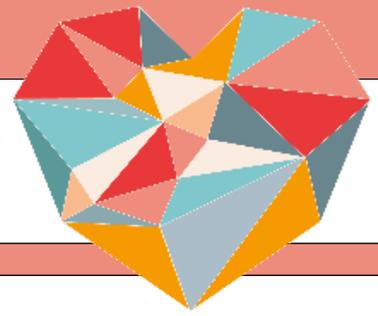


Meaningful art related activities for people living with dementia



How to facilitate someone with dementia to get involved in activities?

Activity involvement of someone with dementia is more complex than it seems. Especially in people with more advanced dementia.

Recommendations:

- Activities must be broken down into steps: someone may be able to do one or more steps of an entire activity, others may not be able to do any steps but enjoy just watching. Remember that even watching others do an activity can be stimulating and also creates a feeling of belonging.
- Respect the time each person needs to do the activities.
- The concept "well done" is relative: any intention to participate and any result of the task are successes, and therefore should be taken as such.
- Create environments: generate spaces with life, where things happen, where routines occur. Someone with dementia benefits from being in enriched and active environments.

What if someone with dementia doesn't want to participate?

- Respecting the decision to not participate strengthens a person's dignity and ability to make everyday decisions.
- Also, the decision of only observing must be respected: the observation of an activity must be recognized as a form of participation that is as important as others.
- Different roles must be accepted. For example, for some people it might be significant to supervise, to make a previous organization of the task, etc. These tasks have meaning for them.

How to face difficulties?

- **Start simple.** Start with simple activities in enabling environments because it "reminds" a person with dementia of the activities they have always carried out in those kinds of places. For example, it will be harder to encourage cooking if there is no such a defined space.
- **Start small.** Also start with small tasks, and chose quiet days.
- **Stay focused.** Prepare everything you need ahead of time, so you can focus your attention on the person doing the activity.
- **Choose people.** Try to encourage someone first and perhaps others will join in more easily if they have seen the activity before and the right atmosphere is there. In the end we are all very similar and most of us find it difficult to be the first to do something that is different, don't you think so?
- **Remember that change is difficult.** Routines are established little by little and help to involve all people, even those with greater difficulties in participating.

