

Communication Friendly Activities

Seasonal Card Making

This activity can be undertaken 1:1 or in a group setting, depending what is most appropriate for your residents.

e.g. Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas

- Everyone can be involved in making the cards.
- Cards can contain advice/message from residents.
 - **Mother's Day** – advice from long time parents.
 - Cards could be given to local midwives to hand out to new parents, sold to the local community to raise funds etc.
 - **Valentine's Day** – advice about love/successful relationships.
 - Cards can be given to local high schools, donated churches/registry offices to give to newly married couples, sold to the local community to raise funds etc.
 - **Christmas cards** – recipe for mince pies, a tradition that the resident enjoys.
 - Cards could be sold to families of residents/visitors to raise funds for your home, sent to Social Work teams who could send it those who are on their own.

Blank Canvas

This activity can be undertaken 1:1 or in a group setting, depending what is most appropriate for your residents.

- Create a picture as a way of reflection.
- Bring out your arts and crafts tools such as paints, pens, brushes, sponges, fingers, hands can be used on the canvas.
- Topics could include:
 - How you feel
 - Your life story
 - Your favourite thing
 - Something you are grateful for
 - What you see from where you sit
- If residents are willing and able, you can discuss the pictures and their meanings/feelings.
- Picture/emotion cards can be used to help support communication.

Memory Mats

This activity can be undertaken 1:1 or in a group setting, depending what is most appropriate for your residents.

What's needed:

- Large blank sheet of paper/card.
- Photos
- Words
- Maps
- Song lyrics
- Blank pieces of paper for resident's words to be added.
- Residents choose what to put on the mat to cover it.
- Prompts memories and starts conversations.
- Families may like to be involved in this activity and are likely going to be able to support with memories/stories.

Music and Singing

- Music can be a **powerful tool** to evoke **memories**, provide **familiarity, comfort** and **improve mood**.
- Research has suggested that music, in a variety of forms, can have a **positive impact on a person's physical and mental health**. It is suggested that it **can improve thinking, feeling, perception, mood and behaviour**.
- Musical activity can **encourage people to communicate verbally**, by generating **conversation** and **reminiscence**. For others that may be challenging, but look for **non-verbal changes** in your residents such as **changes in facial expression or body language: smiling and swaying and/or clapping to the music**.

Making Musical Instruments

For those who find conversation too challenging or overwhelming, **using musical instruments** such as maracas, drums and tambourines can **encourage participation** and **reduce the communication load**.

What about making some musical instruments as a craft activity using simple, household items?

This activity can be undertaken 1:1 or in a group setting, depending what is most appropriate for your residents.

Maracas

- Fill an empty water bottle with dried rice/beans/peas.

Tambourines

- Take a paper plate, pierce some wholes near the edges and tie ribbons with small bells attached, through the holes to create a tambourine.

Drums

- Use empty Pringles cans with the lids in place
- Alternatively, stretch a balloon over the top of an empty coffee jar/tin, secure with a rubber band.

Sharing Music

This activity can be undertaken 1:1 or in a group setting, depending what is most appropriate for your residents.

Conversation around songs may be challenging for some. However, depending on the resident's communication ability you can use these questions to open conversation:

- Do you recognise this song?
- Does it bring happy memories?
- Can you remember what year this was?
- What memories does this song trigger?
- Do you remember roughly how old you were and what you were doing around the time this song was in the charts?

Music from the 50's

Here are some examples of familiar songs from the 1950's which may trigger memories and create conversation.

Many of these songs will be familiar to a variety of age groups due to their popularity and also where they have been used in advertising.

Song	Artist
Mack the Knife	Bobby Darin
That's Amore	Dean Martin
Unforgettable	Not "King" Cole
How High the Moon	Les Paul and Mary Ford
Chances Are	Johnny Mathis
Young At Heart	Frank Sinatra
Cry	Johnny Ray
Rags to Riches	Tony Bennett
Love Me Or Leave Me	Sammy Davies Jr.
What A Diff'rence a Day Made	Dinah Washington

Music from the 60's

Here are some examples of familiar songs from the 1960's which may trigger memories and create conversation.

Many of these songs will be familiar to a variety of age groups due to their popularity and also where they have been used in advertising.

Song	Artist
She Love's You	The Beatles
Respect	Aretha Franklin
Mrs. Robinson	Simon & Garfunkel
I Heard It Through The Grape Vine	Marvin Gaye
Downtown	Petula Clark
Brown Eyed Girl	Van Morrison
Happy Together	The Turtles
Sittin' On The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding
I Got You Babe	Cher & Sonny
Do You Believe In Magic?	The Lovin' Spoonful
California Dreamin'	Barry McGuire
Sweet Caroline	Neil Diamond
Dancing in the Street	Martha Reeves & The Vandellas
I Got You (I Feel Good)	James Brown and The Famous Flames
Whiter Shade of Pale	Procol Harum
Twist & Shout	The Isley Brothers
My Girl	The Temptations

Music from the 70's

Here are some examples of familiar songs from the 1970's which may trigger memories and create conversation.

Many of these songs will be familiar to a variety of age groups due to their popularity and also where they have been used in advertising.

Song	Artist
Bohemian Rhapsody	Queen
Stayin' Alive	The Bee Gees
Don't Go Breaking My Heart	Elton John & Kiki Dee
You're The One That I Want	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John
American Pie	Don McLean
Jolene	Dolly Parton
Heart of Glass	Blondie
I Will Survive	Gloria Gaynore
No Woman, No Cry	Bob Marley and The Wailers
Life on Mars?	David Bowie
Dancing Queen	ABBA
Maggie May	Rod Stewart

Concert

- Residents to select songs they would like to focus on and “practice”.
- Plan a concert jointly with nurseries and/or schools. Residents can sing, lead chair exercise etc and children can sing, play instruments etc.
- Concerts could be arranged to mark events throughout the year with themed songs e.g. Remembrance Day, start of the summer, Christmas.