RELATE, MOTIVATE, APPRECIATE
A MONTESSORI RESOURCE
Promoting positive interaction with people with dementia
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource is part of the RELATE, MOTIVATE, APPRECIATE: A Montessori Resource. Please refer to www.fightdementia.org.au for an introductory guide and DVD.

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AUTHOR

Dr Eva van der Ploeg of the Aged Mental Health Research Unit at Monash University developed this resource to support family carers of people living with dementia to improve communication and interaction using Montessori principles.

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You are about to read a remarkable document. Actually, it is a revolutionary
document – a game changer. Based on research conducted in Australia and in
other parts of the world, this is a guide to a new way of thinking about dementia
and persons who have dementia. This manual is based on three key concepts.

The first key concept in these pages is that persons with dementia are persons
– normal persons just like you and me. They happen to have cognitive disabilities.
All of us have disabilities of one kind or another. When we put on glasses, who
we are is not defined by the fact that we need glasses to help us see well. We
are living with a chronic condition, and trying to compensate and live well in spite
of weakness in our eyes. If we have diabetes, we may take medication or
injections to help us cope with our blood sugar levels. We watch our diets, try to
exercise, and keep in mind that each day is a precious bonus. We try to live well,
in spite of our disabilities. We are not defined by our disabilities. When we start
to see dementia as a disability rather than a ‘medical condition’ or ‘disease’,
we will begin to think differently. We will begin to ask questions like ‘Where are
the “cognitive ramps” for persons with dementia?’ and ‘How can we modify our
homes and communities to better accommodate persons with dementia?’
We are not powerless in the face of dementia, but we must take action.

The second key concept is that we must find ways to connect or reconnect with
the humanity in persons with dementia. This is done by providing opportunities
for engaging in personally meaningful activity, allowing individuals who have
dementia to contribute to the lives of their families and communities.

This is accomplished by focusing on the strengths and remaining abilities of
persons with dementia, and then matching these along with their personal
interests to specific activities. This approach is based on the educational method
of Maria Montessori. Her philosophy was that every human being has the right
to be treated with respect and dignity, to have a meaningful role in a community,
to contribute to the best of their abilities, and to live a life which promotes
self-esteem while respecting one’s self, others, and the environment. She was
not only a brilliant educator, but an amazing person. It is no surprise that she was
nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

To learn about a person’s interests, we must know the person. Asking persons
with dementia about their pasts, likes and dislikes is a good place to start. Also,
remember that curiosity does not go away with age or dementia, so do not be
afraid of trying something new. A good rule to remember is that if an activity
bores you, it probably bores a person with dementia. If you enjoy it, they are
more likely to enjoy it.

So imagine this to be an education resource, with exercises to teach fundamentals.
It is like a guide to coaching a footy team, or a recipe book for Thai cooking.
Reading this will get you started, and teach you the basics, but you must then
take the principles and ideas in this book and make them your own. You must
adapt what you learn to your own situation, and to the people you live with. It’s
time to change the world.

Cameron J. Camp, PhD
Director of Research and Development
Center for Applied Research in Dementia, Ohio, USA
HOW TO RESTORE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WHEN VISITING SOMEONE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA
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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

ESSENTIAL READING
We have tried to highlight some resources that are helpful to read before you start with the activities. In order to use this method you need to have an understanding of the Montessori principles. We also provide tips on how to prepare for the activities. The combination of preparing relevant activities and applying the principles when delivering them are the core of this approach.

We also describe the RMA-model: **Relate, Motivate, Appreciate**. This should provide you with an easy prompt when you are in the middle of an activity session and you may have forgotten some of the details of the principles. However, keep reading through the principles, until you have made them your own!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
This book includes 28 activities. The activities are grouped under 5 themes; these are related to the human senses – watching, listening, touching, smelling and tasting. Rehabilitation and sensory stimulation form the basics of the Montessori educational system that the current principles are based on.

These activities are just a starting point! Hopefully they will serve as an inspiration for you to think of activities that the person will enjoy. Remember that the more personalised the activities are, the more response they are likely to elicit. Anything at all can be an activity. Try to stimulate all the senses, unless, of course, the person has a clear preference for one.

ICONS
One of the principles of Montessori is that you work from simple to complex and sometimes back from complex to simple. So for every activity we describe both easier and more difficult versions.

**FOLD-OUT**
Attached to the back cover of this book is a fold-out. You can use this fold-out to bookmark an activity that you would like to start with. On the front of the bookmark you will find the Montessori principles; on the back is a checklist of tips on how to prepare for your visits.
INTRODUCTION

‘I’VE TRIED EVERYTHING BUT NOTHING WORKS.’

People living with dementia often have difficulty remembering names or recent events. They may struggle with simple tasks, and will almost certainly begin to have difficulty with abstract concepts and activities as their dementia progresses. The experience of talking and interaction with a friend or loved one with dementia can change over time as well. Conversations can become less interactive as a result of language and memory difficulties, and a person with dementia might lose the ability to participate in activities that were once shared.

As a result of these changes, relatives and friends of a person with moderate or advanced stages of dementia can sometimes find it difficult to know how best to engage with their loved one. Visits might begin to feel awkward, and people might experience the temptation to stay away. This is where the Montessori approach and the activities outlined in this book come in.

One of the main Montessori principles emphasises using less language, while at the same time promoting non-verbal communication by demonstrating everything that you would like the person to engage with.

In other words, talk less and demonstrate more!

When using less language in your interactions, you are likely to avoid frustration or disappointment on the person’s part about not being able to respond to questions verbally. You will also allow them to focus all their attention on what you are demonstrating. This may make it easier for them to engage with you.

In addition, all of the Montessori principles in this book focus on a certain type of memory (implicit, or procedural, memory), which is less affected by dementia than other types of memory. This type of memory works with habits and muscle memory; in other words it is the ‘how’ memory. The person may still know how to shake someone’s hand, how to eat, how to smile, even if they can’t explain or describe these things. This is why, if you hand the person something (at the right angle and pace), they will usually take it. If it is something as lovely as a scented flower they may even smell it, as this is the automatic learned response to a flower. It may even be possible for the person to learn how to do other (new) things if you demonstrate and allow them to copy your movements. In addition, they will get better at doing something the more they practise it, even when they may not recall having done it; this is another benefit of using implicit memory.

To enhance the interaction with the person, it is important to apply all the Montessori principles (see p.9).

The principles can be summarised in the Relate, Motivate, Appreciate model.

RELATE

The person you know has lived a rich and full life. They may have been a parent, spouse, brother, sister, professional, housewife, friend and/or lover. All these roles make up the person they are and how they feel. The first and most important step is to be able to relate to and focus on what were their past experiences. This should also be informed by an understanding of the current abilities and interests the person still has.

Consider whether they are able to:
• read
• talk
• point
• hold things
• walk independently
• answer questions.

Find out:
• what they did for a living
• whether they have siblings
• what they enjoyed doing the most
• whether they travelled
• whether they are in pain or feeling unwell.

Language skills and vocabulary can diminish as dementia progresses, but the desire to communicate does not. It can often help the interaction if you reduce how much you speak and how fast you speak and move. Tasks can also become easier for the person when you break them down into a number of smaller steps, and then demonstrate every step separately as an explanation of what you are asking them to do. Be flexible and willing to adapt to what the person is able to do on a particular day, recognising that each day may be different.

Principles 4 to 10 are associated with Relate.

MOTIVATE

What motivates you?

Most of us are motivated by things we enjoy. When considering activities that the person might enjoy, we need to reflect on their past life experience. What activities did they do in the past?

For example, did they enjoy:
• cooking? – if so, consider pouring or mixing activities
• accounting? – counting, writing
• gardening? – growing vegetables or flowers
• music? – listening, dancing, playing an instrument.

The aim should be to engage the person in a meaningful activity which is clear to follow and almost error-free. Then we may see their self-esteem rise and their sense of pride increase.

The aim should always be for them to have a positive and pleasant experience.

Principles 1, 4, 9, 10 and 12 are associated with Motivate.

**APPRECIATE**

You may experience feelings of loss and grief for the relationship you once had with the person living with dementia. However, the person living with dementia may have experienced losing much more; for example, friends, social activities, various roles, the ability to drive, their job, their career, their partner, and the ability to dress and attend to activities of daily living.

With these in mind it is important that we try to give the person some confidence and roles back and, in that sense, return some meaning to their lives.

The aim should be to enable the person living with dementia to regain control of aspects of their life, through meaningful activities that have a purpose.

This can be achieved by firstly inviting them to participate in an activity. They may not always feel like participating and it is important to respect this choice. There always needs to be at least two choices of activity, as what was of interest yesterday may not be today.

Principles 2 and 3 particularly are associated with Appreciate.
THE MONTESSORI PRINCIPLES

Relate, Motivate, Appreciate summarises the 12 key principles of the Montessori method. These are explained on the following pages.

1. The activity should have a sense of purpose and capture the person’s interest.

2. Always invite the person to participate.

3. Offer choice whenever possible.

4. Talk less. Demonstrate more.

5. Physical skills; focus on what the person can do.

6. Match your speed with the person you are caring for. Slow down!

7. Use visual hints, cues or templates.

8. Give the person something to hold.

9. Go from simple tasks to more complex ones.

10. Break a task down into steps; make it easier to follow.

11. To end, ask: ‘Did you enjoy doing this?’ and ‘Would you like to do this again?’

12. There is no right or wrong. Think engagement.

People with dementia are often confronted with what they can no longer do or with the mistakes that they make. Montessori principles are designed to focus on what they can still do. This is a person-centred approach focusing on the person’s capabilities, capturing their interest and showing them respect. It is important that the focus includes building on the person’s strengths. The principles are structured in the order that you will use them when interacting with a person with dementia. These principles are included in the fold-out section at the back for easy reference and to act as a bookmark.
1. **THE ACTIVITY SHOULD HAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND CAPTURE THE PERSON’S INTEREST**

The activities in this book serve many purposes. Some activities are designed to assist the person maintain or restore certain functions, such as eating more independently. But all activities need to capture the person’s interest; otherwise the activity will be of little or no value. When applying all the other principles, your activities will hopefully result in a pleasant, rewarding and positive interaction.

2. **ALWAYS INVITE THE PERSON TO PARTICIPATE**

The first minutes of your visit will usually be the most important ones. This is when you will hopefully connect with the person. It is helpful to introduce yourself on every occasion; this may feel strange at first, but is important unless the person easily and obviously recognises you. For example, say your name and your relationship to them followed by saying that you have come to visit them today and would they mind helping you with some things. Once you have established this connection, you can then build on this foundation.

As another example you could say: ‘Hello Mum, its Eva, your daughter. I have come to visit you and was wondering if you could help me today. Would you like to fold towels or arrange flowers?’

The most important thing is that you feel comfortable in the interaction. There are many suggestions in this book; however, the person’s response is the best indicator of what you should do. If the person is not interested, try something else.

3. **OFFER CHOICE WHENEVER POSSIBLE**

As can be seen in the example above, it is helpful to present the person with a choice; for example, the option to fold towels or arrange flowers. When offering this choice it is always best to present two visual prompts (e.g. a towel and a flower). This really assists the person to communicate to you what they would like to do.

Give specific choices. A general question such as ‘What would you like to do today?’ will be very hard to answer for most people with dementia.

4. **TALK LESS; DEMONSTRATE MORE**

The first part of this principle, ‘Talk less’, very much depends on the person’s ability to speak. How much you speak should match how much they speak. If the person is (or has become) a chatterbox, feel free to chat just as much. If half of what they are saying sounds somewhat confused, it still may be good to continue talking with them. It’s probably best not to try to clarify what they are trying to say, but just speak back in a calm and warm voice. This may not result in a meaningful conversation, but can still have a reassuring and calming effect on the person. You are acknowledging and honouring their wish to socialise and communicate with you.

However, there are numerous reasons why the person may have become less comfortable with speech. They may lose the ability to speak, or they may revert back to a first language. They may still be able to speak English, but become frustrated because they are aware that their speech is confused or because they lose their train of thought. In these cases, it is best to avoid this frustration and reduce language in your interaction as much as possible. This may require some practice and, again, the person’s response is the main indicator to determine if you can still use some basic sentences or if it is best to greatly reduce your spoken words throughout your visits. As with most things, the person’s preference may change over time.

Regardless of how much speaking you do, you should always demonstrate every step of each activity. You may have to demonstrate each step of the activity only once, or you may need to repeat each individual step. Demonstrate each step (Principle 10) separately and repeat your demonstration until the person is able to imitate, unless they have lost interest in which case it may be time to change activities.
5. PHYSICAL SKILLS; FOCUS ON WHAT THE PERSON CAN DO

It will help your interaction if you accommodate any physical impairment the person may struggle with. Many elderly people suffer some hearing and visual impairment, so well-adjusted glasses and hearing aids can improve the person’s experience greatly. Sometimes one ear may function better than the other. Sometimes it will be easier for the person to reach and lift one arm than the other. It is worthwhile enquiring about or exploring their physical skills. If the person is residing in a residential facility, it may be helpful to check with staff intermittently to see if they have noticed any changes in physical functioning. In regard to vision, it may help to test a couple of print sizes to establish if and what the person is able to read (see Appendix A). You may want to move around your reading material as well, to find where they are best able to see.

It is usually easiest to do the activities at a table, but be mindful that some chairs can be uncomfortable (especially for people who have had hip problems). Again, trialling a number of set-ups may result in an optimal environment to start the activities. For example, a TV tray may fit over the lap of someone sitting up in bed, and activities can be performed on the tray.

6. MATCH YOUR SPEED WITH THE PERSON YOU ARE CARING FOR. SLOW DOWN

Even though each person is unique, for most people with dementia it is best to slow down, both in speech and movement. If you are speaking (Principle 4), it could help to speak slightly slower than you usually do and articulate well. Don’t speak louder, because the change in tone may agitate some people. If hearing is impaired, it is best to sit close and speak in a calm tone. Even if they can’t hear exactly what you are saying, the sound and tone of your voice may be reassuring. By demonstrating each step of each activity, you can communicate what you are asking them to do anyway.

You may also need to adjust the speed at which you are moving. Your normal pace may be too fast and may add to the person’s confusion. It is best to observe their response to establish the best pace to be working at. As a general rule, it is best to work at a pace that matches the pace of their movements.

7. USE VISUAL HINTS, CUES OR TEMPLATES

When inviting the person to participate, you should use visual cues that represent the activities you are suggesting. Whenever you give them another choice, you can continue to use these visual prompts.

The main cue to use is pointing to direct the person to what you are asking them to do. After you demonstrate the activity (a number of times if necessary), the person may respond to your invitation to do the activity themselves. However, if the activity consists of a number of steps, the person may not remember all the steps. A first response could be to point from the object they are holding to the place where it should go. You can repeat this a number of times; hold their hand to put the object together, or gently take the object from them and demonstrate again.

There are some general templates for sorting pictures in Appendix B. For any sorting or sequencing activities, it may help if you develop your own templates. This visual cue can help the person to understand what you are asking them to do.

8. GIVE THE PERSON SOMETHING TO HOLD

This principle especially applies if the person is not actively participating in your activity, which may happen when you first introduce an activity. The person may need to adjust to this form of interaction. Try not to be discouraged if they do not immediately participate in your activity. You may want to try an activity that is of interest to you. You need to be guided by the person’s response to observe if they share your interest. Even if they are just looking at what you are doing, this may still be a positive interaction. To enable the person to be part of the activity, you can give them one thing to hold. For example, if you are screwing nuts and bolts together, you can hand the person one of each; or hand them the bolt and put the nut within reach on the table. The idea of this principle is that you first of all respect that they may not be ready to participate with what you have in mind. You may still present your materials to see if they capture interest. (If you stop activities every time they do not want to actively participate, you may well never get started.) Secondly, the one thing they are holding could facilitate their participation whenever they are ready.
9. Go From Simple Tasks to More Complex Ones

It is helpful to prepare several activities for the person; which activities you prepare may change over time. The person is likely to do two to three activities in half an hour; however sometimes a single activity may take all this time. On days that it is harder to engage the person, you may need to try more than three activities.

It can be best to start with a simple version of each activity, to avoid frustration. The life of a person with dementia is full of things they are not managing, and these activities should not result in stress. Your activities need to be designed so that the person has every chance of feeling competent and appreciated. However, you do not want to make activities too simple, as this can result in loss of interest.

This principle really focuses on observing the person. Let the person determine what activity you will be doing, and at what difficulty level and pace. They may not verbally communicate this, but you can see it from their response. Once they have chosen an activity, the observation starts. As soon as you feel that their interest is fading, you can make changes. The first thing to do is check all your principles:

- Am I moving too fast?
- Am I talking too much?
- Did I forget to demonstrate what I am asking the person to do?

If you feel you are following all the principles, you can consider the difficulty level of your activity. Each activity described in this book presents alternatives for making them more complex or more simple. You may come up with other alternatives. If you have adapted the difficulty level, but the response is still quite disengaged, you could consider doing a different activity altogether.

Remember, everything is an activity: even preparing materials for certain activities or clearing the table after you have finished with a certain activity. Just continue applying the principles!

10. Break a Task Down into Steps; Make It Easier to Follow

Every activity consists of steps. For example, sorting pictures includes:

- looking at the picture (together)
- handing the picture to the person to hold
- looking at the template headings
- placing the picture on the template.

You may be able to teach the person every step, one after the other. Or they may only be able to do one step at a time. You can help by pointing and demonstrating each step until they are able to do the whole sequence. It can also be important to present only one object at a time to the person. Handing them a pile of pictures to sort may be too much to ask. However, if you present one picture after the other, the person can focus on each picture. The same applies to uncluttering the environment: clean the table you will be working at, present materials for one activity at a time, step by step.

11. To End, Ask: ‘Did You Enjoy Doing This?’ and ‘Would You Like to Do This Again?’

It is not necessary to complete a task; the main purpose of the interaction is to engage someone’s interest. If the person does complete a task, you can ask them if they enjoyed doing this and would they like to do it again? In this way, they are in charge of what you are doing with them.

12. There Is No Right or Wrong. Think Engagement

This final principle is closely related to the first principle. The aim of your interaction is to have a pleasant time – that’s all. The person does not have to do everything ‘right’ (or anything for that matter); they do not need to complete an activity. If pictures of blue cars keep going on the pile meant for red cars, does it really matter when they are absorbed in the activity? It may sometimes be hard to encourage ‘mistakes’, but try not to correct the person if they are enjoying themselves. If they get frustrated by their mistakes, it is time to make changes (see Principle 9).
Martha was 78 when her husband, Bob, died. She had been a housewife all her life, living for her children and grandchildren. She took pride in her cooking and sewing, always keeping a clean and tidy house. When Bob sold their house to buy a motor home ‘so we can be free to come and go as we please’, Martha was disappointed.

Living in the motor home with his wife in such close quarters, Bob began to notice things. Martha seemed to have trouble remembering what he had told her just a few minutes before. She would forget appointments, and decided that she no longer wanted to drive, especially the motor home. ‘It’s just too much,’ Martha told him. He became concerned when he came back from the store and found that she had left the kettle on the stove and all the water had boiled out of it – again. This was the third time in the last month. Though he was concerned, he kept it to himself. He did not want to worry the children. She was his wife, and he would deal with it. When Martha began repeating the same stories over and over again, Bob just listened as long as he could, and then would go outside. Sometimes he would invent reasons to drive to the store, just to get away, but then he worried about whether Martha would be safe or not when she was alone, so his trips were always short. When she kept asking the same questions over and over again, he just kept giving the same answer and said to himself, ‘Lord, give me patience.’

When Bob died suddenly, Martha seemed different to her children. She was not grieving the way they had expected. On the way home from the funeral, she asked ‘Where is Bob?’ This upset her children greatly. When they told her that their father and her husband was dead, she said ‘Who is going to take care of me?’

The children decided that Martha would live with the oldest son and his family for the time being. Soon after she moved in, problems began to emerge. Martha would try to clean up or put things away and then her daughter-in-law could not find them. When told to please not help anymore, Martha got moody and would go to her room and stay there.

When her children were little, Martha used to punish them with slaps or spankings. When Martha now got angry, she would try to hit her son. When she got angry at a grandchild and slapped her, the family decided that something had to be done.

First, they began to give Martha tasks that she could accomplish successfully, that would let her ‘help’, and give her a feeling of accomplishment. The daughter-in-law asked if Martha would help her in the kitchen, and gave her different fruits to sort. Martha also shredded lettuce for salads, and squeezed oranges on an old-fashioned juice squeezer to make orange juice. The family noticed that Martha had more ‘good days’ and was less disturbed when she had things to do.

Over time, Martha began to have more difficulty walking and taking care of herself. She no longer could go to the bathroom on her own, and did not know what to do once she was there. She began to have ‘accidents’ all the time, and got very angry and physically abusive if anyone tried to help her clean up. Then she fell, and though nothing was broken ‘this time’, the family decided to move her into a residential aged care facility. This was a hard decision, but after lots of discussion among the family members and with social workers and staff of different facilities, the family made the decision.

Martha was very upset when she was ‘left’ at the residential aged care facility. On the first day there, Martha ‘bolted’ out the front door when a delivery man opened it. Staff tried to talk her into coming back in, and she slapped and hit them when they tried to bring her back. When family came to visit, they did not know what to say or do. A diversional therapist on the staff told the family that Martha really liked to help fold clothes, and so family members began to bring in baskets of clothes for folding when they came to visit. Martha and her visitors would fold clothes and talk while doing so. Family members would bring oranges or other fruit snacks, and Martha would peel the oranges or bananas and they would share them together. The family members began to bring photographs of family vacations they had taken together in the past, and pictures of holiday gatherings from the ‘good old days’. They would put glue from a glue stick on the back of a photo, and show a piece of paper with a thick outline of a square that was the size of the photo, and have Martha put the photo on the square. They made ‘memory books’ of these pages, with a few words about the photo under each one. Family members and staff continued to work together to find out what activities Martha was capable of doing. Everyone agreed that days when Martha had visits with activities were ‘good’ days.
**PREPARATION**

**BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

The checklist to prepare for your activities:

- Prepare the environment by ensuring there is calmness and not too much clutter in the area where you will spend time together. Also avoid an overly stimulating environment.

- Prepare a number of activities and consider preparing the activities together with the person.

- Include a variety of activities that stimulate different senses; this recognises that different activities might appeal to the person on different days.

- It may be good to demonstrate what you want the person to do before asking them to do it.

- Avoid correcting if you think a mistake is made.

- Use safe materials; nothing sharp, or things that may look edible if they are not suitable to eat.

- Think of opportunities to make each activity easier or more complex. If the person is having difficulty engaging in the activity independently, it may help to break the activity down into smaller tasks and demonstrate each step separately.

- When music is a favourite, consider using your phone or other media player and portable speakers (because head phones may not be tolerated).

- Bring glasses, magnifiers or hearing aids if the person needs them.

- Ensure you will both be comfortable wherever you set up.

- In residential care, you may want to ask staff to assist you when seating the person.
ISSUES THAT CAN ARISE

There are many things that can happen during your sessions. Some of these are outlined below with suggested approaches.

GENERAL

What if the person is no longer actively participating?
• Start working on an activity yourself, then, hand them something to hold that is associated with the activity.
What if I temporarily lose their attention because of a distraction?
• Re-establish eye contact, use their name, gently touch their hand, upper arm or upper leg, invite them to help you a bit longer.
What if the person is in the habit of pacing or wandering and tries to get up during the activities?
• Re-establish eye contact, use their name, gently touch their hand, upper arm or leg, invite them to help you a bit longer. It may really help to cross their line of vision with your hand and direct them towards what you were doing.
What if the person still wants to get up?
• Assist them with getting up, ask if you can walk with them. You can always come back to your activities later by asking if they would like to sit down again.

AT HOME

What if old friends come to visit?
• Model how to engage the person and provide structure for everyone.
What if there is an unexpected visitor?
• Have materials (that have been shown to work, such as a memory book) at the ready in a box or bag, and invite the visitor to join. Give everyone a specific role. Preparing food together is a good option.
What if the person wants to do other things to help around the house?
• Set up routines and make a list of tasks for them. Invite them to tick boxes once they complete a task. Examples include watering plants, sweeping, and setting the table. Don’t forget to demonstrate every task, and practise every step. At the end of each day you can make a list for the next day.

IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

What if another resident in the facility is interested in what we are doing?
• Acknowledge their presence by saying ‘Hello ..., how are you? I am doing some work with X at the moment. Can I speak with you later?’
What if the other resident in the facility remains very interested and seems to want to participate?
• Invite them to sit down with you, hand them something that seems to interest them, bring your focus back to your person. Or, if you feel comfortable and know this person well, you can change the activity to a group activity.
There are many variations of this activity. The only things you need are:

- two templates (an example can be found in Appendix B)
- a number of labels with different headings or categories
- colourful printed pictures (from magazines or from the internet). The pictures can represent a number of things (e.g. related to the person's previous occupation, their hobbies or interests, or images from favourite holidays).

**PREPARATION**

The templates from Appendix B may be used, or you can make your own. You may want to laminate these so they will last longer.

Print out pictures; these can also be laminated to make them last longer if you think you might use them again. A5 size (half of an A4 sheet of paper) is an easy size to hold.

The labels need to be related to the pictures; however, they can be broad categories to capture a number of pictures. Examples include:

- different colours or just ‘light’ and ‘dark’
- brand names
- male and female
- ‘like’ and ‘dislike’
- different countries
- different content (e.g. pictures of ‘land’ and ‘water’).

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Put the templates on the table in front of the person.
2. Choose two relatively easy category labels and place them on the top black rectangle. As an example, use ‘like’ and ‘dislike’.
3. Show the person the first picture; look at it together and, perhaps, discuss what is in the picture.
4. Ask the person if they like the picture (if they do not have a response, talk about the picture yourself).
5. Look at the labels together. Direct the person’s attention to the labels by pointing from their line of sight to the labels.
6. Encourage the person to point to or verbalise where the picture should go and put the picture on the template of the person’s choosing.
7. Look at the next picture. Now carefully hand this over to the person to hold. Continue as before.
The person may need some more instructions at any time: keep demonstrating and pointing at what you are asking them to do.

You may want to:
- just look at pictures together. You can talk about what’s in the picture. What colours? What kind of things or people? How many? Ask questions. Let the person point at certain aspects of the image
- change the labels to easier ones. If likes/dislikes is too difficult, consider sorting by colour (e.g. blue/red) or to make it a bit easier use dark/light.

You could:
- use more complex labels, such as names of countries or cities, or brand names of products. If you are sorting football teams you can sort by team, by city of origin, or by who made the finals last year
- use more templates
- prepare questions to stimulate reminiscence (if the person is still quite verbal)
- make a collage of the pictures – put it on the wall.

**ALTERNATIVES TO THIS ACTIVITY**

If playing cards was a favourite game of the person, consider sorting cards (develop special templates). You can sort by colour or by suit. If that is too easy, you can try and play their favourite game. If they played poker, for example, you can create examples of each type of hand (e.g. a pair, a straight, a full house). You can ask the person to name a hand (e.g. flush, three of a kind), or to match the hand with a label (e.g. ‘flush’, full house’), or to say which of two hands is the better hand (e.g. a flush is better than three of a kind).
ACTIVITY 2.
SEQUENCING PICTURES

This is a variation of the sorting pictures activity. You will need:
• a template (see Appendix B)
• a number of pictures. Any kind of pictures can be used, as long as there is a clear start, middle and end to each sequence, for example ‘young’ to ‘old’ for animals or people, or first to last for any events or sequence activities (e.g. kicking a goal – the mark, prepare for the kick perhaps by putting their mouth piece in their sock, and then the kick).

This activity provides a great opportunity to use family pictures; for every member of the family you can bring photos from the time they were babies until their current age.

PREPARATION

The template can be used from the Appendix, or you can make your own. You may want to laminate these so they will last longer.

Print out pictures; these can also be laminated to make them last longer if you think you might use them again. A5 size is an easy size to hold.

THE ACTIVITY

1. Mix the three pictures for one sequence (e.g. of one family member).
2. Show the person one picture and encourage them to place it in the appropriate place on the sequence template.
3. Show the person another picture and encourage them to place it in the appropriate place on the sequence template. Give the person the opportunity to perhaps change the choice they made before for the first picture. Maybe upon seeing the second picture, they would like to move the first one somewhere else.
4. Show the person the third picture and encourage them to complete the sequence.
5. Continue with the next group of cards.

You could try:
• using a template with only two options (e.g. first/last or young/old)
• looking at the pictures and talking about who is in them. If that is difficult, talk about colours, number of people, what they are wearing.

You may want to:
• use a template with more options or prepare a second template (for up to 6 options)
• make the difference between the pictures less distinct
• give the person all the pictures for the same individual at the same time
• use two templates one above the other and sets of photos for two relatives. Let the person sort by person and young/old at the same time.
ACTIVITY 3.
MAKING A MEMORY BOOK

This activity also is looking at pictures, but in this activity you will actually be making a book together with the person. During future interactions you can then look at the book together, or you can keep adding more photos and pages.

PREPARATION
Provide a book for the album (or get two books and the person can decide which to use).

Collect many images (these can range from family pictures to colour prints from the internet and may include images related to the person’s previous occupation, their interests and their hobbies).

You will also need glue or tape to attach the pictures in the book.

THE ACTIVITY
1. With the person, look at the pictures, one after the other, and decide whether each picture should go in the book. This can be a sorting activity using labels ‘include’ and ‘not include’.
2. Together decide on themes and make labels for each theme.
3. You could ask the person to select the order of the themes.
4. Separate the images for the first theme and start arranging pictures on the first page. You could demonstrate the first one by choosing the picture, showing it to the person and then putting it (slowly) on the page.
5. Hand the next picture to the person and invite them to put it on the page.
6. Once the page has several pictures on it, demonstrate how to attach each picture to the page using tape or glue.
7. Invite the person to attach the next picture by handing over the tape or the glue.
8. Continue on the next page.

• You may want to do all or some of the steps yourself, with the person watching.

• You could try selecting the pictures together from family photos or the internet.
  • If this really captures the person’s interest and they find it easy to follow your lead, you could hand the activity completely over to them. You could even leave the materials and leave written instructions.
  • When they finish their own book, you may want to ask the person to make a book for a family member, or a friend.
This activity aims to make puzzles out of familiar pictures.

**PREPARATION**

Choose a photo of something that is familiar to the person (such as a family member or friend or pets), copy onto A4 paper and horizontally cut into three pieces. (You may want to laminate the picture before cutting it to make it last longer.)

Make a template of a blank A4 page and draw black lines matching the shape of the pieces.

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Put the template in front of the person.
2. Present the person with the first part of the picture, and invite them to hold it for you.
3. Look at the piece of the picture together, and perhaps discuss what is in the picture.
4. Point at the three different sections on the template.
5. Invite the person to put the piece on the template, perhaps guiding their hand.
6. Present the second part of the puzzle and continue as before.

You could try:
- adding a template of the actual picture for easier matching; still outline the pieces that you cut
- presenting the parts in order from top to bottom
- cutting the picture into two pieces only
- putting the puzzle together for the person as they watch.

You may want to:
- cut the picture into more parts, possibly also diagonally
- Put the puzzle together with no template, using only the pieces of the picture.
- use an actual puzzle, either with large or regular pieces. Work on smaller sections if it is large.
ACTIVITY 5.
MATCHING ACCESSORIES

This activity is about matching shoes and handbags. There are many choices for matching, and the person will ultimately decide what you will be doing. You could match by:

- size
- colour
- pattern
- style.

PREPARATION

Gather several shoes and a variety of handbags. You may wish to tie the shoes in their pairs to make it easier to find a pair.

Op shops, relatives and friends are all good sources for many materials used in these activities.

THE ACTIVITY

1. Show one pair of shoes to the person and suggest that they hold them. Or you could put the shoes on the table in front of them.
2. Show the person two handbags and ask which one matches the shoes best. You might talk about colours, or size.
3. Once the person has made a choice, put the shoes and handbag to the side and show another pair of shoes and another choice of handbags.

You might try:
- looking at the shoes and handbags and feel different textures and materials
- matching the items yourself with the person watching; check if this captures their attention, and then encourage them to participate.

The described activity is very open. If there is a good understanding of the activity you can:
- ask the person to sort by colour or a certain style
- add hats or other items to the mix.

ALTERNATIVES TO THIS ACTIVITY

This activity can be used with other items of clothing. You might like to use shirts and ties, or skirts and blouses.
ACTIVITY 6.
ENJOYING MUSIC

Music can be a source of enjoyment for many people. You may want to try singing with the person. Alternatively if singing is not a hobby of theirs, you may want to listen to their favourite songs with them. Find a quiet private place to encourage the person to sing or listen to the music.

Find out what the person’s favourite music style, artists and songs are. You may already know, but you may need to ask other family members or, if relevant, facility staff for more recent preferences.

At home you can use your stereo, but if you are visiting in a facility, it may help to upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers for better sound.

PREPARATION

Upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers.

You might like to prepare some visual prompts. For example, you could bring pictures of the particular artists you are going to be listening to.

You may want to bring the lyrics.

Remember to print the words in a large enough font.

THE ACTIVITY

1. You could ask the person, using the associated pictures of the artists, which music they would like to listen to.
2. If you have brought the lyrics, hand the sheet to the person.
3. If the person finds it hard to choose, you can just start a song of your choice and observe the response. It may need some trial and error, because their preferences sometimes change.
4. Once the music is playing and the person seems to be listening, you can start singing along. Point to the words and see if they can follow.
5. Singing or not, as long as the person is engaged, you can continue this activity. Other positive indicators include humming, head bobbing and drumming on the table. You may want to join in with what the person is doing.

You may want to:
• just listen to the music
• sing for the person if you are comfortable doing this
• look at the pictures of the artist and talk about who they are, what they are doing, what kind of clothes they are wearing? (You can also make this into a sorting activity if you bring several images of each artist.)

You could:
• sing without the print-outs of the lyrics
• stop the music at the chorus and keep singing
• demonstrate the use of the music device and step by step teach the person how to independently operate it.
**ACTIVITY 7.**
**FEEL THE RHYTHM**

This activity is very similar to Activity 6, but it is non-verbal. The activity uses a rhythm instrument (such as maracas).

Find out what the person’s favourite music style, artists and songs are. You may already know, but you may need to ask other family members or, if relevant, facility staff for more recent preferences.

You may find maracas or a different rhythm instrument at an Op shop or variety store.

At home you can use your stereo, but if you are visiting in a facility, it may help to upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers for better sound.

- **TIP** It may be best to find a quiet place, so that the person feels free to join in.

**PREPARATION**

Upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers.

Find a rhythm instrument (such as maracas).

Alternatively you could make your own rhythm instrument, perhaps with the person. For example, you could fill empty paper towel rolls or plastic bottles with rice, beans or coins and tape the ends. To make this into an activity you can decorate the rolls using the person’s favourite colours or patterns; you could use paint, coloured paper or fabric.

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. You could ask the person, using the associated pictures of the artists, which music they would like to listen to. If the person finds it hard to choose, you can just start a song of your choice and observe the response. It may need some trial and error, because their preferences sometimes change.

2. Give an instrument to the person to hold and keep one for yourself (if there is a pair).

3. Demonstrate how to use the instrument.

4. Shake the instrument with the music and encourage the person to join in.

5. Shaking or not, as long as the person is engaged you can continue this activity. Other positive indicators include humming, head bobbing and drumming on the table.

- You could try:
  - just listening to the music
  - moving with the rhythms yourself with the person watching
  - clapping to the music instead of using instruments
  - holding the person’s hands or supporting their elbows to assist the shaking
  - looking at pictures of the artists and talk about who they are, what they are doing, what kind of clothes they are wearing.

- You may want to:
  - use different rhythms and invite the person to follow suit
  - let the person set the rhythm and pace
  - work with one instrument in each hand; shake different rhythms with each hand.
ACTIVITY 8. DANCING

Many older people have danced in their earlier years, especially ballroom-style dancing. This may be an opportunity to go back to their days of the foxtrot, waltz or tango.

Do some research on the person’s favourite dance; and find a couple of basic steps or sequences.

At home you can use your stereo, but if you are visiting in a residential aged care facility, it may help to upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers for better sound.

PREPARATION

Find a couple of basic steps or sequences from a favourite dance. You could write these down breaking them into steps.

Upload music on a portable music player (MP3 or phone) and bring portable mini speakers.

The person should be wearing comfortable shoes.

THE ACTIVITY

1. Put on the music and invite the person to dance by offering your hand. Help them up.
2. Stand facing each other about half a metre apart and while holding hands sway to the music.
3. Demonstrate the first step and lead them to follow. Move slowly and perhaps start with them moving forwards.
4. Repeat the first step frequently, before going on to the next step.
5. Once they get used to the motions, join the steps together to make it more complex or ask them to move backwards.
6. Add more steps if the person wants to.
7. Be aware that they might tire quickly. Allow a rest and then ask if they want to continue.

You could try:
- practising only very basic steps, such as forwards and backwards or making a box step (You can throw in a little spin for yourself and see how they respond.)
- sitting the person in a comfortable higher chair, taking their hands (you can sit or stand yourself) and moving their arms back and forth to the rhythm of the music.

You may want to:
- bring in clothes related to the dance style they like – perhaps two options for each, so that the person can choose. You might like to do their hair (and make-up) and dance in style
- ask the person to teach you a couple of moves: it does not really matter if these are existing moves or are made up on the spot.
This activity will work best with people who have played an instrument earlier in life.

You could find out if an instrument the person played earlier is still around. If not, an Op shop may have one.

**PREPARATION**

Bring an instrument the person played earlier in life. Cleaning the instrument can be an activity of its own.

Instruments, especially their own old ones, may elicit some emotions. So take it slowly. First show the case, gently open it and show what is inside. Observe the person’s response: are they enjoying this?

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Show the person the instrument or case and then open the case. Instruments, particularly their own old ones, may elicit some emotions. So take it slowly.
2. Take the instrument out and hand it to the person or invite the person to take the instrument out by holding it close to them.
3. Talk about the instrument. Feel the different textures and explore about the different parts.
4. You may be able to demonstrate how the instrument is played, and then invite the person to participate.

You could try:
- holding the instrument for them and pointing out different parts
- printing out a (large) picture of the instrument and matching the parts on the picture with the parts on the actual instrument. Gradually invite the person to match the parts you point out on paper to the parts on the instrument
- bringing in some recorded music for this specific instrument and listening to it with the instrument at close hand.

You may want to:
- bring in some sheet music. You can study the notes together or invite the person to play the piece to you
- carefully take the instrument apart step by step and put it back together again.
ACTIVITY 10. READING

Reading is a skill that is usually retained for a long time. Sometimes it may seem as if the person is no longer able to read; however, this may be due to the size of the print. It is important to discern what sized print needs to be used for the person (you may like to use the type size test in Appendix A).

PREPARATION

If it is still within the person’s capabilities, bring in actual newspapers, magazines or books they like.

THE ACTIVITY

1. Present two options (e.g. a newspaper and a novel) and ask the person what they would like to read today.
2. With the person being able to see the pages, start reading headlines, photo captions or text.
3. You might like to ask them to read some to you
4. At first turn the pages yourself, but then you could invite them to turn the pages.

⚠️ You could try:
- bringing books with large print, or copy and enlarge certain pages
- bringing recorded books or read to the person
- bringing picture books to talk about
- discussing photos in a newspaper or magazine.

🏠 • If reading is relatively easy for the person, ask them to select articles and chapters to read to you. With a novel they can read you a chapter each day.
  • You could use newspapers to discuss current affairs.
  • People from a non-English background may have a first language with a different alphabet (e.g. Greek or Mandarin). Even if you are not fluent in their first language, you could bring in newspapers and books in their first language and ask them to read to you.
  • As an alternative you can print pages with symbols from their first language and English translation; ask them to teach you their first language.
TOUCHING ACTIVITIES
Activity 11.
Feeling different fabrics

Tactile activities usually work very well with people with dementia.

Preparation is half of the work (and half of the fun). The aim is to have different types of textures to feel; these can be fabrics or clothes. These could be your or friends’ clothes or fabrics, or clothes from Op shops, or samples from fabric or curtain shops.

Preparation

Gather a variety of textures (silk, cotton, wool, leather, corduroy, canvas), patterns (stripes, dots, plain) and colours.

Cut approximately A5-sized (half of an A4 sheet of paper) pieces of each fabric (or do this with the person), or use the fabrics/clothes whole.

Put the pieces in a container.

The Activity

1. Put the container on the table within your reach but outside that of the person.
2. Take out one piece of fabric and show it to the person.
3. Show them how to touch and feel the fabric.
4. Slowly hand the fabric to the person. Observe their response.
5. When they are ready for the next fabric, invite them to hand the current piece back to you. Put it on the side or in another container.
6. Continue with the next fabric.

Alternatives to this Activity

An alternative to this activity is to bring balls of wool for touching, sorting, or knitting or crocheting. With the knitting, you may end up doing the actual knitting, but the person can assist by feeding you the wool.

Remember always to demonstrate first. This activity is good for a group. Everyone can work together to make a blanket or just keep each other company when knitting or doing other handiwork.

Tips

- If the person does not take the fabric from you, gently touch the back of their hands with fabric. Observe their response.
- Put the container in front of the person and guide their hands to touch the top fabrics.

- This activity can easily be altered into a sorting activity using the templates associated with Activity 1. You can sort by colours (or dark vs light), textures (soft vs different), or patterns.
- You may want to patch the different pieces together to make a blanket or just for fun. Give the person two options every time for the next fabric to add to the blanket. Demonstrate all the steps, one after the other.
ACTIVITY 12.
FEELING DIFFERENT TEXTURES

This activity is a mini version of a Men's Shed.
For this activity you will need a variety of objects with different textures. You could look for these at home, from friends, Op shops or ask timber or hardware stores for offcuts.

PREPARATION
Collect a variety of objects with different textures – different kinds of woods, nuts and bolts, sand paper.
Put the items in a tool box.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Put the toolbox on the table within your reach but outside that of the person.
2. Take out an item and show it to the person.
3. Show them how to touch and feel the item.
4. Slowly hand the item to the person. Observe their response.
5. When they are ready for the next item, invite them to hand the current piece back to you. Put it on the side or in another container.
6. Continue with the next item.

• If the person does not take the object from you, you could gently touch the back of their hands with the object. Observe their response.
• Put the box in front of the person and guide their hands to touch some of the objects.
• This can easily be altered into a sorting activity using the templates associated with Activity 1. You could sort by texture (rough vs smooth), temperature (cold vs warm) or size.

You may want to:
• put some of the materials to use. For example you can screw nuts and bolts together. Present the person with both and demonstrate slowly how you put them together. Hand the next set to them. Continue as long as they enjoy it
• bring in different lengths of wood; these could then be sorted by length
• make an item (e.g. a bird-box).
This is an activity that many people enjoy, especially if they previously enjoyed dressing up. You could use a nice smelling massage lotion or their favourite colour nail polish.

**PREPARATION**
Bring two different lotions and nail polishes so that the person can choose which to use.

![TIP]
Be aware that some elderly people have quite brittle skin and may not enjoy a massage.

**THE ACTIVITY**
1. Ask the person which lotion they would like. Smell both lotions. If they don’t make a choice, use whichever one you prefer.
2. Apply the lotion to the lower arm, using gently stroking movements and see what their response is to the touching.
3. If they like the massage, continue to the hands and fingers and perhaps use more pressure.
4. Ask if they would like you to massage the other arm and hand.
5. Ask the person which nail polish they would like applied.
6. Gently apply polish to their nails.

![You may want to:]
- hold the person’s hand, which can be quite reassuring
- to soak the person’s hands in warm water, if they find this soothing
- just focus on the hand massage part
- create a quiet spa-like environment with calming music, a nice aroma and a comfortable chair, and perhaps some wine if it is alright for them to drink

![You may want to:]
- bring other kinds of make-up
- invite the person to give you a hand massage
- add a pedicure or head massage
- combine this with the matching shoes and handbags activity (Activity 5). You could also have a couple of dresses for the person to choose from, and prepare the person for an evening out or even a lovely evening at home.
**ACTIVITY 14. FISHING GEAR**

This is a good activity for people who have enjoyed fishing.

**PREPARATION**

Collect a variety of fishing gear – a rod, different kind of lines, different weights, different hooks. Put everything in a fishing box.

**TIP**

Be sure to protect the sharper parts with transparent plastic protection.

As with any small object, for persons with more advanced dementia be sure to explain that the objects are not for eating. Explain what the objects are. If there is a chance they would put small objects into their mouth, do not use small objects.

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Put the box on the table to your side (the other side from where the person is sitting).
2. Start by showing the person the fishing rod, so that it is immediately clear what you are talking about.
3. Put the rod in clear sight for the person and keep it there to remind them of the topic.
4. Present some of the smaller parts: take one weight out of the box. Hold it where the person can see it and show how you weigh it in your hand.
5. Put it on the palm of the person’s hand.
6. When they have weighed it, you can take it back and put it on the table.
7. Continue similarly with the next weight or another item.
8. Present the rod last, or upon request. You could put it in front of you both on the table and explore all parts together.

**You could try:**
- looking at pictures of fish, and sort them (Activity 1), into likes vs dislikes, by colours or by type of fish
- focusing on one part of the rod (e.g. the weights). You could then talk about different types in terms of colour, size and weight
- making a puzzle of a picture of a fishing rod (Activity 4).
- bringing sea shells to examine – feel them, listen to them, match them by shape, size or colour. You might want to develop templates, outlining the shells.

**You may want to:**
- arrange the weights in order – lightest to heaviest
- take the fishing rod apart and put it back together
- prepare a fish dish together in the kitchen.
ACTIVITY 15.
MAGICAL MYSTERY BAGS

This activity is particularly enjoyable for people with vision or hearing impairment. It involves identifying objects hidden in bags.

PREPARATION
Gather two of several different common objects (e.g. spoons, artificial flowers, pens, fishing weights).

Provide three similar small bags.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Place a different object in each bag.
2. Put the bags in front of the person.
3. Pick up an object matching one of those in the bags.
4. Demonstrate how to hold and feel the object.
5. Invite the person to hold and feel the object.
6. Ask them to put that object on the table.
7. Demonstrate how and then ask the person to feel in the first bag to decide whether the object is the same as the one on the table.
8. Continue until a match is made and then repeat with other objects.

You could try:
• using more distinct objects – different in size, weight and texture
• using only two bags
• showing the person the content of each bag
• just feeling and exploring the objects you brought.

You may want to:
• add more bags
• put several objects in one bag and invite the person to pull out the one matching the object on the table
• make a collage of the objects you brought.
ACTIVITY 16.
CLOTHES SORTING

You could use your own washed and dried clothes or, if they live in a residential aged care facility, you could ask the staff if you can fold the washed and dried clothes from the person’s laundry.

PREPARATION
Bring a laundry basket with washed and dried (but not sorted or ironed) clothes.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Demonstrate to the person how to sort the clothes (e.g. put socks together, shirts together).
2. Hand a piece of clothing to them.
3. Invite them to put it on the right pile (or make another pile).
4. Then invite the person to take pieces out of the basket themselves.
5. When all the sorting is done, you can invite the person to fold some of the easier pieces, such as the socks or towels.
6. Demonstrate how to fold a towel, then offer one towel.
7. Observe if the person is able to continue with the pile of towels; if not, keep handing them one towel after another and demonstrate again if necessary.

You may want to:
• provide a basket of socks, all of the same colour. Take out two socks and fold them in half and put in another basket
• fold tea towels.

You could:
• do the activity while standing up (to use leg muscles)
• do all the laundry steps together – putting the laundry in the machine, taking it out, hanging the clothes out to dry (or putting them in the dryer), taking them back in, sorting, folding, putting them away.
SMELLING ACTIVITIES
ACTIVITY 17.
MAKING COFFEE

This activity is most suitable for coffee drinkers. You could use a manual coffee grinder (available from kitchenware or coffee supply stores), or an electric grinder.

PREPARATION
Purchase approximately 100 grams of fresh coffee beans.
Provide a grinder, a coffee plunger, milk and sugar.
You will also need a source of boiling water.

TIP
You may need to handle the hot water, depending upon the person’s abilities.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Place the coffee beans in the manual or electric grinder.
2. If using the manual grinder, after demonstrating, encourage the person to grind the coffee (this will depend upon their dexterity). This exercise is good for improving and strengthening the fine motor skills of the hand.
3. When the coffee beans have been ground, tip the ground coffee into a small bowl.
4. Smell the aroma and invite the person to smell.
5. Ask the person to place in one tablespoon of freshly ground coffee per person into the plunger.
6. Top up with boiling water, and allow the coffee to steep.
7. Pour the coffee, again enjoying the aroma.
8. If the person is able, invite them to add milk and sugar if they want to.

• You may need to grind the coffee and then offer the ground coffee for smelling and enjoying.
• The person may watch you grinding and making the coffee.

You could:
• encourage the person to do the whole activity, grinding the coffee and making the plunger of coffee, and you simply supply the hot water when required
• discuss coffee making experiences in the past
• buy some biscuits to enjoy with the coffee
• make some cake or biscuits to enjoy with the coffee.
ACTIVITY 18.
FLOWER ARRANGING

This can be a very colourful activity with many aromas. You could use real flowers, or artificial flowers that you have scented with different bottled aromas.

PREPARATION
Buy a bunch of flowers.
Provide a vase.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Place a vase on the table, and add some water.
2. Give one flower to the person to hold.
3. Show them how to smell it.
4. Invite them to put the flower in the vase. If they like to hold on to it. You can continue demonstrating how to put flowers in the vase until they follow suit.
5. Continue with the other flowers.

You may want to:
• arrange the flowers for the person.
  Let them still hold one flower
• just smell each flower or feel the textures
• match flowers with pictures.

You might like to:
• hand the person all the flowers and leave the arranging to them
• bring a number of different flowers and ask them to combine these in the vase. You can prepare this as a gift for a neighbour or friend
• go to a flower shop together and let the person choose which flowers to buy
• take a walk and explore all the flowers that you encounter. Gently touch, smell and discuss colours or other aspects of the flowers.
ACTIVITY 19.
HERBS

This activity is ideal for people who like cooking or gardening. It might be good to use herbs with a distinct smell (e.g. mint, coriander, rosemary).
This activity can also be done using spices (e.g. cinnamon, vanilla).

PREPARATION
Buy several bunches of herbs or bring some home-grown herbal plants.

Tip
If you buy herbs, you can store them best by wrapping them in wet newspapers and put them in your fridge.

Have some wet wipes ready to clean your hands.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Give one herb to the person and hold one yourself.
2. Demonstrate rubbing the leaves between your fingers, then smelling your fingers.
3. Invite the person to do the same.
4. Continue with the other herbs, one at a time.

⚠️ You may want to:
- let the person smell your hands
- show pictures of the herbs and sort the actual herbs with the pictures.

🏠 You could:
- use a mortar and pestle to squash the herbs and bring out the aroma more
- consider planting the herbs together (Activity 20)
- bring a cookbook and match herbs with dishes
- do a sorting activity where you separate Asian herbs (e.g. ginger, lemon grass, coriander) from other herbs (e.g. rosemary, thyme, mint).
ACTIVITY 20. PLANTING SEEDS

This activity may be enjoyable for anyone who enjoys gardening.

PREPARATION
Organise to have some soil in small bags, small amount of seeds, and some colourful pots.
Bring some gardening gloves.

THE ACTIVITY

1. Show the gardening gloves, demonstrate how to put them on and then invite or help the person to put theirs on.
2. Place one pot near the person.
3. Demonstrate using a gardening tool to transfer soil from the bag to the pot. Push it down to compact the soil.
4. Invite the person to participate, and hand them the tool.
5. Open the bag of soil and invite them to take some out and put it in the pot.
6. Continue until the pot is reasonably full.
7. Demonstrate making a hole in the soil, putting in a seed and covering in the hole.
8. Invite the person to make a hole.
9. Hand them a seed and invite the person to plant it.
10. Suggest they cover the seed with some soil.
11. Continue planting seeds in the same pot, or start a new pot.

You may want to:
• plant the seeds for the person
• just feel the soil
• go for a walk through the garden.

You could:
• plant some actual pot plants or herbs
• extend the activity by watering the soil daily
• make a little garden together.
‘Snoezelen’ is a term that describes multisensory treatment. It means creating a calming environment that facilitates relaxation. This could be pleasant to initiate before bedtime. In this you combine several of the previous activities.

You might introduce some aromatherapy using an electric oil diffuser with a small amount of pure essential oil to add a subtle aroma to the room.

**Good oils to help aid natural sleep are:**
- lavender (calming and sedating)
- chamomile (sedating and calming)
- jasmine (sedating, soothing and has antidepressant properties)

**Oils to calm, relax and relieve stress** include neroli, rose, sandalwood, sweet marjoram and ylang ylang.

It might be helpful to find a quiet corner or, if possible, a room that can be used for this activity. The person may like to use this space every day, so it may be worth the time to find or design a relaxing environment.

**PREPARATION**

Find a quiet corner or a room that can be used for this activity.

- Find out what kind of music they enjoy and that has a soothing effect on the person.
- Install a bubble lamp or a lamp that gradually changes colour in a corner.
- Prepare a comfortable chair, preferably one that can tilt backwards. You could also provide a footrest.
- Bring a few different oils to the activity so that the person has a choice. It is important to use good quality essential oils (and not a blend or a fragrance), and use only a few drops at any one time. They should not be used directly on the skin.
- Bring an electric oil diffuser (if you have one).

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Explore with the person what their preferences are.
2. Put a drop of oil on a tissue and ask the person if they like the smell. If not, try a different oil, remembering not to use the oils directly on skin.
3. Start the oil diffuser with the preferred oil.
4. Invite the person to sit down by pointing at the chair. Put the footrest in front of them; if necessary help their feet up.
5. Put on comfortable shoes or slippers for them; perhaps add a blanket.
6. Turn on the bubble lamp and dim other lights and turn on some music. With every step observe the person reaction: is it relaxing them or does it cause overstimulation? Turn things off again if the response is not positive.
7. Turn on the music.
8. Sit next to them for a while. Are they happy to relax alone or would they like you to stay with them? You could perhaps give them a hand massage if that is enjoyable for them.
5 TASTING ACTIVITIES
ACTIVITY 22.
ORANGE JUICE SQUEEZE

This activity also helps with muscle strengthening.

PREPARATION
Find an old-fashioned (non-electric) orange squeezer.
Bring in a couple of oranges.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Cut an orange in half.
2. Demonstrate how to put the orange on the orange squeezer and how to squeeze by twisting the orange backwards and forwards.
3. Invite the person to continue.
4. If the first half has been squeezed, hand them the second half.
5. Continue with other oranges.
6. Demonstrate how to pour the juice into a glass.
7. Hand the squeezer to the person to continue pouring.
8. Invite the person to drink the juice.
9. If they are happy to continue, ask them to make a juice for you.

⚠️ You may want to:
• do the squeezing yourself and invite the person to smell and taste the juice
• assist the person to squeeze the fruit by putting your hand on top of theirs and do the squeezing together.
• Use an electric squeezer that lets you hold the orange still while the machine moves under the orange to squeeze out the juice.

🏠 You could:
• let the person also cut the oranges
• add a lime for some finer muscle exercise and to give zest to the drink.
ACTIVITY 23.
FOOD TASTING

This could be a feast.
Think of some of the person’s favourite foods, and prepare tasting boxes. If the person really likes something less healthy, such as chocolate or cheese, prepare small portions and do it only infrequently. The following example is a fruit tasting.

PREPARATION
Bring a variety of fruits. Select fruits that are distinct from one another in colour, smell and taste (e.g. strawberries, kiwi fruit, banana, mango).
Also bring some plastic forks and plates.
Cut all the fruit in small pieces, perhaps with the person’s help, and place in separate containers.

Take care that everything is ready to eat, and that the person does not have trouble swallowing.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Line up the containers with the fruits, well within the person’s reach.
2. Place a plate in front of the person and in front of you.
3. Using a fork, demonstrate taking some fruit from a container and putting it on a plate.
4. Hand a fork to the person and invite them to take a piece of fruit from a container and put it on the plate.
5. Continue with the other fruit.
6. Once there are several bits of fruit on the plate, demonstrate and then invite the person to eat the pieces.

Many people will enjoy this. Try to sit a group of people around a small table and put a fruit platter in the middle.

You could try:
• assisting the person’s hand when they reach for the fruits, or feeding the fruit to them
• mixing the fruits into a nice ‘smoothy’ for the person to drink
• doing a card sorting activity (Activity 1) with pictures of different coloured fruits or likes and dislikes.

You may want to:
• bring pictures of the fruits you selected. After each tasting, show the pictures of different fruits and ask which one they just tasted
• prepare a fruit scoring sheet and ask the person to rate each fruit. You can fill out the form for them
• prepare a fruit salad together.
ACTIVITY 24.
HIGH TEA

The activity combines a nice ‘cuppa’ and some food tasting with the aesthetics of an elegant tea set.

Foods that may be good for a high tea are small sandwiches (without the crust), mini cupcakes, scones with cream and jam, mini savoury pies, or any other food that the person really likes.

PREPARATION
Put a variety of food on a tea tray or dish.
Include teacups and saucers, a variety of tea bags and a teapot.

Many people will enjoy sharing a high tea. Sit a group of people around a small table and put the tea tray in the middle within everyone’s reach. Consider having some music in the background.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Give the person a choice of types of tea.
2. Make the tea of their choice.
4. Start by taking one piece of food and direct the person towards the same type of food.
5. Taste the food together.
6. Choose something else and continue and enjoy.

You could try:
• assisting the person’s hand when they reach for the food, or feed the food to them
• present one food at the time; presenting a full tray may cause overstimulation
• simply having a cuppa together.

You may want to:
• prepare the high tea together with the person. Remember to give them simple tasks that you have demonstrated (e.g. crowning strawberries, spreading egg salad on sandwiches, pouring the tea)
• try tasting different teas, then discuss the differences.
Most people enjoy being involved in cooking activities, but you need to consider what tasks are safe for the person to do.

You may want to print the recipe in a large enough size that the person can read it. You could prepare labels describing each task in a few words and match the words with the pictures and possible numbers so that the order is very clear.

**PREPARATION**

Make sure the person can easily see what you are doing, either from a comfortable chair with a table tray where they assist with certain tasks, or standing with you.

Print the recipe.

Prepare labels describing each task (if you are using these).

Gather the ingredients together in one place.

Have the necessary equipment close at hand.

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. If you are using a recipe, look at the recipe together. If you are using labels, put them where the person can see.

2. For each step in the preparation, think of something that the person can do (e.g. washing vegetables, taking pasta out of its wrapping, shelling boiled eggs).

3. Demonstrate one activity.

4. Encourage the person to do the same.

5. Show them everything you are doing and invite them to feel the foods you are working with by putting them within reach.

6. Invite them to smell or taste by demonstrating what you would like them to do.

**You may want to:**

- just let the person sit comfortably in your kitchen where they can see what you are doing
- invite the person to feel, smell and taste
- look at a well-illustrated cookbook.

**You could:**

- ask the person to choose a recipe. Give two options to facilitate the choice. Or give them a cookbook if they are happy to look through it
- give them one dish to prepare (e.g. a salad). Demonstrate each step, one after the other
- prepare an oven dish together. When the dish is in the oven, clean yourselves up and dress up for a nice dinner. Set the table together. Enjoy a lovely dinner.

**TIP**

This activity will probably take double the time it would take you to do by yourself, so only do this on a day when you have plenty of time.
As with cooking (Activity 25), you need to consider what tasks are safe for the person to do.

**TIP**
Always be close at hand to ensure that the person stays safe.
Consider protective hand care, such as gloves, so the person cannot burn themselves.

**PREPARATION**
Make sure the person can easily see what you are doing, either from a comfortable chair with a table tray where they assist with certain tasks, or standing with you.

**THE ACTIVITY**
1. Unwrap the meat together.
2. Demonstrate to the person how to put the meat on plates.
3. Either ask the person to hand you certain pieces of meat (e.g. skewers) that you will put on the BBQ or reverse these roles and hand the person meat to put on the BBQ.
4. Demonstrate how to turn the meat and invite the person to do the same.
5. When the meat is cooked, demonstrate how to put each piece on a plate.
6. Ask the person to bring the plate to the table or serve people that are standing around.

**You may want to:**
- let the person sit comfortably near the BBQ where they can see what you are doing
- invite the person to feel, smell and taste the food
- look at a BBQ cookbook, with pictures.

**You could:**
- go meat shopping together
- swap roles and be the person’s assistant. Demonstrate the steps, but then just assist
- invite the family and encourage some of the family members to work with the person.
ACTIVITY 27.
FRUIT SORTING

This activity involves sorting a mix of fruit into its various components.

PREPARATION
Bring a variety of fruit in a large bowl or basket.
You will also need a number of smaller bowls – one for each different type of fruit.

THE ACTIVITY
1. Put the bowl or basket of fruit on the table in front of the person within their reach.
2. You could place the smaller bowls around the larger bowl.
3. Demonstrate the activity by moving one piece of fruit to one bowl and a second type of fruit to another bowl.
4. Invite the person to continue to do the same, with fruit being put into the bowl with other pieces of the same fruit.
5. Finish when the person communicates it has been enough or when they seem to tire.
6. You could then eat a piece of fruit together: let the person choose by presenting two fruits to them.

You may want to:
• transfer one type of fruit from a big bowl to a smaller bowl (and back again)
• peel a banana
• invite the person to slice a banana with a butter knife. You could put lines of syrup on the banana to show where to cut, and demonstrate the first cut.

After sorting the fruits, you could make a fruit salad together.
• You could use BBQ tongs to move the fruits. This will use different muscles.
• To also train leg muscles, you could do the activity standing up.
• To use even more muscles, the person could do the activity while seated but stand up to sort one particular fruit and sit down again. (You need to make sure that the person is steady on their feet; if you are unsure, just ask them to lift themselves once only.)
**ACTIVITY 28. PASTA SORTING**

This activity does not involve actual tasting, but is closely associated with cooking. It has been a hit with some people from Italian backgrounds.

**PREPARATION**

Provide different types of pasta. Select a variety in size, shape and, if possible, colour (e.g. tricolour).

Have each type of pasta in a different storage box. Or you could mix some of the pastas together, if you want to sort by shape.

Have two extra (transparent) boxes for the actual sorting.

**THE ACTIVITY**

1. Place the boxes in front of the person.
2. Present the first type of pasta to the person. Let them have a look and feel. Indicate to the person which box this particular shape should go into.
3. Show the other type of pasta to the person. Let them see and touch it. Indicate to the person where this particular shape should go.
4. Hand a piece of pasta to the person, and invite them to put it in the associated box.
5. Continue with more pasta.

**You may want to:**
- prepare labels with a picture of the pasta as a prompt
- just look at and explore the texture of the pasta.

**You could:**
- hand the box with the mixed pastas to the person and let them sort them without help
- add a third sorting box to add an additional colour or shape to the mix
- cook some pasta. Give the person structured tasks (e.g. ask them to wash the tomatoes for the sauce or stir the sauce). Don’t forget to demonstrate
In the Montessori approach to rehabilitation for people with dementia, the goal is to enable individuals to reverse some of the existing deficits to achieve higher levels of functioning and to prevent excess disability. Structured, person-centred activities, such as many of the ones described previously, are a key feature of rehabilitation in the Montessori approach.

People with dementia who are apathetic show increased engagement when activities are matched to their interests and ability. A range of therapeutic activities can benefit these people. These include music, exercise, cooking, creative activities and Montessori methods. A common feature of positive non-drug interventions for these people is that activities are individually tailored to their needs and interests.

The following case study looks at the effectiveness of non-drug interventions in the rehabilitation of an 83-year-old woman with dementia who is experiencing apathy. It also shows how the process helped her sons re-establish meaningful connections with her. It also demonstrates how the woman learnt from the experience of involvement in the rehabilitation process.
In recent years Marjorie had withdrawn from friendships and activities that had once been a great source of enjoyment. Marjorie’s personal hygiene was neglected and her two sons found they had to increasingly undertake household chores to support Marjorie to remain in her own home. Marjorie’s sons were bewildered by her complete loss of interest in her home as her home and garden had always been a great source of pride and pleasure. Marjorie had been depressed for some time following her husband’s death, but that was many years ago. The changes in Marjorie that the family observed in recent times were out of character and they were not surprised when her doctor confirmed a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease. Following several falls and a near-disaster with a fire in the kitchen, it seemed logical to move Marjorie to a residential aged care facility although the decision caused considerable distress for the family.

Following Marjorie’s move to the facility, apathy continued to be a major problem for her interaction with her family. Family members described Marjorie as previously being a vivacious, attractive lady with a wide range of interests. In the facility, Marjorie was assessed as having a moderate level of dementia; however, her son described his mother as ‘giving up’ although she was in no obvious distress. The family commented that they were keen to find a way to spend meaningful time with Marjorie, as visiting has become a depressing experience.

Staff were also concerned about Marjorie’s apathy. She lost interest in participating in group activities arranged by the Lifestyle department and the nursing staff commented that she just sat in her room or in the lounge area for extended periods of time. Her reduced appetite and loss of mobility were also causing concern. Despite Marjorie’s ability to speak and comprehend simple instructions, Marjorie’s sons felt they were no longer able to communicate with her. A recent assessment confirmed further cognitive decline. Other assessments confirmed a mild level of depression although the doctor diagnosed her apathy to be more a consequence of her dementia than depression.

Communication

Before establishing the rehabilitation plan, it was important to support Marjorie’s sons to develop more effective approaches to their communication with their mother, as their current approach would have undermined her rehabilitation. Various attempts by one son to engage Marjorie using scolding, reassurance, humour and pleading had proved unsuccessful. The other son tended to talk at her from the doorway, talk over her and about her to staff, and quiz her to improve her memory. This approach appeared to overwhelm her and exacerbate her detachment.

The modelling of more effective approaches to communication assisted the sons to enhance their communicating with Marjorie. The approaches included gently gaining Marjorie’s attention on each visit, focusing on tone and pitch of voice, using gestures, and communicating at the same physical level. Unnecessary distractions in the environment were reduced, including turning off the television. Other strategies included greater patience, simple sentence construction, and limiting choices.

Which approach to use for rehabilitation

In general, family and staff had expressed a keen desire to alleviate Marjorie’s apathy by supporting her to engage in activities that previously had been enjoyable for her. Ideally, these activities were to be shared with the family during visits.

It was explained to the family that the level of engagement in activities for people with dementia increases when activities are tailored to the person’s interests and skills. Ultimately their decision was to proceed with the Montessori approach as a non-drug intervention. This decision was based on interest by the family and staff in the progression of an activity that reflected Marjorie’s current abilities and skills and in the longer term,
the possible development of roles and routines for Marjorie within the facility.

**Identification of the goals using the Montessori approach**

After assessing Marjorie’s current skills and interests, three goals were identified. The principal goal, which was to be the focus of Marjorie’s rehabilitation plan, was that Marjorie actively engage in an activity of interest to her for a minimum of fifteen minutes each day for ten consecutive days. The activity selected involved flowers and would be supported by her sons each time they visited and by staff on the days they were absent.

The two other long-term goals were that Marjorie develop a role within the facility that required her to fulfil specific tasks on a daily basis, and that she participate in musical activities with other residents as arranged by facility staff.

**Development of rehabilitation plan**

Application of Montessori principles to Marjorie’s plan meant that the activity would initially be presented at the simplest level. It also required that modifications be planned to accommodate her progression with the activity. In terms of arranging the flowers, it was planned that Marjorie would initially observe the arrangement of the flowers and then progress to do it herself. Similar activities would include arranging silk flowers in the vases in the dining room. Related and more complex activities could include propagating and potting plants and developing roles and routines within the facility.

**Implementation**

A roster was established for the ten-day period that required each son to visit on two occasions during the week and on one occasion each during the weekend. On the day the sons were absent, the staff undertook to engage Marjorie in the activity. This very structured approach was designed to clarify and confirm the specific commitment to the plan by staff and family and to optimise the plan’s chances of success.

On each occasion, the Montessori principles were applied. These included preparing the environment to ensure unnecessary distractions were removed. A small area was set up in Marjorie’s room for her to arrange the flowers. This included a table and a tray that defined the area where the flower and vases could be clearly seen. In the dining room, a work station was set up where the flowers and vase were clearly visible and labelled.

Interruptions and distractions in the environment were meant to be reduced as much as possible. Unfortunately this wasn’t easy to manage as routines related to morning tea and medications disrupted the activity on five of the ten days despite requests to staff for this not to occur. Distractions in the dining room were also difficult to manage because many of the other residents were interested in what was going on.

On each occasion, Marjorie was invited to participate and offered a choice of related activities. When it was not appropriate to alter the fresh flower arrangement, Marjorie was invited to arrange the silk flowers in the dining room or reminisce using a display folder prepared by her sons, which contained photos of her garden and favourite plants.

Marjorie was shown what to do with minimal conversation and minimal steps. Marjorie was never corrected, the focus of the activity remained on the process rather than the outcome. On each occasion Marjorie was thanked for her participation.

**Evaluation**

Marjorie’s sons both commented that over the ten-day period, their mother’s verbal communication increased, her facial expressions became more positive and her general level of engagement increased. These were also observed by the staff.
APPENDIX A. TYPE SIZE TEST

Invite the person to read the words listed on the following page starting with the largest type size gradually working your way down.

The type sizes used are: 100 (about one inch high/2.5cm), 72, 48 (about a half-inch high/1cm), 36, 24, 16 and 12 points.

If they cannot read a word, say ‘Did I make the letters too small? Ok. We’ll only use letters that are the right size.’

Don’t ask the person to keep reading after they first cannot read a word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Read correctly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>(100pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>(72pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud</td>
<td>(48pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>(36pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>(24pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave</td>
<td>(16pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>(12pt)</td>
<td>Yes □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cut out or photocopy the following page.
Sea
Cat
Cloud
Dog
Sun
Wave
Land
APPENDIX B.
TEMPLATES

Cut out or photocopy the following templates.
APPENDIX C.
MONTESSORI ACTIVITIES FOR AGITATION, AFFECT AND ENGAGEMENT

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE MONTESSORI METHODOLOGY

The authors of this book have also done research to show the impact of Montessori activities.

A study with 44 aged care facility residents with dementia and high-frequency agitated behaviour (usually pacing) showed distinct changes in these individuals’ agitation, engagement and affect. However, this was a select group. All participants resided in facilities in Melbourne, Victoria and only around 20% of everyone in facilities was eligible for this study, because of our focus on agitation, which was usually associated with severe dementia.

Agitation

We observed individuals 30 minutes before, during and after an intervention applying activities with Montessori principles. For every minute we recorded the presence or absence of the behaviour. Hence, the score for every period could range from 0 to 30.

Figure 1. Minutes with agitation for a group of 44 people with severe agitation and dementia

Before doing the activities, the participants in this group were pacing on average 17 of the 30 minutes (Figure 1). During the activities this was reduced to 8 minutes. After the activities facilitator left, the level went back to the same level as before the activities.

Figure 2. Minutes with agitation for people with and without English language fluency

The group consisted of people who were still fluent in English (32 individuals) and people who had lost their fluency in English because it was their second language (12 individuals). Figure 2 shows that the group who had lost their fluency in English was pacing more before the activities than the group who could still speak English. The reduction of agitation in the non-English speaking people was greater than the reduction in English speakers.

Active engagement

We also recorded at one minute intervals what the predominant type of engagement of the participant was. We studied 4 types of engagement: 2 positive kinds (active and passive engagement) and 2 negatives types (non- and self-engagement). Active engagement meant that the individual was actively participating with the environment or the activities, either by talking to people or by handling materials. Passive engagement meant they were still involved with the environment or activity by listening or watching. Self-engagement was a focus on the self, usually associated with agitation as well, and non-engagement was signified by a blank stare.

Figure 3. Minutes with positive engagement for a group of 44 people with severe agitation and dementia

Figure 3 shows that there was limited opportunity for these people to be positively engaged before and after the activities were delivered: on average,
7 of the 30 minutes. However, during the Montessori activities they were able to positively engage with the facilitator and the activity for 22 of the 30 minutes, resulting in positive interactions between facilitator and participant.

The findings presented have been published in scientific journals:


RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING


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Dementia: Facing the Epidemic. A vision for a world class dementia care system. September 2009

Younger Onset Dementia: A New Horizon, National Consumer Summit March 2013

These documents and others available on www.fightdementia.org.au
Prepare the environment by ensuring there is calmness and not too much clutter in the area where you will spend time together. Also avoid an overly stimulating environment.

Prepare a number of activities and consider preparing the activities together with the person.

Include a variety of activities that stimulate different senses; this recognises that different activities might appeal to the person on different days.

It may be good to demonstrate what you want the person to do before asking them to do it.

Avoid correcting if you think a mistake is made.

Use safe materials; nothing sharp, or things that may look edible if they are not suitable to eat.

Think of opportunities to make each activity easier or more complex. If the person is having difficulty engaging in the activity independently, it may help to break the activity down into smaller tasks and demonstrate each step separately.

When music is a favourite, consider using your phone or other media player and portable speakers (because head phones may not be tolerated).

Bring glasses, magnifiers or hearing aids if the person needs them.

Ensure you will both be comfortable wherever you set up.

In residential care, you may want to ask staff to assist you when seating the person.

**CHECKLIST**
When preparing for your activities:

- Prepare the environment by ensuring there is calmness and not too much clutter in the area where you will spend time together. Also avoid an overly stimulating environment.
- Prepare a number of activities and consider preparing the activities together with the person.
- Include a variety of activities that stimulate different senses; this recognises that different activities might appeal to the person on different days.
- It may be good to demonstrate what you want the person to do before asking them to do it.
- Avoid correcting if you think a mistake is made.
- Use safe materials; nothing sharp, or things that may look edible if they are not suitable to eat.
- Think of opportunities to make each activity easier or more complex. If the person is having difficulty engaging in the activity independently, it may help to break the activity down into smaller tasks and demonstrate each step separately.
- When music is a favourite, consider using your phone or other media player and portable speakers (because head phones may not be tolerated).
- Bring glasses, magnifiers or hearing aids if the person needs them.
- Ensure you will both be comfortable wherever you set up.
- In residential care, you may want to ask staff to assist you when seating the person.
Keep the **Relate, Motivate, Appreciate** model in mind when interacting with a person living with dementia.

**THE MONTESSORI PRINCIPLES**

1. The activity should have a sense of purpose and capture the person’s interest.

2. Always invite the person to participate.

3. Offer choice whenever possible.

4. Talk less. Demonstrate more.

5. Physical skills; focus on what the person can do.

6. Match your speed with the person you are caring for. Slow down!

7. Use visual hints, cues or templates.

8. Give the person something to hold.

9. Go from simple tasks to more complex ones.

10. Break a task down into steps; make it easier to follow.

11. To end, ask: ‘Did you enjoy doing this?’ and ‘Would you like to do this again?’

12. There is no right or wrong. Think engagement.

At the back of this fold-out, there is a checklist on how to prepare for a visit.