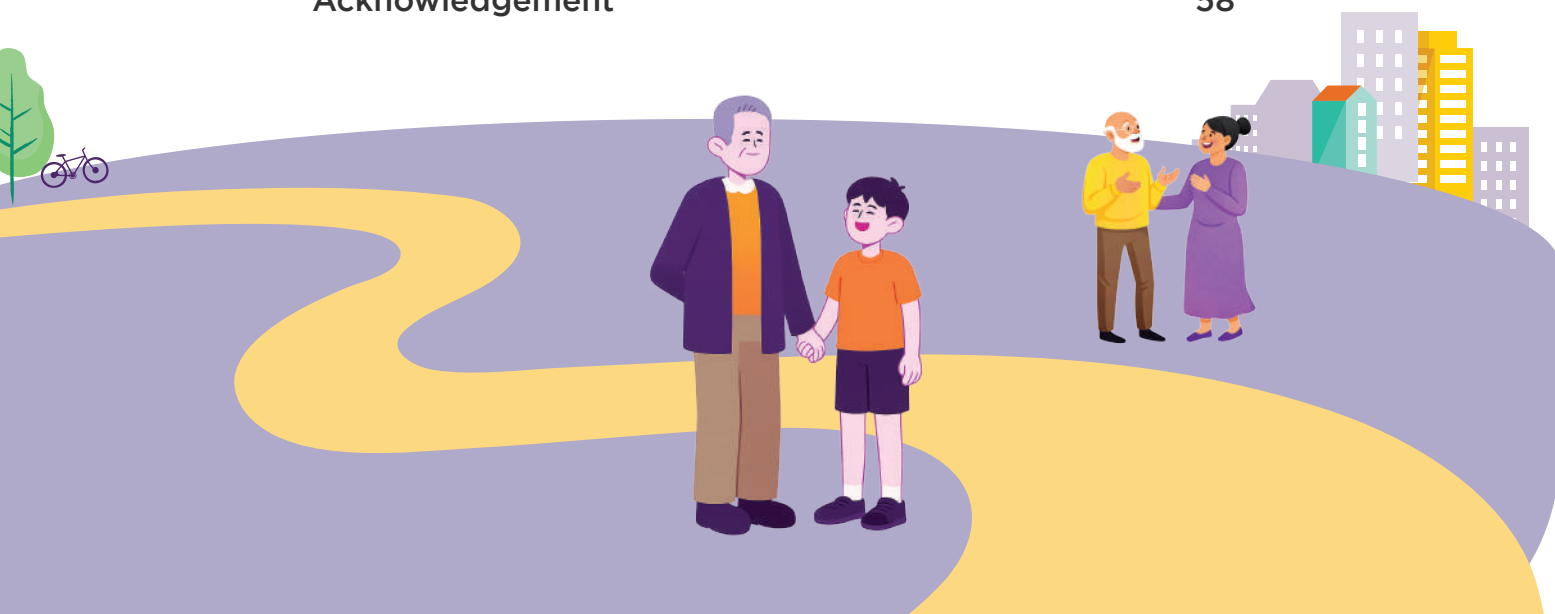


A Journey With You



A Person-Centred Approach to
Engaging Persons Living with Dementia
in Cognitively Stimulating Activities

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Introduction to A Journey With You



A Journey With You is a guidebook designed to help anyone to facilitate activities and meaningful conversations with persons living with dementia, engaging them in activities that stimulate the mind, using materials contextualised to Singapore's local culture. Influenced by Person-Centred Care principles¹ and Cognitive Stimulation Therapy², it collates activity ideas developed by Dementia Singapore for persons living with dementia who have benefitted from activity programmes under its centre and home-based services.

The activity ideas are suitable for persons at the mild to moderate stages of dementia, guiding meaningful conversations between the person living with dementia and their family, friends, caregivers, or befrienders. These activities may be modified for small groups of 3-4 persons living with dementia. Through these activity ideas, we aim to promote the quality of life and wellbeing of persons living with dementia and increase the confidence and satisfaction of those interacting with them.

A Journey With You sessions can be conducted weekly to help maintain the person's cognitive abilities and to encourage social interaction. Each session can range from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the person's cognitive ability. The facilitator should be trained to apply the seven guiding principles of PROCESS, to stimulate thinking at the "just right" challenge and improve the wellbeing of the person living with dementia.

We hope that this will be a useful resource for all who enjoy meaningful conversations and activities with persons living with dementia.

¹Kitwood, T., & Brooker, D. (2019). *Dementia reconsidered revisited: The person still comes first*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

²Yates, L., Yates, J., Orrell, M., Spector, A. & Woods, B. (2017). *Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for dementia: History, Evolution and Internationalism*. Routledge.



Persons Living With Dementia As Unique Individuals

**'If you have met one person with dementia,
you have only met one person with dementia'
(Kitwood, 1997)**

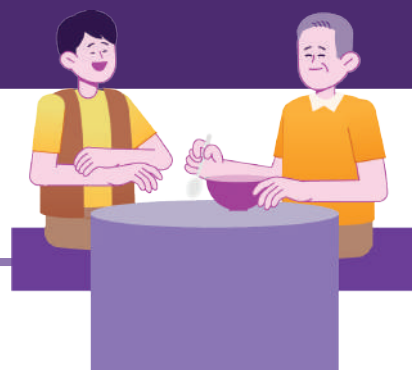
Every person living with dementia is different. When planning and facilitating activities, it's important to consider each person's unique attributes including their culture, life experiences, personality, interests, and preferences. As dementia is a progressive condition, activities and conversations should be adapted to match the person's current cognitive abilities.

Activities can be adjusted to offer the right level of challenge to stimulate thinking without causing stress.

We should also consider other health conditions that may impact the person's ability to engage in activities. For example, a person with both dementia and chronic back pain may not be able to tolerate sitting for a prolonged period to sustain attention. A person with vascular dementia and a weak dominant hand may struggle with activities that involve the use of both hands, and writing. Additionally, if the person living with dementia is experiencing depression, they may lack the motivation to participate in activities.

There may be times when a person living with dementia would like their loved ones, including family members, caregivers and friends to join the session. Involving loved ones can improve participation and help family members and caregivers recognise the person's abilities and strengths. It also gives them the opportunity to engage the person in similar activities in their own time.

Considering the individual characteristics of each person, the facilitator should exercise adaptability and flexibility when selecting appropriate activities and tasks for each session.



Guiding Principles of Cognitive Stimulation



PROCESS outlines **7 guiding principles** for facilitating cognitive stimulating conversations and activities (Figure 1):



Perspectives

- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing solely on facts.



Respect

- **Respect** the person as someone who has a lifetime of experiences, support this identity and dignity.



Orientation

- Provide **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions identity and dignity.



Creativity

- Facilitate **Creativity** through meaningful connection of ideas and thoughts.



Environment

- Ensure a conducive and consistent **Environment**, adjusting to the pace of the person living with dementia.



Strengths

- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** by providing the “just-right” challenge.



Senses

- Tap on different **Senses** including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and movement.

Figure 1: Seven Guiding Principles

Perspectives

Rather than focusing solely on what is factually correct, it is helpful to take a step back, to acknowledge and validate the **Perspectives** of the person living with dementia.

When engaging with a person living with dementia, encourage them to make choices, express their preferences, and share their opinions and perspectives.

Here are some examples of how to invite the person to share their perspective:

When offering a drink:

- Would you like water tea or coffee?

During the activity:

- Do you prefer to stay indoors, or go outside to enjoy the cool breeze?

Getting the opinion of the person:

- Where do you think is a good place to go for a holiday?
- What should parents do to ensure that their children do well in school?
- Where would you get good carrot cake in Singapore?



Perspectives

Sometimes, what the person says may contradict the facts. Due to changes in the brain and memory impairment, what the person says may be different from what is happening in real life. We should acknowledge and accept what is said without judgment.

When strong emotions are expressed, we can validate the person's emotions by:

- **Acknowledging the emotions being expressed**, not just the words. For example, "It sounds like you were really angry with your boss for giving you this assignment."
- **Rephrase to reflect what you have heard the person said.** For example, if the person has said, "I used to make sure I complete my work early on Fridays so I can take my kids to JB for a weekend get away," you can paraphrase it as, "you enjoyed those short holidays to Johor Bahru with your kids."
- **Use open-ended questions** by using "who," "what," "when," "where," and "how" to encourage the person to share more.

To get the person started on sharing different opinions, use visual cues like pictures, photos, or newspaper articles to get the person thinking. For example, you can show photos of famous people, such as politicians, singers, or actors, to spark conversation.



Respect

Respect the person as someone who has a lifetime of experiences, supporting his identity and dignity.

Persons living with dementia are mostly older adults who have lived through many experiences including going to school, toiling for the family, starting a new family of their own, various occupations, significant life events and retirement. These experiences have shaped their values and preferences for things. They have had valued roles and occupations that they take pride in and are respected for.

To demonstrate respect for the persons living with dementia, we can:

- Address them by their preferred names and title.
- Invite them to share their life story and experiences.
- Acknowledge their contributions from significant roles they played in their lives such as raising children, work achievements, or other accomplishments.
- Validate the challenges they have faced and overcome.
- Celebrate their successes.



Orientation

Provide **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

Whenever possible, facilitate orientation to the date, time, place and people who are present with the person living with dementia. This can be done by making the calendar and clock visible to the person living with dementia, or subtly through activities and conversations. Always introduce yourself at the start of each activity and remind the person of the purpose and what to expect from the session.

Discussing current events using newspapers is a good way to orientate the person to the date, month, and year, as well as recent local events. Use upcoming festive occasions to prompt reminders of the date.

Many persons living with dementia enjoy reminiscing about past hobbies, interests, roles, and occupations. They may enjoy conversations about events, places, and people from the past. Use reminiscence to bring the person to the present, by comparing the 'past' with the 'present'.



Creativity

Facilitate **Creativity** through meaningful connections of ideas and thoughts. Creativity can be facilitated through activities like viewing and commenting on art pieces, discussing new ideas using traditional beliefs or engaging in crafts and baking.

When showing pictures in conversation, creativity can be facilitated by showing two or more images at the same time and inviting the person to discuss similarities, differences, or what is unusual. We can also ask the person to share his/her opinion about “which is better” and “which is more attractive”. For example, you may say, “what do they have in common?”, “what does their expression tell you about what they are thinking?” or “who do you think had a better life? why?”.



Environment

Ensure a conducive and consistent **Environment** by going according to the pace of the person living with dementia.

When facilitating an activity session, make sure the person living with dementia is in a safe and comfortable environment. They should be seated comfortably on a firm, sturdy chair for tabletop activities.

The environment should be well-ventilated, with appropriate temperature and lighting for engagement. During cognitive activities, minimise distractions such as noise or background music to help the person focus. For physical activities, ensure furniture and equipment are safe and minimise the risk of falls.

Creating a consistent environment provides a sense of predictability and emotional safety. Following a standard session structure, such as starting with a discussion about current affairs, provides consistency. Ideally, schedule activity sessions on a fixed day and time of the week.



Senses

Tap on different **Senses**, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.

Multisensory stimulation can improve attention and engagement. To initiate conversations and trigger reminiscence, consider using the following medium in your activities to engage their senses:

- **Sight:** Photos, pictures, videos, or written words
- **Sound:** Audio recordings of familiar sounds, songs, or traditional music
- **Taste:** Traditional foods, snacks, or cut fruits
- **Touch:** Different textures, clothing, childhood toys or games, or travel mementos
- **Smell:** Herbs, spices, fragrances, powder, or smells from baking and cooking
- **Movement:** Dancing or moving to music, or actions to simulate familiar tasks such as brushing teeth or washing clothes by hand



Strengths

Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** by providing the "just right" challenge.

As each person living with dementia has different abilities and limitations, it is important to modify activities to match the person's level of ability. An activity is considered a "just right" challenge when the person can engage in it for a sustained period and appears relaxed or happy. Table 1 illustrates how to adjust the level of challenge.

Ways	Increase Challenge	Decrease Challenge
Activity	• Make it more competitive e.g., keep a scoreboard, set a time limit • Increase complexity of rules • Allow the person to create own product	• Make it less competitive e.g., allow the person to complete task at their own pace • Decrease complexity of rules • Provide templates or an end-product to copy
Involvement	• Assist with setting up the activity	• Follow instructions
Instructions	• Give verbal instructions	• Use visual or physical prompts
Cognitive Skills	• Focus on planning and problem solving	• Focus on remembering the steps and paying attention
Engagement	• Do the activity	• Observe the activity and talk about it

Table 1: Different ways to modify an activity.

Initial Contact

If you are meeting a person living with dementia for the first time, it is necessary to spend some time in casual conversation with the person, to build rapport. The person living with dementia would want to know more about you and what you intend to do together with him/her, to feel comfortable enough to engage in activities with you. Take time to introduce yourself, and ask the person questions about their life history, culture, interests, and preferences.

You can include the following points in your conversation:

- Introduce yourself and ask the person how he/she would prefer to be called.
- Ask questions to get to know the person, through natural conversation.

You may use the following examples (You do not have to follow any particular sequence):

Younger days:

- Were you born in Singapore? If not, which country were you born?
- Which dialect group are you from?
- What was your life like when you were young?
- Did you have to do housework when you were young?
- Did you do National Service? (for male Singaporeans born after 1949)

Family:

- Have you lived in this house all your life? When did you move here?
- Do you have siblings?
- How many children / grandchildren do you have? How old are they?

Occupation:

- What jobs have you done before?
- Did you like the work?
- Was working life tough?
- What did you like most about your job?

Hobbies/Interests:

- What is your favourite food?
- Do you like pets?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What are your hobbies?
- Is there anything you do not like to do?
(Give an example with your own answer.)

Routines:

- What time do you like to get up in the morning? Early? Late?
- What do you like to eat for breakfast?
- Do you go to the market?
- What do you like to do at home?
- Do you take naps?
- What time do you usually go to bed at night?
- What do you usually do during the weekend?

- Whenever possible, direct questions to the person living with dementia. Ask for their permission to include family members or caregivers in the conversation. You may direct the questions to the family member or caregiver if the person appears to have difficulty expressing himself or gives you permission to ask the other person.
- Encourage the person living with dementia to share family photos or photos from past events as they talk about their life stories.
- You may like to share your own life story if it relates to what the person is talking about.



Initial Contact



DOs

- Give the person enough time to understand and respond to your question.
- Follow the flow of the person's conversation.
- Use prompts to encourage sharing (e.g., "Tell me more..." or "That's very interesting...").
- If the person struggles to recall or answer, gently move on to the next question.

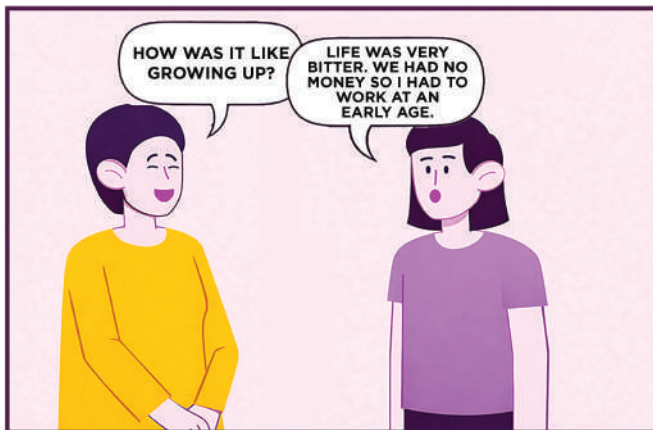


DON'Ts

- Press the person for an answer if they have difficulty responding.
- Ask factual questions if the person struggles with memory (e.g., "What are your children's names?").
- Ask about potentially sensitive or traumatic topics (e.g., the war, deceased children) to avoid causing distress.

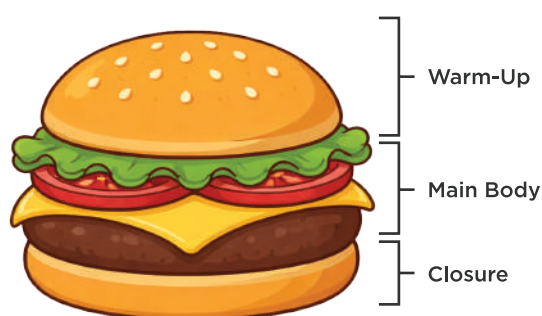


Once rapport has been established with the person living with dementia, seek agreement from the person to begin a series of facilitated activity sessions for mental stimulation, socialisation, and recreation. You can also discuss the duration and frequency of the sessions with the person, and their family members or caregivers.



Facilitated Engagement

A facilitated engagement session can be structured like a burger. The duration of a meaningful session typically lasts between 30 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the individual's concentration and tolerance for activity.



Just like how the top and bottom buns are essential for a burger, a facilitated engagement session requires both a warm-up and a closure to be complete. Similarly, just as burgers come with various ingredients, there are many different main activities you can choose as the focus of the session.

Like adding extra ingredients to a burger (e.g., extra cheese), you can tailor the activities to the person's individual needs and preferences. For example, if a person living with dementia enjoys singing, you can include singing familiar songs during the session.

Figure 2 below outlines how a 1-hour session can be broken down into the warm-up, main activity, and closure. The warm-up should include orientation and physical activity to increase the person's level of alertness for cognitive activities. The tea break is optional and provides the opportunity for the facilitator and the person living with dementia to socialise in a natural setting, while ensuring adequate hydration.

Warm up (10 Mins)

- Orientation and Current affairs
- Physical Activity to increase level of alertness

Main Activity (30 Mins)

- Cognitive stimulation at the "Just Right Challenge"

Tea Break (15 Mins)

- Socialise while making & enjoying food and drinks

Closure (5 Mins)

- Summarise & ask for feedback

Figure 2: Sample Session Outline



Warm-Up Activities

Opening the session



Warm-Up – Orientation and Current Affairs

PURPOSE

- Orientate the person to the “here and now”.
- Encourage verbal expression of thoughts and opinions about current affairs.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Acknowledge the person’s **Perspectives** and validate them, rather than focusing on the facts.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through conversation.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- A hard copy of a newspaper or a printout of online news for the day.

PREPARATION:

- Select news articles which are of interest to the person or have the potential to stimulate discussion.

FACILITATION:

- **Greet** the participant and **introduce** yourself.
- **Casually talk about the date, month, year, and time**, as you engage the person in conversation and remind the person when you might have last met each other.
- Discuss **recent or upcoming events** (e.g., festivals or celebrations).
- Discuss the **weather** (invite the person to look out the window).
- Discuss the news. Read the headlines of selected **newspaper** articles, point out pictures, and summarize the key points.
- Invite the person to share his/her opinions about the articles, highlighting significant or controversial issues that could be discussed.



Warm-Up Activities

Opening the session

Warm-Up – Physical Activity

PURPOSE:

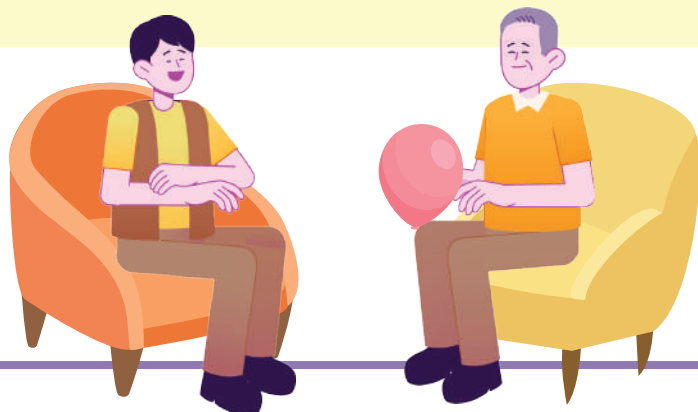
- Increase the person's level of alertness.
- Promote physical activity and mobility.
- **Key Principles:** Ensure a conducive and consistent **Environment**, moving at the person's pace.
- Engage multiple **Senses**, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** through a "just-right" challenge.

PREPARATION:

- Be aware of the **person's medical or physical conditions** (e.g., risk of falls or any specific movements that should be avoided).
- Ensure that the furniture used is stable and sturdy; Use chairs with back and armrests to provide stability.
- Remove any potential tripping hazards and do not use furniture with sharp edges.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

- If the participant has a high risk of falls, conduct the activity while they are seated.
- Prompt the person to take a rest if they appear tired.
- Stop the activity if the person experiences any of the following:
 - Pain or pressure in the chest, neck, shoulder, or arm
 - Sharp or severe joint pain
 - Dizziness or nausea
 - Excessive sweating (cold sweat)



Physical Activity Ideas

The following activity ideas can be incorporated into the warm-up component to increase the person's level of alertness and stimulate the senses in preparation for more cognitively challenging tasks. These activities should be adapted according to the person's medical or physical health conditions to ensure ease of participation and safety.

Modified Basketball

Materials:

1. 8-10 balls (can be made out of newspaper)
2. Laundry basket or pail



Facilitation

1. Take turns to throw the balls into the basket.
2. Add an element of competition by seeing who can get more balls into the basket.
3. Start with the basket placed a shorter distance away from the participant and gradually move it further away if the person can manage.

Knock it Over

Materials:

1. Beanbags
2. Beachball
3. Plastic bottles (can be filled with water to provide stability)



Facilitation

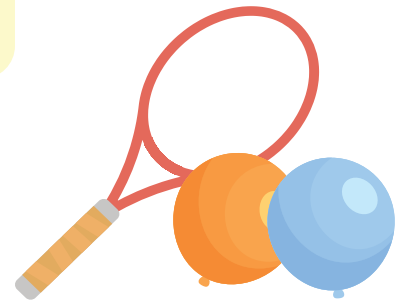
1. Arrange the bottles on the floor.
2. Take turns to throw beanbags to knock down the bottles.
3. Next, take turns to roll or kick the beachball to knock down the bottles.
4. Add an element of competition by seeing who can knock down more bottles.
5. Start with the bottles placed a short distance away from the participant and gradually increase the distance if the person can manage.

Physical Activity Ideas

Balloon Play

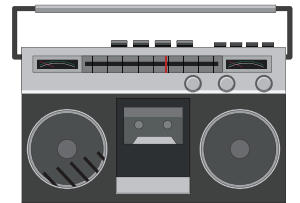
Materials:

1. Balloon.
2. Optional: Rackets (e.g., badminton racket), swimming noodles, or a rolled-up newspaper stick (newspaper rolled and tapped up into a stick).
3. Chairs if seated while playing.



Facilitation

1. Stand a distance away from each other and toss the balloon to and from each other.
2. Gradually increase the distance if the person can manage.
3. Track how many successful passes you can sustain for.



Music and Movement

Materials:

1. Stay Home Workout Videos from Dementia Singapore OR songs that are familiar to the person living with dementia.

Instructions:

1. Play the video clips and follow the movements together with the music or,
2. Play a song that is familiar to the person and create your own actions to the song.

Stay Home Workout Videos:



DSG Stay Home
Workout Rasa Sayang



DSG Stay
Home Workout
Gao Shan Qing (高山青)



DSG Stay Home Workout
Wang Chun Feng (望春风)



DSG Stay Home Workout
Ai De Ni Ya He Chu Xun
(爱的你呀何处寻)

Main Activities

14 Ideas for Cognitive Stimulation



There are a total of 14 main activities to choose from. You can pick and grade the activity depending on the cognitive ability, life story, interests, and preferences of the person living with dementia.

- Main Activities 1 to 4 focus on building rapport and getting to know the person.
- Main Activities 5 to 14 may be selected based on the individual's life history and interests.

Main Activity 1

Getting to Know You

PURPOSE:

- Build rapport with the person living with dementia.
- Understand the person's life history, valued roles, routines, and interests.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect** the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

MATERIALS:

- "Getting to Know You" play cards.

PREPARATION:

- Consult the person's family about what is important to the person living with dementia, including interests and preferences.
- Note the person's preferred language.

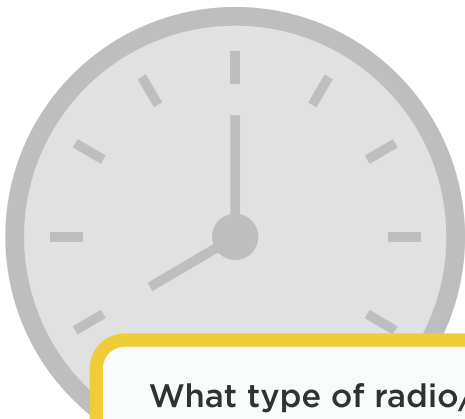
FACILITATION:

1. Invite the person living with dementia to draw a card from the pile.
2. Ask the person to read the question aloud.
3. Each person to take turns to answer the question, If other family members are present, encourage them to join in the activity too!



"Getting to Know You" Playcards





What type of radio/TV stations do you like?

你爱看或听哪个电视播道或广播电台呢?



What daring things have you done before?

曾经做过什么大胆的事?



Do you prefer rice or noodles?

你比较喜欢吃饭还是面?



Main Activity 2

My Treasured Moments

PURPOSE:

- Encourage the person to talk about memorable life events from the past.
- Strengthen the person's feelings of self-worth and identity by reminding them of who he/she is, his/her achievements and what was important to the person.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect** the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing solely on the facts.

MATERIALS:

- Old photos of the person's significant life events.

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person's family about significant life events.
- Request the person or family to prepare photos of important events that happened in the past.

FACILITATION:

- 1** Focus to one photo at a time.
- 2** Invite the person living with dementia to share what he/she sees and remember about the photo.



DOs



- Give the person sufficient time to understand and process your question.
- Go with the flow of the person's conversation.
- Use open-ended prompts to encourage sharing, such as "Tell me more..." or "That's very interesting. Can you explain further?"
- If the person struggles to recall or respond, gently move on to the next question to keep the conversation going.
- Acknowledge the person's negative emotions that may arise, then gradually guide the conversation to a more positive or neutral topic.

DON'Ts



- Press the person for an answer if they have difficulty responding.
- Ask factual questions if the person has difficulty remembering (e.g., "What are your children's names?").
- Ask questions about potentially sensitive or traumatic topics (e.g., past wars, loss of loved ones), as this could cause distress.



Questions we can ask using family photos:



Ask

- Were you close to your brother? What was he like when he was young?
- What role did you play in your family? For example, did you help care for siblings or help out at the farm?
- What were some of your favourite home-cooked dishes?



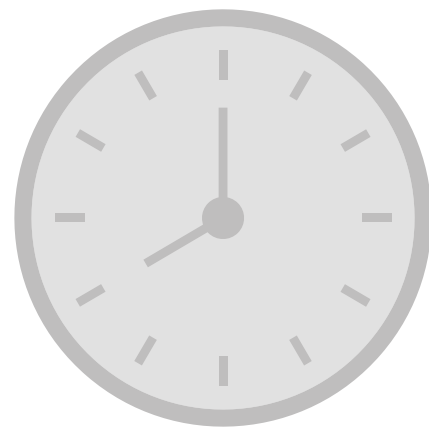
Photo licensed from National Archives of Singapore



Do Not Ask



- Who is this?
- What is his name?
- Do you still remember....



Ask

- How did you first meet your husband? What was your first impression?
- How did you spend time together when you were dating?

Do Not Ask

- What is your husband's name?
- When did you get married?

Photo licensed from National Archives of Singapore



Main Activity 3

Childhood Games

PURPOSE:

- Share memories from childhood.
- Engage in physical activity with an element of competition and fun!

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues, through discussions.
- Tap on different **Senses**, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the “just-right” challenge.

MATERIALS:

- Photos of children playing games in the past.
- Childhood games/toys commonly which were played during the person's childhood (e.g., chapteh, marbles, five stones, rubber bands, gasing (spinning top)).

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or family about games or toys the person living with dementia used to play with during childhood.
- Be familiar with how these games and toys were played in the past.



FACILITATION:

- 1** Introduce the toy or game, either using the actual object or a photo (e.g., “Let me show you this toy I recently found at home...”).
- 2** Invite the person living with dementia to talk about the game by asking some questions about their experience with the game, for example:
 - “Have you seen this before?”
 - “Who did you play this game with, and when?”
 - “How do you play this game?”
 - “What games do children play these days?”
- 3** Play the game together, adapting the rules based on the person’s abilities, ensuring the activity is at the “just-right” challenge.



CHAPTEH

Use the palm of the hand to hit the chapteh (instead of using the foot to kick).

FIVE STONES

Level 1: Throw one stone in the air and catch it.

Level 2: Throw one stone in the air, touch the table, and then catch the stone.

Level 3: Throw one stone in the air, pick up another stone, and catch the first stone.



Main Activity 4

My Interests

PURPOSE:

- Share personal stories related to the person's interests or hobbies.
- Engage in one activity of interest to the person, and discuss activities they would like to do in their own time or during subsequent sessions.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Tap on different **Senses**, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

- Photos or images: Print out pictures related to the person's hobbies or interests.
- Equipment/materials for the activity of interest to be conducted during the session e.g. if you intend to do crafts, prepare materials required for the craft activity.

Watch this video: [Craft-Making and Reminiscence for Persons Living with Dementia](#) for simple craft ideas to facilitate conversations related to interest and hobbies through creative activities.



PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or family about activities of interest to the person living with dementia, or things he/she enjoys doing or used to do during his/her free time.
- Be familiar with how to do the chosen activity of interest for the session.



FACILITATION:

- Introduce the activity by saying:
“Let’s look at some interesting activities, and you can tell me which ones you like.”
- Present 3 photos at a time.
- Invite the person to choose 1 photo.
- Talk about the chosen photo using the following questions:
 - “Do you like this activity?”
 - “Have you done it before? How did you do this activity?”
 - “Who did you do this with?”
 - “When was the last time you did this activity?”
 - “Where do you go to do this?”
 - “What do you like most about this activity?”
- Continue with the next set of 3 photos and invite the person to choose 1 from the 3 photos).
- Once the person has talked about their interests or hobbies, invite them to engage in an activity of interest together (e.g., gardening, crafting).
- By the end of the main activity component, the person should have completed the activity, such as potting a plant, finishing a simple craft, or making a sandwich for tea break.

Main Activity 5

Old Wives' Tale

PURPOSE:

- Engage in enjoyable and meaningful conversations.
- Share stories related to traditional beliefs.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Respect the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Acknowledge and validate Perspectives, rather than focusing solely on the facts.
- Encourage Creativity through meaningful connection of ideas and thoughts.

MATERIALS:

- A stack of cards, each with different traditional belief or old wives' tale.

PREPARATION:

- Identify traditional beliefs or old wives' tales that are relevant to the person's culture.



FACILITATION:

- Draw a card from the stack and read the it out aloud.
- Invite the person to share their thoughts and experiences by asking questions such as:
 - “When/From whom did you hear this saying or belief?”
 - “What do you think? Is it true?”
 - “How do you think this saying or belief came about?”
- Have fun discussing the old wives’ tale!

Don’t point your finger to the moon, or else your ear will be cut. What do you think?

別用手指指着月亮，
否則耳朵會被割傷。
你認為這是真的嗎？



Don’t keep shifting places when you are eating, or you will marry a lot of people. What do you think?

Tidak boleh makan berpindah tempat, nanti kahwin ramai orang.

Main Activity 6

Let's Talk About Makan

PURPOSE:

- Talk about Singapore's local food.
- Share personal memories related to different local dishes.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Tap on different **Senses**, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

- 5R size photos (approximately 10) of different local dishes.
- 3 types of spices/herbs (e.g., cinnamon stick, star anise, lemongrass, curry leaves, peppercorn, basil leaves, pandan leaves).

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or family what would be some local foods that the person living with dementia likes to eat.
- Be familiar with dishes that associate with the person's cultural, such as Hainanese Chicken Rice, Teochew Kueh, or Nonya Kueh.
- Confirm if the person living with dementia has any dietary restrictions or food allergies.



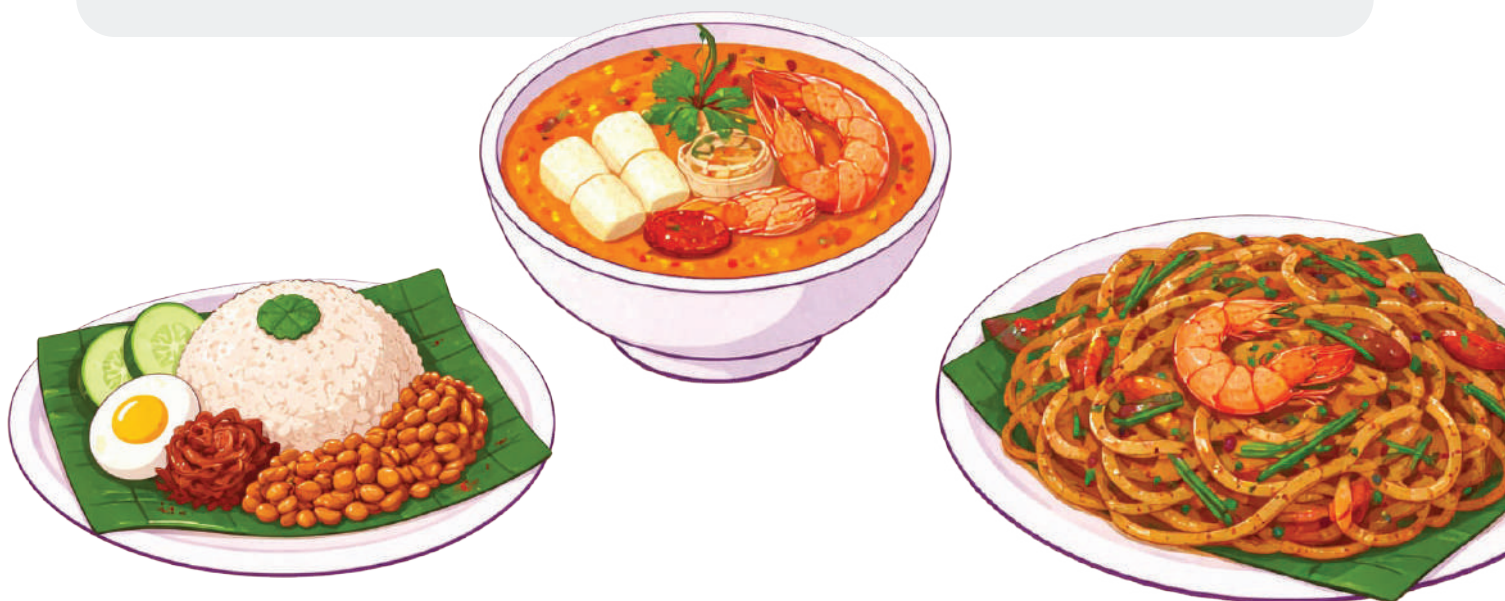
FACILITATION:

Part 1: Conversation About Spices/Herbs

- Present one spice or herb at a time and invite the person to smell it.
- Talk about the local dishes that each spice or herb may be associated with.
- Repeat this process for three different spices or herbs.

Part 2: Discussion About Local Foods

- Place 10 different photos of local dishes on the table.
- Invite the person living with dementia to choose:
 - (1) His/her most favourite food
 - (2) His/her least favourite food
- Engage the person in a discussion about the dishes they've selected by asking:
 - “When was the last time you had this, and who did you have it with?”
 - “Where can we buy a good [name of food]?”
 - “Do you know how to cook this dish? What are the ingredients?”
 - “How much does it cost today to buy or prepare this dish?”



Main Activity 7

Sounds and Music

PURPOSE:

- Talk about familiar sounds, songs, and their associated memories.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

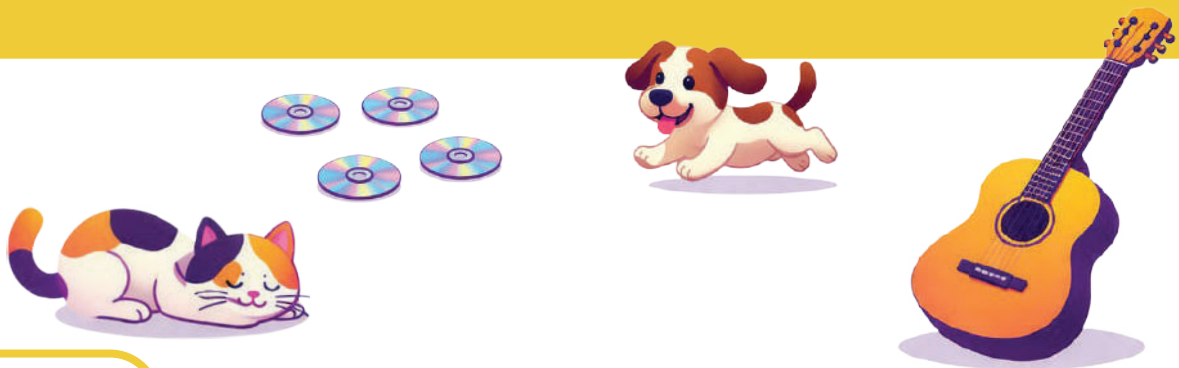
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Encourage **Creativity** through meaningful connection of ideas and thoughts.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

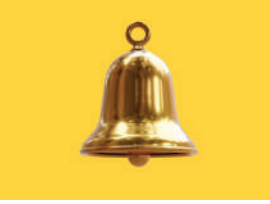
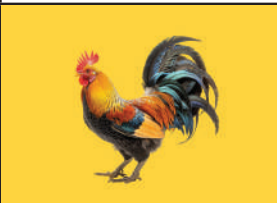
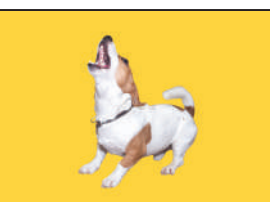
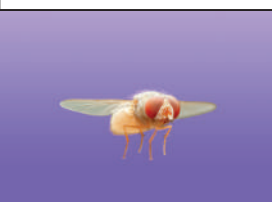
- A collection of different sound clips from different categories such as:
 - **Household items:** e.g., vacuum cleaner, washing machine
 - **Transportation:** e.g., bicycle bell, car horn, MRT announcements
 - **Animals:** e.g., dog barking, cat meowing, frog croaking
 - **People:** e.g., baby crying, children playing
 - **Local scenes:** e.g., Karang Guni (rag and bone man), Lion Dance, Ice-Cream man, Malay Kompang (wedding drums)
 - **Local songs:** popular songs from the person's youth
- Pictures related to each sound such as a picture of a dog for barking or a picture of a singer who performed a specific song.

PREPARATION:

- Prepare sound clips from sources like YouTube or local archives, based on the person's culture and life history.
- Print out an activity sheet with pictures corresponding to the selected sound clips (see image on next page).



Guess the Sound

				
Malay wedding drums	Telephone ringing	National anthem	Bell	Cat meowing
				
Roster crowing	Baby talking	Chinese lion dance	Laughter	Karung guni
				
Frog croaking	Cow mooing	Glass breaking	Dog barking	Fly buzzing

FACILITATION:

- Play each sound clip one at a time. Ask the person to identify the corresponding picture on the worksheet.
- After the person identifies the corresponding picture on the worksheet, ask questions to prompt conversation, for example:
 - “Do you like dogs or cats?”
 - “What do you think of lion dance performances during Chinese New Year?”
 - “Have you ever attended a Malay wedding?”
 - “Do you hear roosters in your neighbourhood?”
 - “Do you like babies?”
 - “Who is your favourite singer?”
 - “Do you play any musical instruments?”

Main Activity 8:

Significant Events

PURPOSE:

- Discuss significant events that have happened in Singapore.
- Share memories and personal stories related to these significant events.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect** the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing solely on the facts.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

MATERIALS:

- 8R size photos of significant events that have happened in the past in Singapore, such as festive celebrations, general elections, or the National Day Parade.

PREPARATION:

- Be aware of significant events that have happened during the life history of the person living with dementia.

FACILITATION:

- Show one photo at a time.
- Invite the person to look at the photo and ask questions such as:
 - “What do you think is going on in this photo?”
 - “Have you participated in such an event before?”
 - “Can you tell me more?”
 - “How is this celebration/event is carried out today?”
- Allow the person to share freely, without judgment, creating an open and supportive atmosphere for reminiscence.

Note:

Allow the conversation to unfold naturally, allowing the person to explore their memories and experiences at their own pace. The aim is to evoke meaningful stories and connections, focusing on the personal significance of the event rather than on historical details.



Photo licensed from National Heritage Board

You can find photos of common celebrations and rituals of Singapore in the past here:

Conversation Starter Kit for seniors: Series 4 - Rituals and Celebrations (roots.gov.sg)



Main Activity 9:

Jobs

PURPOSE:

- Discuss jobs in the past and present.
- Share memories related to valued roles and occupations.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect** the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing solely on the facts.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

MATERIALS:

- Photos of jobs that are familiar to the person – two photos of each job, one from the past (during the person's working days) and one from the present (to facilitate orientation).

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or family about the person's job history and be familiar with the selected photos for the discussion.

FACILITATION:

- Show both photos of the same job (past and present) at the same time.
- Invite the person to share their opinion about the job in the past and how different the same job is today.

Questions we can ask using photos of different jobs:

Areas to explore	Questions to ask
Identify the job	“This is a (nurse) last time, and this is a (nurse) now.”
Job demands	“(Nurses) have many things to do... such as helping patients to get dressed, shower, take medication... What else do they have to do?” “Being an (ice-cream man) is not easy, have to stand all day, have to push the heavy cart in the sun...” What else do you think is difficult about this job?”
Family and Culture	“Do you know any friends/family who worked as a (cobbler)? How was it like for them?” “Who were the Samsui women? Were they mostly Cantonese?”
Personal experiences	“What did you work as last time? What did you like the most about your job? What did you like the least?” “How did you get your first job?”

Questions we can ask using photos of different jobs:

Area to explore	Questions to ask
Then VS Now	"In the past, (barbers) worked by the roadside. Now, (barber shops) are all indoors... Last time, (barbers) would also help to shave and dig your ears. But now, most (barbers) only cut hair!" "How much did it cost to have a hair cut back then?" "Where do you have your hair cut?" "How much does it cost today?"

Jobs	Then	Now
Nurse	 Photo licensed from National Archives of Singapore	 Photo licensed from National Archives of Singapore
Barber	 Photo licensed from Jennifer Teo Photography	 Photo licensed from KCuts
Cobbler	 Photo licensed from National Archives of Singapore	 Photo licensed from Her World Singapore

For more photos related to jobs and professions, go to:

Conversation Starter Kit for Seniors: Series 3 - Jobs and Professions (roots.gov.sg)



Main Activity 10

Household Memories

PURPOSE:

- Discuss the use of household objects and valued roles within the home
- Share memories related to childhood, family, and culture.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Encourage **Creativity** through meaningful connection of ideas and thoughts.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

- 4R size photos of individual household objects that were commonly used in the past.
- Each object should have a corresponding photo of an object used today serving the same function (e.g., laundry board vs. washing machine, abacus vs. calculator).
- Ensure the number of household objects matches the cognitive ability of the person living with dementia, providing the "just-right" challenge.

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or their family about their involvement in household activities when he/she was younger and be familiar with the photos selected for discussion.





FACILITATION:

Part 1: Conversation About Household Objects

- Present 2 photos of household objects at a time: one from the past and one from the present, both used for the same purpose.
- Invite the person to discuss:
 - “How are the two objects different?”
 - “Which one is easier to use?”
 - “Which one do you prefer?”
- Continue showing a total of 4 pairs of household objects, one pair at a time.

Part 2: Matching Pairs (using 8 matching pairs)

- Add a duplicate set of the 4 original pairs of photos, so you now have a total of 8 pairs (16 photos).
- Place all 16 photos face down on the table.
- Ask the person living with dementia to try to remember the position of all 16 photos.
- Take turns turning over 2 photos at a time to find 2 photos of household objects that serve the same purpose/function.
- The person who finds the most matching pairs wins.
- Modify the activity based on the cognitive ability of the person, by increasing or decreasing the number of matching pairs.

Purpose	Then	Now
Washing Clothes	 Laundry Board	 Washing Machine
Ironing	 Charcoal Iron	 Electric Iron
Lighting	 Kerosene Lamp	 LED Lamp

For more photos related to household treasures, go to:

***Journey with the Arts
& Dementia (JADe)
Toolkits Archives -
DementiaHub.SG***



***Conversation Starter Kit
for Seniors: Series 2 -
Lifestyle (roots.gov.sg)***



Main Activity 11

Places in Singapore

PURPOSE:

- Discuss various places of interest in Singapore and how they have changed from the past to the present.
- Share memories related to these places.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect** the person as someone with a lifetime of experiences, supporting their identity and dignity.
- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing on factual details.
- Provide **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

MATERIALS:

- 8R-sized photos of places of interest in Singapore (about 3-4 places of interest).
- Each place of interest should have a corresponding photo that compares the past with the present.

PREPARATION:

- Ask the person or family about places of interest that are familiar to the person living with dementia.

FACILITATION:

- Show one photo at a time, beginning with an image of a place of interest in the past.
- Ask questions to facilitate conversation about the place shown, such as:
 - “Does this look familiar?”
 - “Have you been to this place before?”
 - “When was the last time you visited this place? With whom were you with?”
 - “What did you like about this place?”

(Refer to the table of example questions below to facilitate further conversation.)
Questions we can ask using photos of places:

Areas to explore	Questions to ask
Where	“Have you been to this place before?” “This place is called...”
Who	If the person has been to the place before, ask: “When was the last time you went to this place? With whom?” “How do you usually spend time there?”
What	Explore the 5 senses : Sight e.g., “What do you see in this picture?” (Point at specific buildings/objects in the photo to prompt) Sounds e.g., “What are some of the sounds we might hear here?” “Was it noisy?” Smells e.g., “Was it smelly?” Taste e.g., “What are some of the foods we might find here?” Touch – bring out an object that one might find at the place of interest, and allow the person to touch the object and talk about it. “What do people like to do here?” “What did you enjoy doing at this place?” “What can you find there?” “What has changed over the years?”



(Refer to the table of example questions below to facilitate further conversation.)
 Questions we can ask using photos of places:

Areas to explore	Questions to ask
When	“During which occasion you would go there?” “When do you think most people visit this place?”
How	“Is this place the same today?” “How is it different now?” “Are there places like this today?”
Compare between then and now	e.g., “In the past, the airport used to be at Kallang, but now, the airport is at Changi...” “What has changed here over time?” “How was it back then compared to how it is now?” “How does it feel now compared to when you first visited?”

Main Activity 12

Art Appreciation

PURPOSE:

- Appreciate artwork done by local artist Yip Yew Chong.
- Share thoughts, ideas, and memories associated with the artwork.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing on factual details.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Facilitate **Creativity** by encouraging meaningful connections of ideas and thoughts.

MATERIALS:

- 2-3 photos of paintings from **www.yipyc.com**.

PREPARATION:

- Be familiar with the stories and places associated with each artwork.

FACILITATION:

1. Show one artwork at a time.
2. Ask open-ended questions to facilitate conversation about the artwork, such as:
 - “What do you see? What do you think is happening here?”
 - “Which part of this painting catches your eye?”
 - “Look at the people in the painting, what are they doing?”
 - “What kind of place do you think this is?”
 - “Imagine you are in the painting. What would you be doing, and who would you be interacting with? How would you feel?”
 - “Have you ever been to a place like this?”
 - “What do you think of the ‘Kampung Spirit’ today?”
 - “Does it still exist?”
 - “How is housing different today, compared to the past?”

3. (Optional) After discussing the artwork, offer a related colouring template related to the picture discussed for the person living with dementia to complete at his/her own time.

Suggested resource: Moving Memories: Colour with Yew Chong Video Tutorials (**available at nhb.gov.sg**).



Questions we can ask to prompt conversations about artwork
(Refer to “Mamak Store” image on the left)

Photo licensed from “Kampung” by Yip Yew Chong

Areas to explore	Questions to ask
Setting the context	“What do you see in this picture?” “Where do you think this place is?”
Storytelling	“What shall we call this person?” “What do you think he is thinking?” “Does he have a family? What might they be doing?” “What is he like?” (personality, character)
What	“What shall we call this person?” “What do you think he is thinking?” “Does he have a family? What might they be doing?” “What is he like?” (personality, character) “What time is it?” “What smells can you imagine?” “What sounds do you think he can hear?” “What would you like him to do next?”
Reminiscence	“Have you been to a Mamak shop before?” “When Where might you go to a Mamak shop?” “What did you buy from there?”

Main Activity 13

Let's Go Shopping

PURPOSE:

- Categorise items that can be bought from the supermarket.
- Have fun with games related to shopping.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Provide Orientation using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.
- Engage the person's Senses, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's Strengths with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

- Whiteboard and markers.
- 5R photos of items which can be purchased at the supermarket, such as:
 - Meats
 - Vegetables
 - Fruits
 - Utensils
 - Toiletries
 - Clothing
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Actual objects (optional)

PREPARATION:

- Be familiar with the current prices of the above items sold at the supermarket.



FACILITATION:

- 1** Name a category (e.g., fruits) and ask the person to list as many names of fruits as he/she can think of.
- 2** Show the person an actual item from the list and ask questions to prompt reminiscence (e.g., “Is this sweet or sour?” “Do you enjoy eating this?”)
- 3** Place 20 photos of items on the table and ask the person to group the items according to different categories (e.g., food, cleaning, toiletries).
- 4** Select one category and invite the person to guess the price of each item in that category.



Main Activity 14

Let's Party!

PURPOSE:

- Enjoy preparing food together.
- Engage higher cognitive skills, such as planning, sequencing, and monitoring quality and safety.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Ensure a conducive and consistent Environment, adjusting to the pace of the person living with dementia.
- Tap on different Senses, including sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and movement.
- Maximise potential by utilising the person's **Strengths** with the "just-right" challenge.

MATERIALS:

- Ingredients required for the food preparation activity.
- Recipe (printed in large font, Arial size 14).

PREPARATION:

- Get agreement from the person and his/her family members to do food preparation in the home.
- Ask the person/family to identify one simple dish that the person likes, which can be completed within 90 minutes (e.g., fruit salad, baking muffins, making dumplings).
- Take note of any potential hazards (e.g., careful handling of sharp objects such as knives or open cans, and hot surfaces like stoves).
- Familiarise yourself with the kitchen setup.
- Check if the person living with dementia has any dietary restrictions or food allergies.



FACILITATION:

- Read the recipe aloud together with the person living with dementia.
- Encourage the person to be involved in every step of the process (e.g., setting up ingredients, cleaning up).
- Allow the person living with dementia to do as much as possible, offering verbal prompts and visual cues when required.
- Engage the person in conversation about the food being prepared. Ask questions like:
 - “When was the last time you cooked/made this dish?”
 - “What is your favourite dish to cook for the family?”
 - “Where do you usually buy the ingredients from?”
 - “How much does it cost? (specific ingredients/items)”
- Once the food has been prepared, enjoy eating together!



Session Closure

Wrapping Up the session



Closure

The closure of the session is an important part of the process, as it helps to reflect on the activities completed. By summarising the session, expressing gratitude, and discussing future activities, the facilitator can ensure the person feels acknowledged and positive about their time spent. This also sets the stage for continued engagement in future sessions.

PURPOSE:

- Consolidate the ideas and perspectives gathered through the discussions.
- Demonstrate appreciation and encouragement for the person's participation.
- End the session on a positive note.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

- Acknowledge and validate **Perspectives**, rather than focusing solely on the facts.
- Facilitate **Orientation** using reminiscence and visual cues through discussions.

FACILITATION:

- Summarise the activities done during the session. For example, you can say:

“Today we did a lot together! We discussed the news, made a card, and did some exercises.”
- Ask the person what he/she enjoyed the most and what he/she would like to do again in future sessions.
- Discuss the activities for the next session.
- Thank the person for his/her time and company.

Ending the session with appreciation and a look forward to the next meeting helps foster a positive environment and strengthens the person's engagement in future activities.

Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the leadership team and all cross-functional contributors whose guidance and hard work made this project possible.

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