for older people who can no longer visit world-class cultural collections in person. If you have iPads for your group you can use the app as part of the session, but it works without too!

### To prepare:

Print out copies of the artwork *Portrait of Lady Burlington* by Michael Craig-Martin, or have it on an iPad.

### To begin:

Explore the image together, asking open-ended questions, such as:

What can you see here?

What is she thinking? What is she looking at?

What sort of a job do you think she does?

Why do you think the artist used these colours?

It can be nice to write down what people say to create a simple piece of writing.

### Then:

Use kaleidoscopes to look through and change the overall appearance of the art work. Ask questions such as: *How does it look now? What shapes/colours can you see? Does this change the overall look of the artwork?*

Inspired by this, introduce some brightly coloured balloons to the group and use them to incorporate movement into your activity. Try to keep all the balloons in the air and then invite people to catch a balloon. Look at the balloons that people are now holding and ask the group what the specific balloon colour means to them i.e. red is the colour of love.

### Next:

Invite the group to create colourful collages out of various tactile papers (corrugated, mirror card, etc.) to create faces. You could use different emotions as a starting point, e.g. sad, happy or shocked.

### To finish:

Make sure you spend time appreciating what everyone has created and brought to the session. Then conclude with a round of applause! If you have iPads with the Armchair Gallery app installed, you could now spend some time exploring it together.

# Creative befriending

## Stories and poetry

90 minutes

### You will need:

Paper

Pens

A clipboard

Classic and contemporary poems (see suggestions below)

A range of sensually stimulating materials, such as fabrics and art postcards

### One-to-one



Gentle  
Contemplative  
Quiet

### Suggested poem anthologies:

The nation's favourite poems, from BBC Books

Staying alive, from Bloodaxe

Best British poetry, from Salt

A little, aloud, from The Reader Organisation

Or try short stories and/or life writing or memoirs

By combining creativity and befriending, this activity gives participants the freedom to explore their imaginations in the comfort of their home. This one-to-one activity is offered to older adults living alone, led by a professional artist. The artist facilitates a high quality, collaborative environment in which new pieces of writing are created together.

### To prepare:

Ideally contact the person that you will be working with before your visit. Introduce yourself and ask questions about their hobbies, memories and expectations. Consider the conversation, decide on a theme and prepare a range of materials that may be of interest. For example, for an avid knitter, seek out a set of poems relating to this pastime or about hands. Short poems work best!

### To begin:

Introduce the session, including the theme you've chosen. Make sure you share your own passion for poetry!

Begin by reading a poem to the participant and then ask them to read the poem to you.

Next talk about the poem asking open questions about it, discussing the details you enjoyed and offering reflections. As you talk, remember to be encouraging and affirm all comments from the participant. Use ideas shared to prompt further conversation, referring back to the poem from time to time. Repeat with a couple of other poems.

### You might like to ask:

*How would you describe how this poem makes you feel?*

*What key words or phrases are you most struck by and why?*

*What can you say about the shape of the poem on the page?*

*Who is the speaker in the poem?*

*What does the poem suggest about the nature of [the theme]?*

### Then:

Take a fresh piece of paper and explain to the participant that you would love to write a poem with them, based on their conversation and the theme. Let the participant know the poem doesn't have to rhyme and that you often enjoy 'free verse' poems that use language that echoes the way people speak.



TO ME IT WAS IT WAS CHALLENGE  
THOUGHTS ~~OF~~ ~~THE~~ ~~PIECES~~  
FROM

BARBARA

I HAD A LIMITED COSSIE  
IT FELT LIKE ONE PIECE

THEY'RE ADDICTED

WHEN

I LOOKED VERY PRETTY, COLLECTING LITTLE  
SHOWS, FOR LINES THAT FITTED INSIDE EACH OTHER.  
SOME I USED FOR DOLLS

JUST A BIT MORE

EVERYTHING WAS FINE WITH

SORT OF A THE EDGES  
GETTING THIN

BUT WHEN I GOT INTO THE  
TO MY WAIST.

IT

~~PIECES~~  
~~BITTS~~  
A GOOD PLACE TO  
START IS  
PICKING OUT THE  
MAIN PIECES  
TO MY KNEES!



Agree a structure for the poem. Good examples include: a list poem which collects content in a list form; a poem with a repeated line starter such as 'I am...' or 'Blue is...' to build up a picture of the theme the poem describes; a poem structured as a dialogue between two people with distinct voices; or an ode, addressed to the subject and written in honour of a person, place, object or feelings.

Choose a first line, perhaps based on the framework, your conversation, or a line from one of the poems.

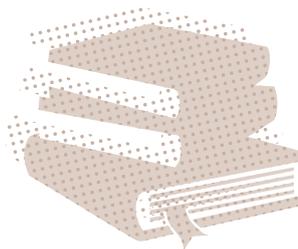
Ask a series of open questions. Repeat phrases you both like and agree you will write these on the paper to build the poem. At regular intervals, read aloud the poem-in-progress, and ask if there are aspects the participant wants to change.

In the final stages, read the whole poem several times together, amending and refining.

**To finish:**

Agree when the poem is complete and then each read the finished piece to each other. Then ask the participant to choose a title. Finally photograph the written poem or story beneath the hands of the participant and the artist.

If you wish, this activity could be followed up with a posted package including a thank you card, a typed copy of the written poem and photographs, and further pieces of published writing to consider.



**Credit:**

Gemma Seltzer

# Launchpads

Great starting points to generate ideas  
or to form the basis of a wider project.

# The change train game

## Performance

**20 minutes**

### You will need:

Loud whistle or drum  
Tape to mark out a square on the floor  
Chairs for those who need them

Physical  
Collaborative  
Inspiring

This game is used with our third age theatre company members. It would be run after a warm-up that included some still image work. It offers everyone the opportunity to identify individual issues they want to be changed; a group consensus is not required. It enables the facilitator to follow up with a discussion about the issues raised, and to bring in appropriate articles, facts or data about the issues identified the following week. It is one of the tools we use to help us identify subjects for productions.

### To begin:

Ask everyone to line up – one behind the other.

### Then:

Each person takes a turn to step forward into a Soap Box Square (a square marked out with tape on the floor) and say what they want to be changed in the world, before moving out of the box to take up a stationary position of protest.

When everyone has taken a turn and the space is full of people holding poses of protest, the facilitator either blows a whistle or bangs a drum. This is the signal for everyone to shout/chant for the things they want to be changed. After a short period, the facilitator blows the whistle or bangs the drum and everyone freezes once again.

During the freeze the facilitator can put their hand on individuals' shoulders and ask them to speak further about the things they want changing.

The facilitator can then blow the whistle or beat the drum and everyone will shout about the things they want changing again.

This process can be repeated as many times as the facilitator wishes.

### Next steps:

If you are working on a longer term project with a group, this is an excellent way of finding out what interests the group and where the focus of the project might lie going forward. It works particularly well when a group are devising a piece of performance, but can be equally effective to brainstorm ideas at the beginning of a creative project focused on any art form.

### Credit:

Mandy Redvers-Rowe,  
Collective Encounters



# Group lyric writing

Music

45–60 minutes

**You will need:**

Large sheets of paper and pens  
Chairs for participants

Dementia-friendly



Friendly  
Relaxed  
Focused

A game of ‘consequences’ to gather lyrics for a song. Initiated by discussion focusing on a local area.

**To begin:**

Split into small groups of around five or six people and then assign one or two volunteer ‘scribes’ to each group. Place a piece of paper on the floor in the middle of each group so that participants are seated on chairs in a semi-circle around it.

**Then:**

Now it is time to get the creative juices flowing! In each group, decide on a topic or theme for the lyrics. It is nice to base this on the local area, tying in culture and history and personal experience. Write down anything that is discussed during the discussions about the area, etc. Noting down key words and phrases should be enough – the aim is to stimulate discussion. It may help to have some questions prepared as a springboard for conversation.

**You might like to ask:**

Are there any local legends connected to the area?

Any local landmarks, parks, rivers, etc?

Any special buildings, factories, shops? (Do any participants have a personal connection to any of these?)

Any local characters of interest (historical or living)?

Is the area well known for any special industry?

Are there any annual/monthly/weekly local events (market, fair, festival...)?

**Next:**

Take a fresh piece of paper ready to start the activity of ‘consequences’. Use the former discussion for ideas and follow these steps.

1. At the top of the paper write a name of a character connected with the area. Fold over the top of the paper so the name is not showing and pass the paper to the next group.
2. Write the name of another character and then fold down as above and pass to the next group.
3. Write down the name of a local landmark, building etc. Fold the paper and pass it on.
4. Write down what the first character said to the other character. Fold down the paper and pass on.
5. Write what the second character said to the first, fold and pass it on.
6. Write down what happened next (i.e. what was the consequence of their meeting?)





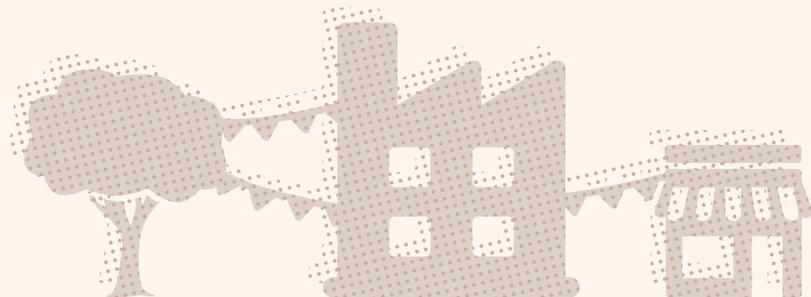
Now open the whole piece of paper and you will have the body of lyrics for a 'verse'. You can embellish these by adding in small words to the main text, for example: **character A** met **character B**.

**To finish:**

Read the lines out to the group. You will hopefully have some amusing combinations. If you had two groups, you will have two verses for one song, or the lyrics for two mini songs ready to add music. The simplest way to do this is to try singing them to the tune of a well-known song – or you may want to do this in a more detailed way as part of a subsequent workshop. Lastly, come up with a title(s) for the song(s) you have created.

**Next steps:**

Now you have lyrics, you can write your own music in a subsequent workshop to complete your song. You could use the process to create several different songs to build your own musical or song cycle. Or you could even create songs to make your own opera.



Be not afeared.

The isle is full of noises.

Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and  
hurt not.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears;

And sometimes voices, That if I then had  
waked after long sleep, Will make me sleep  
again;

And then in dreaming, the clouds, methought,  
would open and show riches, ready to drop  
upon me, that when I waked  
I cried to dream again

# Mapping the island

## Miscellaneous

30–45 minutes

### You will need:

The outline of an island, drawn on a large sheet paper

A range of tactile materials, such as: fabric, yarn, pebbles, grasses, sequins, shells, rope scraps, nets – the more, the better!

Passages from *The Tempest* which talk about the island, printed out

A list of features that we know about the island, written on separate pieces of card

## Dementia-friendly



Poetic  
Conversational  
Exploratory

This activity was created as part of a longer project working with a group of people living with dementia to create a piece of performance inspired by *The Tempest*. It is a great way of exploring the language of the play and thinking about what it is describing.

### To prepare:

Prepare your passages from *The Tempest*. Suitable ones could be:

- Ariel: “Come unto these yellow sands” (Act 1, Scene 2)
- Ariel: “I charmed their ears...” (Act 4, Scene 1)
- Caliban: “And then I loved thee...” (Act 1, Scene 2).

Prepare your list of island features and locations. These should be things that come directly from the text, e.g. water springs, berry bushes, brine pits, a filthy pool, etc.

Lay out your map on a table surrounded by the different materials you have gathered, and the cards with different features/locations written on them.

### To begin:

When your group are sitting down and settled, explain that you are going to think about the different environments that exist on the island featured in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Look together at the different cards with locations written on them and invite people to respond to them. *Which of the locations stand out to them? What kind of place do they think it would be? Does anybody live there? Is it a hospitable place or somewhere that you would like to get away from?*

### Next:

Once you have spoken about a couple of different places as a group, explain that you are going to try and create some of them on your map. Depending on your group, you may want to start by taking the lead to demonstrate how you might build a location on the map. Firstly decide upon its location, and then add different materials to create the physical aspects of that place. For example your yellow sands could be created by laying down strips of yellow yarn by the coast. The sea could be made from crunched-up blue paper.

Invite each member of the group to pick a location that they would like to work on then to locate it and to create it on the map. When all of the locations have been created, look at the island you have made and talk about it.



**You might like to ask:**

What are the different locations you can see?

Which of them are home to people or animals?

Which of them are uninhabited?

Are there any you would like to visit?

Which areas of the island look most populated?

Does the island look easy to navigate or is it a place where you would easily get lost?

What would it feel like to be standing in that place on your own?

**Then:**

Read out the direct descriptions of the island that Shakespeare wrote in *The Tempest*. Do they sound similar to the island that you have created? Or are they different? What makes them feel similar/or different? Do they tell you anything new about the island that you don't know already? Which of the extracts do you like the most? What do you like about it?

**You could also:**

Try writing your own poetry inspired by a location on the map, either as a group or individually. A good starting point is to think about the chosen location and to respond to it in terms of all of your senses, e.g. how does it look, sound, smell, taste, feel?

**To finish:**

Share any creative writing that has been written during the session. Going around the group, reflect on the places they would most and least like to visit on the island you have created.

**Next steps:**

This activity is an excellent starting point to begin exploring the world of *The Tempest*, or the world of any other play for that matter. It can be used within a larger project to generate material and the things that you discover here can be very useful to help structure your work going forward. The activity also helps you to get a feel for which areas of the play may be particularly rich and resonant starting points for the people that you are working with. This could form the basis of the creation of a piece of work such as a performance, or even a visual art piece such as a large collaborative collage.

**Credit:**

Liz Postlethwaite

# Important events

## Stories and poetry

**1 hour**

**You will need:**

A flip chart or large sheet of paper that everybody can see (lining paper can work well)

Marker pens in a range of colours

## One-to-one



Reflective  
Collaborative  
Exploratory

This activity allows groups to begin exploring ways of taking a structured approach to using and sharing personal stories. The game should be used when you are sure that a group you are working with are ready to start sharing their own personal material.

**To begin:**

Ask each participant to think about three significant public events that have marked or shaped their lives. You can vary the game by asking participants to think of a specific issue or moment: for example, the first time they went abroad or a particular invention that impacted their life. Or you can leave it open and let them choose whatever they want.

**Then:**

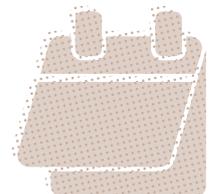
Ask them to write these down including the year in which they occurred. Draw a timeline on a flip chart and write up the event and the name of the person for whom it was significant. Go round the group and ask each person to say why these events are significant, what the impact was, and how it affected them.

The game will reveal more information about each group member. It will also start to create a common understanding across the group and allow you to compare shared experiences from different perspectives in the group.

It works particularly well with people from different cultural backgrounds or elderly people with a range of experiences and forms a great starting point to gather stories to be recorded and shared digitally.

**Next steps:**

This activity is a really good way of starting a project involving the gathering of personal stories as part of the creative process. For example, the stories that you gather could be used to inspire a piece of performance based on personal experiences, or to develop pieces of creative writing. They could also be used as a starting point to explore digital methods of presentation such as film, digital animation, or podcasting.



**Credit:**

DigiTales  
Silver Stories

# We're in the lounge

## Performance

### 30–90 minutes

(or a longer project over many weeks)

#### You will need:

A group of people who have lived full lives and are willing to share objects and the stories behind those objects

Everyday objects to create a lounge.

Revelatory  
Encouraging  
Exploratory

In 2015, the Royal Exchange Elders Company created an installation and exhibition that used the private living spaces of those taking part as a starting point. By presenting objects, memories and stories, *We're in the Lounge* explored what home means and how our own archives reveal the stories behind all of us.

#### To begin:

You could start by discussing what the word 'lounge' means to people. You could ask people to describe their lounges, or you could invite people to bring an object from their own lounge that has a story behind it.

However, there are many ways into this activity. At its heart, it is about unlocking people's stories and using the Lounge as a way in.

#### Then:

It might be helpful to imagine you are creating a film set of a lounge. What objects should you include? Can you find imaginative ways to present individual stories? In the Royal Exchange project, one member, Maureen, described a wall in her living room that she pats and talks to about her day, so we hung some wall paper and created several hand prints on the wall, with notes in speech bubbles about things that happen in Maureen's daily routine. Elsewhere, we used the words the group associated with the word 'lounge' to decorate mugs that were placed around the space. For special objects that people had brought in, we presented them in a locked cabinet with written explanations by the group about their significance.

#### You might like to ask:

*What music do you associate with your lounge?* Use this to create a playlist.

*What were your childhood lounges like?* Record snippets of the conversation and play it back as part of your installation.

*What books/films/TV programmes have had an impact on your life?*

You could present copies of the books/films in your installation on shelves or piled up on a coffee table.

#### You could also:

If you're feeling adventurous, use shoeboxes to create models of lounges.

#### Next steps:

All of these activities can be used to start drawing ideas together to create an installation in your space. This process, and thus these activities, may take place over several weeks or over a single session. It is nice for the process to culminate in a sharing day where visitors are invited to explore the lounge you have made together and where the makers could share the stories of their objects and other aspects of the work they have created.

#### Credit:

Royal Exchange Theatre



# Selected resources

## **Akademi**

[akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/dance-well/digital-resources](http://akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/dance-well/digital-resources)

A library of educational videos and resources designed to serve as a toolbox for dance artists and activities coordinators when planning activities with older adults.

## **Arts in Care Homes, Social Care Institute for Excellence**

[www.scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes](http://www.scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes)

This online resource of arts activities for care homes was developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence with the National Activity Providers Association (NAPA).

This resource offers care teams, including activity providers, many practical ideas on how to get started and covers a huge range of art forms from theatre and dance to puppetry and gardening.

## **Do Think Share**

[www.dothinkshare.com](http://www.dothinkshare.com)

A huge range of simple creative activities for individuals and groups. Whether you're looking for things to do at home, in your workplace, school, care home or local café, there's something here to inspire you.

## **Toolkit for musicians, A choir in every care home**

[achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-singers](http://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-singers)

Singing and making music with residents in care homes can be challenging but it is always rewarding. This toolkit will help you start whether you're a professional musician, care home staff member or an amateur singer.

## **The Homemade Circus Handbook, Upswing**

[baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/homemade-circus-handbook](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/homemade-circus-handbook)

Homemade Circus uses circus to improve the health and wellbeing of older participants. This booklet enables readers to try out some simple circus games themselves.

## **Creativity in Care Activity Toolkits, City Arts**

[city-arts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Creativity-in-Care-Activity-Toolkits.pdf](http://city-arts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Creativity-in-Care-Activity-Toolkits.pdf)

A download including six activity sheets with practical advice and instructions for running creative activities with older people.

## **Dont Be Afraid To Dance, City Arts**

[city-arts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Dont-be-afraid-to-dance.pdf](http://city-arts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Dont-be-afraid-to-dance.pdf)

This pack is the starting point for developing basic movement and dance activities with older people.

## **Dementia and Imagination Handbook, Arts for Health at Manchester Metropolitan University**

[www.artsforhealth.org/resources/dementia-and-imagination.pdf](http://www.artsforhealth.org/resources/dementia-and-imagination.pdf)

A handbook focused upon artists working on visual arts projects with people living with dementia.

## **Courtyard Hereford**

[creativeageing.co.uk/resources](http://creativeageing.co.uk/resources)

A series of resources to support artists, care staff, carers, and other arts organisations in developing arts-based projects for older people. These are a mix of online tools and documents to use anywhere.

## **Age of Creativity**

[www.ageofcreativity.co.uk](http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk)

A network of more than 1,000 professionals who all believe that creativity and culture supports older people to experience better health, wellbeing and quality of life.

# Themed menus

## Dementia friendly

1 to 10 game 25  
8 beat 16  
Armchair arts: Lady Burlington 93  
Arts from the armchair 48  
Clapping games 22  
Colour emotions 39  
Comedy with care 74  
Concertina houses 33  
Creative iPad improvisation 64  
Day's end 86  
Everything stops for tea 61  
Fantasy Film flowers 37  
Flight attendant 19  
Group lyric writing 100  
Group percussion improvisation 40  
Hand massage 68  
Join the dance 75  
Juggling games 83  
Large scale animals 62  
Leaves of time 59  
Mapping the island 103  
Mindfulness through art 89  
Nature and nurture 84  
Nature collages 67  
Poetic snapshot in five lines 31  
Pressing nature into clay 45  
Rhythm and pulse 50  
Riverside stories 77  
Snap characters 78  
Surprise 23  
Teaching and arranging a song 30  
The big draw 54  
The creative space 80  
Walking in space 53

## One-to-one & small groups

Arts from the armchair 48  
Concertina houses 33  
Creative befriending 94  
Creative iPad improvisation 64  
Important events 105  
Digital life stories 57  
Digital travellers 46  
Colour emotions 39  
Fantasy Film flowers 37  
Flight attendant 19  
Hand massage 68  
Leaves of time 59  
Life maps 69  
Nature collages 67  
Personalised memory map 35  
Pressing nature into clay 45  
Poetic snapshot in five lines 31

## Larger groups

1 to 10 game 25  
Clapping games 22  
Comedy with care 74  
Creating a miniature seaside 91  
Fantasy Film flowers 37  
Large scale animals 62  
Make a pop-up Posh Club 73  
My story 18  
Rhythm and pulse 50  
Surprise 23  
Teaching and arranging a song 30  
Teaching the unteachable 28  
The big draw 54  
The change train game 98  
The gossip game 42  
This is not a pen 20  
The name dance 26  
We're in the lounge 106

## Make something

Colour emotions 39  
Concertina houses 33  
Creative befriending 94  
Creative iPad improvisation 64  
Digital life stories 57  
Fantasy Film flowers 37  
Group lyric writing 100  
Group percussion improvisation 40  
Large scale animals 62  
Leaves of time 59  
Life maps 69  
Nature collages 67  
One photo, one object 36  
Personalised memory map 35  
Pressing nature into clay 45  
Riverside stories 77  
Teaching and arranging a song 30  
The big draw 54

# Alphabetical index of activities

## 0-10

- 1 to 10 game **25**
- 8 beat **16**

## A · B · C

- Armchair arts: Lady Burlington **93**
- Arts from the armchair **48**
- Clapping games **22**
- Colour emotions **39**
- Comedy with care **74**
- Concertina houses **33**
- Creative befriending **94**
- Creating a miniature seaside **91**
- Creative iPad improvisation **64**

## D · E · F

- Day's end **86**
- Digital life stories **57**
- Digital travellers **46**
- Everything stops for tea **61**
- Fantasy Film flowers **37**
- Flight attendant **19**

## G · H · I

- Group lyric writing **100**
- Group percussion improvisation **40**
- Hand massage **68**
- Important events **105**

## J · K · L

- Join the dance **75**
- Juggling games **83**
- Large scale animals **62**
- Leaves of time **59**
- Life maps **69**

## M · N · O

- Make a pop-up Posh Club **73**
- Mapping the island **103**
- Mindfulness through art **89**
- My story **18**
- Nature and nurture **84**
- Nature collages **67**
- One photo, one object **36**

## P · Q · R

- Personalised memory map **35**
- Poetic snapshot in five lines **31**
- Pressing nature into clay **45**
- Rhythm and pulse **50**
- Riverside stories **77**

## S · T · U

- Snap characters **78**
- Surprise **23**
- Teaching the unteachable **28**
- Teaching and arranging a song **30**
- The big draw **54**
- The change train game **98**
- The creative space **80**
- The gossip game **42**
- This is not a pen **20**
- The name dance **26**

## V · W · X · Z · Y

- Walking in space **53**
- We're in the lounge **106**

# Contributors

## 64 Million Artists

[www.64millionartists.com](http://www.64millionartists.com)

[www.dothinkshare.com](http://www.dothinkshare.com)

64 Million Artists believe everyone is creative and when we are creative we can make positive change in our lives and the world around us. They work in all sorts of settings: for example workplaces, care homes, prisons and schools to help activate people's creativity, boost their wellbeing, and empower them to make positive changes.

## acta

[www.acta-bristol.com](http://www.acta-bristol.com)

acta is a small theatre with a big heart based in South Bristol, working with isolated and vulnerable people to build confidence and connections within the community.

## Akademi

[www.akademi.co.uk](http://www.akademi.co.uk)

Akademi is the UK's leading producer of South Asian dance, capturing imaginations through inspiring storytelling and unique spectacle. Creating vital talent pathways for the next generation of dance artists, Akademi also takes dance to the heart of the community, offering life-affirming experiences for those who are disadvantaged, disengaged or isolated.

## Andy Barry

Andy Barry is a theatre director and artist. He leads the Royal Exchange Elders Company and has over 15 years' experience involving people of all ages in theatre and storytelling.

## Artcore

[www.artcoreuk.com](http://www.artcoreuk.com)

Artcore is a visual arts charity based in Derby fuelling active engagement for communities in the East Midlands.

## Arts 4 Dementia

[www.arts4dementia.org.uk](http://www.arts4dementia.org.uk)

Arts 4 Dementia is a UK charity collaborating with artists and arts venues to provide training and deliver arts programmes that will empower and inspire people with early-stage dementia, and their companions.

## City Arts

[www.city-arts.org.uk](http://www.city-arts.org.uk)

City Arts Nottingham develops arts opportunities that bring people together, stimulate change and create stronger, healthier communities. City Arts believes participation in the arts can enrich and transform people's lives and has been pioneering this approach for over 30 years.

A registered charity, it works creatively and collaboratively with communities and targets resources towards vulnerable groups. Its projects include music, performance, visual and digital arts and are facilitated by artists skilled in working creatively with people.

## Collective Encounters

[www.collective-encounters.org.uk](http://www.collective-encounters.org.uk)

Collective Encounters is a professional arts organisation specialising in using theatre as a tool for social change through collaborative practice. Collective Encounters works with people on the margins of society, tackling pressing social and political concerns. It works across the Merseyside region with those who have been directly affected by poverty and inequality. Our productions seek to raise the profile of important social and political issues whilst engaging those who would not normally access the arts.

## Coney

[www.coneyhq.org](http://www.coneyhq.org)

Coney are interactive theatre-makers. They create games, adventures and play where people can choose to take a meaningful part. Their work takes place anywhere that people gather: in theatres, schools, museums, on the streets and online and always follows the principles of adventure, curiosity and loveliness. It is inspired by the belief that the world can be a magical place where ordinary people can do extraordinary things.

## Creative Ageing at The Courtyard

[www.creativeageing.co.uk](http://www.creativeageing.co.uk)

Established in 2010 Creative Ageing specialises in training and supporting artists and care staff to work creatively in care settings by running projects in settings across Herefordshire.

Based in a busy city centre arts venue, it runs a full programme of dementia friendly events including three weekly creative classes, and monthly dementia friendly shows. Creative Ageing is passionate about encouraging others to be dementia friendly and have contributed to several national best practice guides.

## Creative Minds

[www.creativeminds.art](http://www.creativeminds.art)

Creative Minds is a social enterprise and arts organisation founded in November 2012 by James Cropper and is based in Guildford, Surrey. For over five years their art sessions have had a huge impact on the lives of older adults, people with learning disabilities, adults in the community and children, enabling people of all ages and abilities to explore their creativity.

## DigiTales, Silver Stories

[arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories/about-silver-stories](http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories/about-silver-stories)

Silver Stories was a research project which ran from 2013 to 2015, and which brought digital storytelling to community groups and older people from six European countries. It combined the skills, experience and knowledge needed to develop the vocational use of Digital Storytelling in the caring professions with the active telling of personal stories by older people. The project's legacy can be seen in the range of activity happening across – and beyond – the partner countries.

## Duckie

[www.theposhclub.co.uk](http://www.theposhclub.co.uk)

The Posh Club is a weekly glamorous performance and social club for older people run by Duckie in five locations across London and the South East. Each three-hour event is styled as a tongue-in-cheek 'posh' 1940s afternoon tea with three live show business turns, volunteer waiters in black tie, vintage crockery and an in-house pianist. It is a glamorous event for about 100, which emphasises dressing up, regular access to live performance, social connectivity and intergenerational volunteering.

## Dulwich Picture Gallery

[www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

Dulwich Picture Gallery is a vibrant cultural hub hosting some of the UK's leading exhibitions alongside its permanent collection of Baroque masterpieces. It also stages a wide-ranging programme of public events, learning and volunteer programmes. The Community programme offers a programme of short and long term workshops, and projects working with a wide variety of audiences, including socially isolated older people, older people living with dementia, local young audiences, and access groups.

## Elevate

[www.artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate.htm](http://www.artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate.htm)

Elevate is the participatory arts programme at Salisbury District Hospital. It has been running for six years and has 15 different artists of various genres working on the wards three days a week, 52 weeks of the year. Elevate is funded by The Stars Appeal, the hospital charity and is coordinated by Rebecca Seymour.

## Jennifer Essex

[www.jenniferessex.com](http://www.jenniferessex.com)

Jennifer is a dancer, choreographer, and Senior Lecturer in Dance at Teesside University. She has had the pleasure of working on several projects with older people including a residency at Age Concern Central Lancashire and developing a pilot project of dance classes for people living with dementia with Age UK Darlington.

## Steve Fairclough

Twitter: @sjf40

Steve has been a creative practitioner for 20 years working around the North West in regional theatre and community settings. He has been involved in all aspects of the arts as a performer, writer, director and teacher. His recent work focuses on stories, oral history, heritage arts and dementia-friendly activities.

## Claire Ford

Claire Ford is a socially engaged visual artist whose work is multidisciplinary and process led, often inspired by conversations, observations, objects or life stories. Relationships, multi-sensory exploration and imagination are an essential part of the creative journey. Claire aims to inspire the lives of people living with dementia. She aims to shift and question society's perceptions of living with dementia from a negative to a positive paradigm.

## Emily Hall

[www.emily-hall.co.uk](http://www.emily-hall.co.uk)

Emily is a ceramacist and basket weaver from London. As well as pursuing her own work she also teaches in a number of care homes where she adapts and shares her skills, creating classes that nurture a passion for creativity alongside the physical benefits of working with your hands.

## Lizzy McBain

[www.underconstructiontheatre.com](http://www.underconstructiontheatre.com)

Lizzy is a community artist and theatre director (she runs her own company UnderConstruction Theatre). She has run multi-arts sessions for The Hereford Courtyard at nursing homes across Oxfordshire, and a six-month intergenerational pilot project for older people and pre-schoolers in a village hall in South Oxfordshire.

## Leeds Playhouse

[www.leedsplayhouse.org.uk](http://www.leedsplayhouse.org.uk)

Leeds Playhouse has offered creative projects and opportunities, for, by and with older people since opening its doors in 1990. Now they have developed a dedicated Older People's Programme as part of their award-winning Creative Engagement department.

They are also a pioneering dementia-friendly theatre and have a wide ranging offer of creative opportunities and theatre performances for people living with dementia and their supporters (older people and people with young-onset dementia).

## Live Music Now

[www.livemusicnow.org.uk](http://www.livemusicnow.org.uk)

Live Music Now is a UK-wide initiative, created by Yehudi Menuhin and Ian Stoutzker in 1977. Every year, their musicians deliver thousands of interactive music programmes in care homes and hospitals, and a range of community and healthcare settings.

## Moving Memory Dance

[www.movingmemorydance.com](http://www.movingmemorydance.com)

Moving Memory Dance Theatre has been working in Kent and beyond for eight years, making performances such as Cracking the Crinoline and Beyond the Marigolds. They also lead a range of participatory ('Moving Well') workshops to encourage more people to share the pleasure of creative movement, integrating movement, music, spoken word and digital forms. Their work challenges perceived notions of age, and beauty, celebrating the depth of individual experience, emphasising co-authorship and collaboration.

## Rhythmix Wishing Well Programme

[www.wishingwellmusic.org.uk](http://www.wishingwellmusic.org.uk)

The Wishing Well Music in Healthcare programme was created by Rhythmix in 2013 to bring live music-making right to the heart of healthcare. Its team of musicians are trained specifically to work with people living with dementia. Working one-to-one at bedsides or in small groups they use music-making to build a bridge towards people, helping them to express themselves, connect with the people around them and increase feelings of wellbeing.

## Royal Exchange

[www.royalexchange.co.uk](http://www.royalexchange.co.uk)

The Royal Exchange Theatre is a professional producing theatre in the heart of Manchester. Since 2014 the Royal Exchange has had an Elders Company of non-professional artists who want to meet new people, learn new skills and make boundary-pushing theatre that challenges the stereotypes of ageing.

## Sage Gateshead

[www.sagegateshead.com](http://www.sagegateshead.com)

The Silver Programme at Sage Gateshead is a community music programme for people over the age of 50, which provides a wide range of daytime music workshops in a variety of styles, genres and disciplines. It currently has 20 tutors delivering a programme of 52 weekly sessions to over 1,000 participants.

## Scottish Poetry Library

[www.spl.org.uk](http://www.spl.org.uk)

The Scottish Poetry Library is a unique national resource and advocate for the art of poetry, and Scottish poetry in particular. They are passionately committed to bringing the pleasures and benefits of poetry to as wide an audience as possible. Physically and virtually, the Scottish Poetry Library's doors are open. There's poetry there for everyone, and they can help you find the poem you'll want to keep.

## Gemma Seltzer

[www.writersmeetelders.wordpress.com](http://www.writersmeetelders.wordpress.com)

Gemma Seltzer is a London-based writer who collaborates with older adults to make new poetry and spoken word projects. Supported by Age UK Bromley & Greenwich, Gemma was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2015/16 to visit Australia and the USA. This project identified best practices for artist development in this field. Since her return, she has created and supported a range of projects, including a creative befriending programme and training sessions for young poets.

## Robin Simpson

Robin is an actor, writer and storyteller based in West Yorkshire. As an actor he has performed in dozens of plays both in the UK and abroad. He has adapted several fairy-tales for the stage and written and performed stories for the BBC School's Radio. His story-telling has taken place in schools, libraries and museums up and down the country.

## Small Things Creative Projects / The Storybox Project

[www.smallthings.org.uk](http://www.smallthings.org.uk)

Small Things Creative Projects use creative engagement to fuel learning, change and development. They do this by developing projects that create space for thinking and togetherness in a wide range of settings. The Storybox Project is their flagship project, which uses creativity and imagination to engage, enliven and empower people living with dementia.

## Spare Tyre

[www.sparetyre.org](http://www.sparetyre.org)

Spare Tyre is a leading UK participatory arts organisation, producing bold and powerful theatre and arts. They celebrate untold stories, transform lives and challenge prejudice. Under Arti Prashar's leadership and vision, they have developed inclusive creative practice championing diverse voices. Arti has a strong commitment to collaborative creativity, nurturing the creative impulse that leads to personal and political fulfillment. She is a Winston Churchill, RSA and Birkbeck University Fellow.

## START

[www.startinspiringminds.org.uk](http://www.startinspiringminds.org.uk)

START is a mental health organisation in Salford that uses creativity to support people from all walks of life. START nurtures talents to bring about a newfound confidence in those who feel isolated or excluded.

Creative projects such as Inspiring Minds, our Arts on Prescription programme and Creative Escapes, our groups for people with dementia, help people overcome emotional difficulties and reach new heights.

## Alison Teader

[www.artsandhealth.co.uk](http://www.artsandhealth.co.uk)

Alison is a freelance Arts and Health Coordinator with an MA in Arts & Health who has worked for over 20 years in the field of arts and older people, organising arts projects and activities for older people living in care homes, day centres and sheltered housing. She has a particular interest and experience in green care projects, visual arts and planning large participatory celebration events such as choir concerts, tea dances and seasonal concerts.

## Theatr Clwyd

[www.theatrclwyd.com](http://www.theatrclwyd.com)

Theatr Clwyd is one of the foremost producing theatres in Wales. Since 1976 it has been a theatrical powerhouse and much-loved home for the community. Led by the Executive team of Tamara Harvey and Liam Evans-Ford, Theatr Clwyd produces world-class theatre, from new plays to classic revivals as well as building and creating a thriving Creative Engagement scene.

## Turtle Key Arts

[www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk](http://www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk)

Turtle Key Arts produces and devises original, inclusive art to entertain and inspire. They believe that access to the arts helps to improve quality of life by bringing people together, offering creative opportunities, social interaction, confidence and self-esteem.

They produce a number of innovative and original theatre, dance and circus companies and have a long track record of running excellent arts projects, free to all participants, for disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded people.

## Upswing

[www.upswing.org.uk](http://www.upswing.org.uk)

Upswing is a leading, award-winning, contemporary circus company based in the UK. They tell new stories in extraordinary ways and create world-class experiences that connect audiences, artists and participants through cutting-edge circus. They are a registered charity and core funded by the Arts Council England.

## verd de gris

[www.verddegris.org](http://www.verddegris.org)

verd de gris work in diverse environments and tackle a range of issues and concerns including social fracture, intergenerational drift and dementia. Their project formats are tightly wrought and turn on big, fundamental principles like: place, migration, prayer, love and aspiration. It is their underlying artistic vision and faith that art is a catalyst for engagement and change.

## Andrea Vogler

Andrea specialises in junk, environmental and world percussion. Her workshops explore a variety of genres and creative starting points. Highlights include a community residency in the Shetland Islands, writing and recording wake-up calls for NASA's International Space Station, and directing the world's first Bucket-and-Spade Orchestra in Caernarfon. She is part of Manchester Camerata's award-winning Music in Mind team, and trains and mentors Live Music Now musicians working with older people.

## Kim Wiltshire

[www.laidbaretheatre.co.uk](http://www.laidbaretheatre.co.uk)

Kim Wiltshire is a playwright and theatre-maker who has worked in the community for over 15 years, working in the area of arts and health. Her plays include Project XXX and The Value of Nothing and her works will often concentrate on contemporary issues facing young people and communities. She is also an academic and is Programme Leader for Creative Writing at Edge Hill University.

## Women & Theatre

[www.womenandtheatre.co.uk](http://www.womenandtheatre.co.uk)

Women & Theatre (W&T) is an award-winning theatre company working with diverse groups to create exciting drama projects about things that matter. It creates engaging theatre and uses interactive drama to promote the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the whole community. Working in a range of contexts across arts, health and community sectors, its work is united by core values of inclusion and empowerment, giving a voice to those who are not usually heard.

# Other resources on creative ageing

All resources can be found on our website

[www.baringfoundation.org.uk](http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk)

*Ageing artfully: older people and professional participatory arts in the UK*,  
David Cutler, 2009

*Living national treasure: arts and older people in Japan*,  
David Cutler, 2015

*A new form of theatre: older people's involvement in theatre and drama*,  
Kate Organ, 2016

*West Yorkshire Playhouse Guide to Dementia Friendly Performances*,  
2016

*Growing the creative ageing movement: international lessons for the UK*,  
Alice Thwaite, 2017

*The role of local authorities in creative ageing*,  
David Cutler, 2017

*Late opening: arts and older people in Scotland*,  
Andrew Eaton-Lewis, 2017

*Dutch old masters – and mistresses: creative ageing in the Netherlands*,  
David Cutler, 2017

*Towards the end: The Baring Foundation's Arts and Older People  
Programme 2010–2017*, David Cutler, 2017

*Creative ageing in Germany: the view from North Rhine-Westphalia*,  
Harriet Lowe, 2017

*Arts in care homes: a rapid mapping of training provision*,  
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