

Activity 1 Memory Book

Objective: Creating a activity Memory Book

A Memory Book that could be used for anyone who wants to remember special events or for people who may have to go into hospital/ nursing home to remind them of their friends and happy times they enjoyed.

Uses skills: Attention, Recollection, Reminiscence

Equipment: An A4 folder : Stencils, Coloured Markers, Pretty Papers: Glitter: Beads: Glue: Photographs.

Method:

- 1 Decorate the front cover using glitter and other sparkling beads or jewels that can be bought in craft shops.
- 2 Everyone signs their names on the first page: to add a special effect to the signatures sparkles can be glued over the signatures to make them stand out.
- 3 Ask people to try and remember things they may have shared together: for example when a special guest visited or the group visited them or someone's' birthday (i.e. a milestone like an 80th Birthday).
- 4 Ask each person to describe their memory in a much detail as they can - as if they are telling a story - you or others in the group could help by asking prompting questions about the day/event.
- 5 While someone writes down the stories, others in the group create storyboards using photos and other craft materials to produce a memory book to share.

Make sure the book has a title on the spine and be put in a place where people can look at it, see it and remember it is there.

Activity 1 Reminiscence Activity for Recreation

This activity is used at the Caribbean elder's luncheon clubs in Luton to explore memories through stimulation and reminiscence. It is only an example of what is possible, as activities can be as varied as people's enthusiasm to learn something new or share their own skills.

The Memory Book activity can be done in just one session as a **storyboard/scrapbook page** or you may want to develop it even further over a period of time adding more pages to produce a memory book of your life.

Here are some other ideas for your Memory Book:-

- You could use scraps of material from a favourite dress or any other special outfit.
- Write down the words from a favourite song or hymn that brings back happy memories.
- Use Photographs and Recipes of your favourite foods.

It is very important though, to remember that whilst Dementia damages the memory and the brain's thought process, a person's ability to feel emotions is not affected. Looking at happy memories may also uncover memories that are not so pleasant; therefore this activities should be carried out sensitively, as strong emotions can surface when looking into the past.



Activity 2 Making a Calendar

Objective: Creating a calendar for friends or a member of your family

This activity will stimulate the memory and help each person recall Family events and Birthdays. It's a great way for older people to make a practical gift for a member of the family.

Uses skills: Attention, Raises Self-Esteem through a sense of Accomplishment

Equipment: Printed calendar sheets (one for each month) Photographs: Double-sided tape: Sheet of cardboard to use as a cover: Crafting Materials: Hole punch: Ribbon.

Method:

- 1 Print each month of the year on the top half of a piece of paper (January - December).
- 2 Decorate the bottom half of a blank calendar page with pictures of friends and family members who have birthdays that month and write the person's name on the appropriate date on the calendar.
- 3 Write in important dates and times of meetings and appointments.
- 4 Use stickers, glitter and other crafting papers and material to decorate the calendar pages.
- 5 Decorate the front cover of the calendar.
- 6 Collate all the pages together with the cover on the front and punch two holes in the left side of the stack of paper.
- 7 Slip pretty ribbon through the holes and tie into a bow at the front.



Activity 2 Creative Activity for Recollection

Many older people find it useful to plan tasks, make “things to do” lists; and use notes and other memory aids. You may remember things better by mentally connecting them to other meaningful things, such as a familiar name, song, or lines from a poem.

This activity is a fun way for you to remember those all important dates using the calendar to write down dates and photographs to illustrate members of your family.

Other ideas for calendars:-

- A calendar of **recipes** that can be handed down to other family members.
- A calendar using **pressed leaves and flowers** from the garden.
- A **medical calendar** - noting down appointments at the hospital or GP, with dates you started taking specific medication.

Making a calendar is only a starting point for developing other similar projects to aid memory. By developing it over a period of time, you can build it to become a longer term project. For example: **Create a genealogy chart** - that can be done as a family project, with each member filling in as much as they can remember. This would be a great activity for grandparents and grandchildren to do together.



Activity 3 Creating a Mosaic

Objective: Creating mosaic tiles of Caribbean island of birth

Creating a cultural piece of craft depicting the island that a person was born. A fun way for older people to achieve a sense of accomplishment.

Uses skills: Attention, Raises Self-Esteem through Achievement, Fun

Equipment: Tile grout: Tile adhesive: Trowel: Damp sponge: Old cotton towel: Mosaic tiles: Paintbrushes: Pictures of Caribbean flags.

Method:

- 1 Arrange the tiles on the table as they should look in the final product, making sure to leave spaces of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ in inch in between to fill in with grout.
- 2 Do not use the glue yet, or you can't move the tiles if you change your mind. Make sure the pattern is exactly as you wish.
- 3 Using the trowel put the glue into the mosaic surface and firmly press the tiles into the glue.
- 4 Once the tiles have bonded to the glue, mix the pre-mixed tile grout.
- 5 Carefully spoon grout onto the tiles, and work it between the cracks using the trowel.
- 6 Use the paintbrush to fill in small areas that you can't get to with the trowel making sure the grout is spread evenly.
- 7 After all the spaces between the tiles have been filled, let the mosaic flags sit for an hour.
- 8 After the hour is up, using the damp sponge lightly brush off the film that has likely formed on top of the tiles.
- 9 Give a final wipe over with the cotton towel under the tiles are gleaming bright.



Activity 3 Therapeutic Activity using Creativity

We all need to do things that keep us occupied and stimulated, but also help us relax and are fun to do. Taking part in arts based activities will help older people maintain their skills and develop new ones leading a sense of achievement.

Creative arts touches on various tactile elements that can assist the act of remembering and promotes well-being.

- You may find that this activity is a little fiddly because the pieces are small. Why not try making a large wall mosaic that can be displayed on the wall of the day centre by asking people to bring in old crockery or chipped cups from home. Or ask shops for old tiles that are now part of a discontinued range.

Creative arts therapy can be developed further by reviving some of the creative arts older Caribbean people may have learnt "back home" for example crocheting.

Activity 4 Making an Easter Tree

Objective: Making an Easter Tree

Uses skills: Promotes concentration: Creativity Feelings of Success and Competence

Equipment: Egg shaped ornaments: Glue: Spray paint: Chicken wire or similar: Old newspapers: Florist foam: Dried moss: Chocolate eggs.

Method:

- 1 Make the tree base and stump by forming chicken wire into a long cylinder and form 7-10 long thin branches the same way.
- 2 Wrap stump and branches with wet scrunched up paper, apply glue and leave to dry.
- 3 Glue branches onto tree and paint with craft or spray paints (White is the most popular colour for Easter trees , but you can use other pretty pastels such as pink, green, blue, or yellow) The lighter the paint, the better the tree will look.
- 4 **For the base:** Fill a small clay flowerpot with florist's foam and push the tree into the centre.
- 5 Spread a layer of glue around the base and decorate using dried moss.
- 6 Now decorate your tree by using pastel coloured bows to tie onto the branches.
- 7 Use egg shaped ornaments or any other small novelties you may have around the house to decorate the tree.
- 8 Finish the tree by securing chocolate eggs in between the branches with chicken wire.





Activity 4 Inspiration Activity providing Sensory Stimulation

Many Caribbean elders have children and grandchildren living in America who have adopted other customs associated to the country they are now living in. Celebrations have changed and there are marked differences in the way the younger generation celebrate holidays and other special occasions.

The Easter tree is a tradition that began in America and has taken their holiday period by storm. The idea for this activity was brought over by older Caribbean people who have been abroad on holiday and wanted to share this craft with others. It has served as an opportunity for others to be exposed to different types of holidays and the ways in which the same holiday can be celebrated with very different family traditions.

You can adapt this tree idea in many ways, for example:-

A Memory Tree - that can be created for the home and family, where each person writes down their best memory of each family/friend member. The notes are rolled up and secured onto the tree with gold thread. The notes can be opened and read aloud at Christmas.

Why not collect and keep the notes to put in your Memory Book.

Activity 5 Have you Ever?

Objective:

A memory game that encourages people to either make up a story or uses their own memories.

Uses skills: Recollection of memories: Raises Self-Esteem: Oral presentation

Equipment: Paper: Receptacle to keep questions in.

Method:

- 1 Think about the objective of the session before writing out memory stimulating questions on strips of paper. For example if the discussion was around "leisure" the questions could be...

Have you Ever. . . ?

Been on a boat?

Been swimming?

Been to America?

Slept in a tent?

Stayed on a farm?

Seen a lion?

Eaten Snails?

Sent an email?

- 2 Fold the pieces of paper in half and put into a bowl.
- 3 Each person takes a turn to pick a question and state where and when, giving details of the story.
- 4 If a person answers "No", you could ask if they would like to see/do the particular thing and why. For example, 'No, I haven't been on a boat, but I would like to because I like the sea,' or 'No, because I don't like the water.'

Activity 5 Cognitive Activity Stimulating Thought Processes

Intellectual stimulation is known to help people age well and remain alert. This cognitive activity is used at the luncheon clubs to evoke memories and thoughts, challenging older people's minds.

Did You Ever?.. Is based on Attention to detail: Recollection of memories: Cognitive ability and Oral presentation.

Other ways to adapt this game:-

- Try playing with family members or in a mixed group of adults and young people, comparing memories from different generations can help older people to understand the younger generation (and vice versa).
- Try to use this game to encourage people to make up stories around a theme or a specific question for example " what happened when you visited the seaside". This can help stretch and develop imagination, as well as being good fun!

Why not use some of the ideas that may be in people's memory books to stimulate thoughts around past experiences.

Activity 6 My Life Mind Map

Objective: To stimulate cognitive abilities and to initiate reminiscing

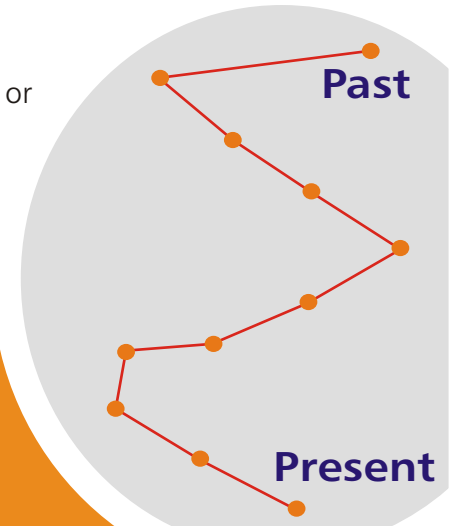
Uses skills: Reminiscence: Stimulate the memory

Equipment: Sheet of paper with a single column with years written down: Pens: Flipchart: Markers: Photocopies of the Mind Map.

Method:

- 1 Give each person one sheet of paper or use as a group activity using a sheet of flipchart (A1) paper.
- 2 Draw the shape of a head which represents the mind.
- 3 Using the pre written sheet of paper ask people to write one or more significant event associated with that year. The event can be personal or something that happened in the world. (i.e., 1934 etc.)
- 4 Starting with the date they were born and end with the most recent events that have occurred, and are important to them, enter the dates to create a timeline of their lives.
- 5 Encourage everyone to think of at least 5 key points.

Why not try creating a 'mind collage' of pictures, newspaper clippings or pick a specific year, for example The Queen's Coronation to make people remember their own memories associated to this.



Activity 7 Creative Acronyms

Objective: To stimulate cognitive abilities: Creativity

Uses skills: To increase self-esteem: Stimulate thought processes: Sense of accomplishment

Equipment: Paper: Pens: Dictionary: Examples of Creative Acronyms.

Method:

- 1 Give out examples of acronyms and ask each person to read one.
- 2 Each person writes a word on a piece of paper, for example WINTER.
- 3 Paper is collected and put into a bowl, each person is asked to take out one piece of paper and write an acronym around the word they picked.
- 4 Let people know the acronym does not have to flow like a poem, but could be a separate sentence for each line.

W Winter is my favourite time because
I I love to watch my grandson Nathan in the snow
N Nothing makes me smile so
T To see and hear him laugh with glee
E Every time he falls over
R Rushing about in the snow



Why not extend this activity getting people to try doing the names of their family with different things that they like.

Activity 8 Exchanging Recipes

Many Caribbean elders still take great joy in cooking. Whether it be standard meals, or fancy baking, cooking is an excellent way to keep people motivated and give them something to enjoy. Most islands in the Caribbean have their own methods of cooking a similar dish by adding one or two different ingredients, seasoning or spices.

Activity 1

Recipe cards

- 1 Ask each person to write down their favourite recipe for a meal, dessert, cake etc. on an index card stating the recipe and the island of origin.
- 2 Once everyone has prepared one, all that's left to do is swap them with other people.

Activity 2

Cook and Eat

- 1 Invite people to bring in a covered dish of food from the island they come from.
- 2 Using a computer print-out a menu and have the tables and room decorated with flags and objects from around the Caribbean islands (you could use the mosaic flags from Activity 3).
- 3 Ask people to bring in any Caribbean cook books they may have at home or borrow some from the library.
- 4 Invite people to the dining room to sample the various foods.
- 5 People could tell a little story about the origin of the recipe and display the key ingredients they used.



Activity 8 Healthy Living

Healthy Eating plays a key part in reducing health risks for Caribbean elders, principally due to the higher death rates due to strokes and hypertension. Healthy Eating does not have to mean that you cannot eat the staple foods that form the basis of Caribbean cuisine, such as Yams, Sweet Potato, Rice, Plantains etc.

Specially targeted programmes providing information on nutrition and how to reduce salt, sugar and fat intake have proved both popular and essential at the luncheon clubs.

Why not help people make informed choices about:

- Nutrition knowledge - providing fact sheets relating to health and food including the amounts of sugar and salt that is in canned foods.
- Helping older people to access safe, cheap, healthy foods by encouraging local shops to work in partnership with your community group.

Help them take preventative actions by:

- Promotion of healthy lifestyles providing dietary counselling by asking dieticians from the hospital to come in as speakers and have food information days including cooking demonstrations.

Help people improve their dietary management by:

- Provide a comprehensive healthy lifestyle and exercise programme to encourage weight reduction before a chronic disorder such as diabetes or hypertension develops.

Activity 9 Physical Activities

It is important that older Caribbean people have a good balance between mental and physical health. Exercise burns up the adrenalin produced by stress and frustration, and produces endorphins, which can promote feelings of happiness. This will help both of you relax and increase your sense of well-being. Exercise can help you develop a healthy appetite, enjoy increased energy levels and sleep better at night.

Activity 1

Tai Chi

A therapeutic and rehabilitative fitness program which can be modified to a sitting position for people in wheelchairs. Tai Chi uses slow and gentle movements, combined with deep breathing techniques to reduce aches and pains and relieve stress to provide a relaxing and effective workout. This programme also helps to increase energy and strengthens their muscles as the person becomes more relaxed. Tai chi, benefits both the mind and the body, and is particularly suited to elderly people because it has no violent impact to the body.

Activity 2

Using a ball of any size

- 1 Place wheel chairs / chairs in a circle filling in the empty spaces so the ball is not able to get out of the circle with the trainer standing in the centre of the circle.
- 2 Start off with a warm up tossing the ball to each person to hit back to you then see who is actually able to catch the ball; the ball is tossed to each person who then kicks it back to the trainer.





Activity 9 Movement and Fitness Programs

Physical exercise not only improves blood circulation and stimulates the growth of brain cells, but also is an effective way of maintaining both mental and physical health and has an important role to play in preventing dementia. This is especially important as a high percentage of Caribbean elders suffer from hypertension, heart disease, strokes and diabetes and osteoporosis.

For many older Caribbean people going to a gym is not an option they would consider. It is therefore, important for you to incorporate exercising into your daily life. Try to have at least 30 minutes of exercise each day. Even if you have low mobility, spread your 30 minutes throughout the day. You can start slowly, as your stamina increases step up the level of exercise.

Why not help people make informed choices about:

- Nutrition knowledge - providing fact sheets relating to health and food including the amounts of sugar and salt that is in canned foods.

Why not try:

- Take a short walk every day: to the local shop to get a paper or set a goal to walk around the garden 3 times a day, gradually building this up.
- Do 5 minutes of gentle dusting every day.
- Depending on the weather spend 15 minutes pottering in the garden.