

DEMENTIA ACTIVITIES IN LOCKDOWN



Many people find it hard to keep people living with dementia occupied, and at this time of national restrictions on movement, day centres and groups have been cancelled and family occasions and trips out postponed. It can feel daunting at the thought of keeping people engaged so we've put together a few ideas that may be useful.

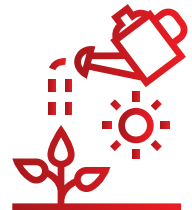
The key thing is that activities can be **S.I.M.P.L.E.**

S SENSORY ACTIVITIES



Dementia often affects the senses and for many people some of the 5 senses can be lost or reduced – so focusing on the senses that are still accessible for people can help them feel connected to the world around them and help them to recall and remember places, people and events from their past. An example of this could be setting up a bowl with shells and sand, whilst listening to seaside sounds and eating ice cream – to help remember holidays or time spent at the beach.

M MEANINGFUL



Something people with dementia often report is that they feel lost or no longer have a purpose and if they are no longer leaving the house and attending groups and activities it can become frustrating for people and affect their mood. Meaningful activities are based around previous work tasks and also jobs around the house. Helping prepare vegetables for lunch, laying the table, watering the plants in the garden or matching odd socks are all useful activities that are simple to offer. For those that miss a working life having paper, files or envelopes or other items that can recreate a work-like experience may be useful. Remember that everything we do from getting up to going to bed is an activity, so helping people stay as independent as they can with personal care and getting ready in the morning are all important activities.

I INDIVIDUALISED ACTIVITIES



We all have different likes, interests and strengths and what hobbies and activities we do in our day to day life varies from day to day, week to week. When looking at activities to do with your loved one, think of what they have liked in the past, but don't be disheartened if they are not interested on a particular day with that activity, try something new. What can be useful is having a table or box next to your loved one with a variety of things on it, so that people can choose what they would like to do. The table might include items for reminiscence such as a family photo album, service medals, magazines, some adult colouring, a twiddle mitt, modelling clay, hand cream and some jewellery or make up. Items should be individual for that person and based around their stage of dementia.

P PEACEFUL



Sometimes sitting quietly and being peaceful is the most wonderful way to spend some time at home. As with all activities what makes the person content and restful varies. Sitting still and daydreaming or watching the world go by is an activity in itself. Things that make people feel peaceful may be music, art, reading or listening to an audio book or the radio, listening to poetry or hymns, praying or just being in a room with a loved one.



L LIFE STORY



Dementia affects everyone differently, and no two people with dementia will have the same experience. This is due to the differences in how the disease is affecting people but also due to everyone's past experiences in life – their life story. Sitting down with someone and putting together an album of photos or memories using postcards, concert tickets, train tickets etc can be beneficial and bonding and can be used to support reminiscence and also as a way to tailor other activities based on past likes, interest and experiences.

E ENERGISING



Exercise is good for the mind, body and soul. It can be very hard to keep up with exercise especially when we are being asked to stay in doors due to social isolation. There are lots of videos on the internet with chair-based exercises. Or why not have a dance around the living room, play balloon tennis or use household chores as a way to keep active at this time?

Activities and abilities will vary and as previously mentioned, everyone is an individual and so please do contact the Admiral Nurse team for more individualised support around activities.

Activities can also be a moment that makes someone smile, like a butterfly landing on a flower and then flying off. They can be blowing bubbles together, telling a joke, holding hands, putting on a lipstick, saying good morning, calling someone by a pet name, looking at a photo, spotting a bird in the garden or opening the windows and feeling the breeze.

If you would like some support and advice from our team of dementia specialist Admiral Nurses contact us on **0808 802 8080**

If you're a member of the Armed Forces community and need some help during the current Covid-19 outbreak, we're here to help. Find out how we can support you at www.rbl.org.uk

Other resources can be found at: www.dementiauk.org • www.alzheimers.org.uk • <https://bestfriendsapproach.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/30-Activities.pdf>

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Using the computer as an aid to engage – listed below are just a few ways the computer can be used to engage a person with dementia:

Google Earth

Use Google Earth to go on a journey. Street View can be a great reminiscence tool. Visit a place where a person grew up, visit a favourite holiday destination, visit a place served in the Armed Forces.

History Sites

Many communities have their own historical sites with great photographs, ideal for reminiscence.

Life History Book

This could be put together through Microsoft Publisher or Microsoft PowerPoint with help from information, photographs and screenshots from the above. Even scan in some of your own photographs if you've not got digital copies. The life history book could just focus in on a person's service career and include such things as regimental, corps, squadron and ships badges which alone often evoke many memories.

Interactive Online Activities

Many songs from the shows and musicals are available for a karaoke style sing-a-long.

- Listening to music together with video.
- Many free concerts are now being shown online.
- Online jigsaw puzzles.

Even in the mid to later stages of dementia, using the computer to search for certain images can really help to engage – 'cute kittens' for example would certainly help to engage any cat lover.