



The Dementia Inclusive Public Library Guide



Ohio
Council for
Cognitive
Health



Memory Activity Kit

A Take-Home Kit from
Your Dementia Inclusive Library



Section I

Roadmap to Implementation



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The Dementia Inclusive Public Library Guide

► Section I | Roadmap to Implementation

Section II | Memory Activity Kits

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Created by the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health

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WELCOME TO THE DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE PUBLIC LIBRARY GUIDE

We are thrilled to announce the release of the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health’s *Dementia Inclusive Public Library Guide*, including Ohio’s unique Memory Activity Kits. Throughout this resource you will see, not only that living well with dementia is possible, but that libraries have a vital role to play in making this happen. When you use these tools, you will be able to join together with Ohioans across our state who are working hard to change the dementia narrative from one of tragedy to one of purposeful and engaged community living. The library, as a social gathering and learning place that serves people at all stages of life’s journey, is the right place to move this “living well with dementia” effort forward, and so it is with great excitement that we share these materials with you.

How this all began. . .

Our story began in spring 2020 just before the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health and the Akron-Summit County Public Library began first to talk about, and then to plan, dementia education and programming for the library’s supervisory staff. From that small beginning, the library’s commitment to understanding dementia and how to be a Dementia Friend has grown, incrementally, into a Dementia Inclusive Library effort that includes holding Dementia Friends sessions for all library staff; providing Dementia Friends Champions training and community outreach; creating a customer landing page for Dementia Inclusive resources and communication aides; hosting Memory Cafes; and, finally, offering our model Memory Activity Kits.

These unique Kits, created in collaboration with Brush Development, are available for check out and use at home, or anywhere memory support services are provided. They are uniquely designed to build on individuals’ retained strengths and interests and to provide a space to create new memories for Kit users and their care partners. Feedback about these Kits has been extremely positive; library patrons and their families report finding opportunities for renewed engagement using both lifelong skills and new-found talents. Patrons and staff alike are discovering that so much is still possible while living with dementia.

And now. . .

Interest within the library professional community has been growing, with many libraries asking us how they can become more dementia inclusive, **in ways that fit the size of their communities, budgets, and staffing levels**. In response, we created this Guide so that this information, along with supporting materials and guidance, is available and accessible to all libraries throughout our great state. Whether your library is big or small, located in a city, suburban, or rural setting, this Guide provides the step-by-step support needed to grow your inclusion work to better embrace those living with dementia and those who support them.

With this Guide and its detailed and ready-to-implement Memory Activity Kits instructions, our goal is to partner with you, hand in hand, to assist you in finding what Dementia Inclusive

programming will work for *your* library in *your* community. We recognize that there shouldn't be a one size fits all approach, so we have done our best to offer a diverse range of suggestions for starting small or going big! After learning more about Dementia Inclusive library practice, feel free to pick and choose from the ideas, take your time to try out different recommendations, and see what feels right for you.

We are certain that whichever elements you choose to implement from this guide, you'll be making a positive impact in the lives of people living with dementia and their friends, family, and other supporters. You likely know of a patron who has difficulty checking out books because he can't find their locations in the library anymore. Or, maybe you know a patron who doesn't attend the book club meetings any longer because she doesn't remember all of the story lines. We believe that working to create a dementia inclusive public library is a great opportunity to let people living with dementia know that their library will ALWAYS welcome them. Together we can work to make sure that the library—with its breadth of knowledge, insight, enthusiasm, and resources—can continue to be a fun and fulfilling space for all.

Living well in the community with dementia is possible! Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide and to embark on your library's Dementia Inclusive journey.

In partnership and with appreciation for all you do,

Dr. Bonnie Burman

INTRODUCTION

“I always felt, in any town, if I can get to the library, I’ll be okay.”

— *Maya Angelou*

Why Make the Commitment to be a Dementia Inclusive Library?

The history of public libraries in the United States is one of commitment to public growth and reflects the evolution of our understanding of access and inclusion. From Andrew Carnegie’s doorway inscription “Free to All” to Maya Angelou’s oasis of safety and support described above, the public library is accurately defined as a community place of connection and understanding — for all community members, at every one of life’s stages. The public library recognizes that the commitment to fulfilling this role is a commitment to honor the humanity of each individual of which the community is composed, ensuring continued welcomed participation in all the library has to offer, and continued support for the library as a vital community asset.

Throughout their rich history, Ohio public libraries have centered themselves uniquely and tirelessly—in times of plenty and times of scarcity, in times of public unity and times of public dissension, in times of celebration and times of deep concern—as a catalyst for individual and community well-being and growth. The commitment and passion for this work is evident, every day, in the over 700 public library locations in our state. And every day, in an Ohio public library, a young child is receiving their first library card, a college student is finishing that important paper, a young parent is finding a new friend in a library program, an avid reader is enjoying a friendly debate with like-minded folks in a book discussion, and a long-time library customer is wondering if they will be able to continue their weekly visits as their life circumstances are changing.

If you ask your library staff, ***“How many of you know someone who is impacted by dementia?”*** it is likely that just about everyone will acknowledge having a colleague, friend, family member, or neighbor who is living with memory impairment or dementia, or caring for someone with dementia. If you ask your patrons the same question, you will find out that many of them are caring for a loved one or experiencing changes in their own cognition and memory.

What is dementia? Dementia is not an actual disease, but a term used to describe a range of neurological conditions affecting the brain that worsen over time. Symptoms can include a decline in cognitive abilities, such as memory, language, judgement, decision-making, abstract thinking, and often changes in behavior and personality. These changes are persistent and significant enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia, and for this reason, the words dementia and Alzheimer’s disease are often used interchangeably in conversation. In this Guide, unless we are referring to specific statistics or characteristics for Alzheimer’s disease, we will use the term dementia. There are many diseases that cause symptoms of dementia. You may have heard of some of them such as cerebrovascular disease, Lewy body disease, frontotemporal lobar degeneration, and Parkinson’s disease.

For many reasons, dementia is still underdiagnosed, with over 50% of individuals with any form

of dementia not formally diagnosed. In 2022, it was estimated that a staggering 6.5 million Americans age 65 and older were living with Alzheimer’s type dementia. Seventy-three percent of these individuals are age 75 or older. That means that of the total U.S. population, about 1 in 9 people (10.7%) age 65 and older has Alzheimer’s disease. By 2050, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer’s dementia is projected to reach 12.7 million people. And this isn’t just a problem that older people worry about. People younger than 65 can also develop dementia. Although prevalence studies for younger onset dementia in the United States are limited, according to the Alzheimer’s Association, researchers believe about 110 of every 100,000 people, about 200,000 Americans, have younger onset dementia.

It’s estimated that approximately 220,000 people in Ohio are living with dementia. People living with dementia are your patrons, but they may not be coming to the library very much anymore. They may become lost easily, forget how to check out a book, have trouble reading an entire book, or no longer drive. Most of the help provided to older adults in their homes is provided by family members, friends, or other unpaid care partners. The Alzheimer’s Association reports that more than 11 million Americans provide unpaid care for people with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia. Many of these care partners feel stressed, exhausted, isolated, and overwhelmed. Professional care partners may also need additional support in engaging meaningfully with their clients living with dementia. (Note: The use of *care partner*, rather than care giver, recognizes the *mutual* relationship of giving and receiving between those who are living with dementia and those who provide daily support. *Care partner* acknowledges the active role that those living with dementia can play in living well with their disease.)

With 70% of individuals with dementia living in the community (not in shared residential settings), how can we provide support and continue to include people with dementia and their care partners in the library and greater community? To be Dementia Inclusive ensures that customers continue to find information, pursue interests, and come together in learning and community, all in the setting of their public library. In doing so, public libraries fulfill their ongoing role of removing the stigma too often associated with differing abilities, including those that may accompany a dementia diagnosis. Patrons living with dementia, and their care partners, remain interested and interesting, and can and should live lives of purpose and passion.

In this Guide you will read about Dementia Friendly communities and Dementia Inclusive initiatives. The authors view the words “friendly” and “inclusive” to carry the same meaning or spirit. Dementia Friendly Communities are places where people living with dementia and their care partners have opportunities for meaningful social interaction, are provided support in addressing the changing needs of people living with dementia, and can truly be engaged in the life of the

Inclusive

As defined by Oxford Languages

Not excluding any of the parties or groups involved in something.

Aiming to provide equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or intellectual disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

community. It's a community where people with dementia have control over their lives and are able to make choices. Dementia Friendly Communities (an official designation by Dementia Friendly America) are started by residents, business owners, and service providers joining together with a shared mission to create a more dementia friendly culture in their local area. A community can be a town, city, or even a county.

We are striving toward Dementia Inclusive libraries (and other public and private spaces) so that all people living with dementia and their care partners continue to be involved in the library and the greater community.

What role will your library play in making this so?

The Ellet Branch Library began the Memory Café program in 2014.

Prior to that, I did not have much experience in working with people who I knew had dementia. The program over the next six years became the best experience of my professional career. There were so many great conversations that came about as a result, as well as bits of conversation that I heard in passing. There were attendees who proclaimed to love the library, but also openly talked about how it had been years since they had set foot in one prior to the Memory Café, and how the library (and Memory Café) then became indispensable to them. They talked about how they came for the conversation, camaraderie, cookies and escape, and walked out with resources that gave them ideas on how to better live with their diagnosis. They talked about how they were afraid that no place would want them there if they knew they had dementia, but how wonderful it was that the library openly embraced them and “gave them the keys to the kingdom.” Most of all, the library went from being a warm afterthought, to one of the most important places in their lives. It was a place that enriched their lives and gave them so much joy and happiness at a time when those moments were becoming less frequent and harder to find during this difficult point in their lives. If we were ever looking for a reason to do what we do as libraries and serve our communities in the best possible capacity, Memory Cafe was certainly a wonderful way to find that reason. And today I serve as part of the Library's Dementia Inclusive service planning cohort, building on this Memory Cafe experience to bring Memory Kits, communication aides, Dementia Friends education, and more to customers living with dementia, and their care partners, across our library system.

– Brian Burch, Manager and Adult Services Librarian, Ellet Branch Library, ASCPL

Using this Guide as Your Roadmap

This implementation Guide will serve as a way finder in your development as a Dementia Inclusive library. At each possible stop along the way, you will find the following:

- **Descriptive information** about each milestone — its potential impact and place within the whole of your Dementia Inclusive journey.
- **Factors for your consideration** — budget, staffing, environment, community context, and more.
- **Details of implementation** — including practical checklists and tips.

Guide Authors



Barbara White. Retired after 31 years of service with the Akron-Summit County Public Library, Barb continues her commitment to Dementia Inclusive communities as a Dementia Friends Champion, founding member of Dementia-Friendly Summit County Ohio, and Education and Programming Committee Chair with Dementia Action Alliance. Barb has shared strategies for Dementia Inclusive library practice on a statewide and national level, and brings Dementia Friends workshops to organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies across multiple community sectors in Summit County.



Jennifer Brush. Jennifer is the Director of Brush Development, Chardon, Ohio and a member of the team at the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health, writing educational material for care partners and people living with dementia. She is a Fulbright Specialist, researcher, award-winning dementia care author, and healthcare consultant located in northeast Ohio. Jennifer also serves as Program Director, Montessori Education for Dementia, St. Nicholas College, Ireland. She is an inaugural member of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Advisory Board for Montessori for Dementia and Aging and the first AMI Certified Trainer for Montessori for Dementia and Aging in the US.



Margaret Jarrell. Margaret is a Montessori-trained guide, who has been a teacher and administrator in Montessori schools for over 20 years. She is a project manager for Brush Development, Chardon, Ohio as well as the Director of the Greenspring Center for Lifelong Learning. Margaret is a Certified Practitioner and Trainer in Montessori for Dementia and Aging through the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

Meet the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health

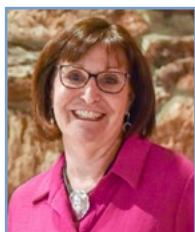


The Ohio Council for Cognitive Health (OCFCH) is a growing network of care partners, health partners, and community members dedicated to transforming life for those living with dementia, their loved ones, and their communities. Their approach ensures scalable, sustainable transformation across systems, within communities and throughout the state. OCFCH's work blends time-tested and emergent clinical approaches along with broader community involvement. By giving voice to care recipients, care providers and the broader community, they are taking person-centered care and caring and the mantra, "nothing about me without me," to a new level.

The Council is helping Ohioans living with dementia — along with their loved ones, care partners and broader community — live with as much meaning, purpose, and joy as possible.

We do this by:

- Helping create environments in which individuals thrive by using and enhancing their preserved abilities
- Providing tools, approaches, and resources for loved ones, care partners, and community members
- Encouraging the concept of interdependence
- Introducing community members to strategies that can enhance cognitive health throughout the lifespan
- Serving as the lead agency in Ohio for Dementia Friends and Dementia Inclusive Ohio



The Council is led by Dr. Bonnie Burman. Bonnie has spent her career as an agent of change, bringing people together to view the world of dementia differently and pushing all of us to transform services and supports for our elders. As a care partner for her mother who was living with dementia, Bonnie experienced firsthand the rewards and challenges that so many Ohioans encountered every day. As the former Director of the Ohio Department of Aging, she advocated for and implemented cost-effective approaches that emphasized high quality, person-centered care.

Bonnie also served as the Executive Director of the Pioneer Network. Working with a wide range of stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels, her team developed consumer-directed long-term care programs, policies and financing through regulatory enforcement, payment reform, and workforce enhancements. Earlier in her career, Bonnie served in a variety of capacities at the Ohio State University College of Medicine including Director of the Office of Geriatrics and Gerontology.

A Word About Collaboration

The Akron-Summit County Public Library (ASCPL), the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health, and Brush Development, all Ohio-based organizations, first came together around a shared vision of the full inclusion of those living with dementia in the life of the community and its public library. An early version of the Memory Activity Kits (funded in part through Ohio’s Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program) included in this Guide were the result of this effort to create a Dementia Inclusive ASCPL, but through sharing our experiences and knowledge gained from our varied contexts, our understanding of what it means to be Dementia Inclusive in the public library grew in depth and breadth. Ideas developed and lessons learned since those first initial conversations are shared with you here. Together we can all build a Dementia Inclusive Ohio, with the public library at the center of this work.

The richness of Ohio lies in the spirit of collaboration that was mirrored in the experiences that made this Guide a reality, and in the acknowledgement and celebration of each region’s distinct resources, challenges, and opportunities. Within each Ohio community, there are members from faith organizations, government entities, community services, and more, contributing their expertise and lived experience to make the best life possible for all. This Guide recognizes the varied contexts in which library work takes place, and we are confident that it will make possible Dementia Inclusive services in libraries of every size and budget—from the small rural library with a small staff and limited hours to the large urban metro system with dozens of branches and hundreds of personnel. The practical steps shared in the coming pages build on the strength of collaborative relationships—formal and informal, both within and beyond library walls—that have built the Ohio of innovation and civic participation we experience daily.

CREATING YOUR DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE LIBRARY: FIRST STEPS

“Diversity is about all of us and about us having to figure out how to walk through this world together.” — Jacqueline Woodson

Gathering Information and Building Your Implementation Team

As a public library, you undoubtedly include in your collection up-to-date materials on living with dementia and caring for those with a dementia diagnosis. This may take the form of books on your shelf, health-related periodicals, and/or dementia-related materials in your lit distribution racks. On your display tables, you may periodically display these materials to raise awareness and better inform your customers about information available. On your bulletin board may be posted information about local support groups, and you may be hosting those groups, as well as informational sessions, in your meeting spaces. And across your circulation or reference desk, you may be serving long-time customers whose needs seem to be changing along with their cognitive abilities. You want to do more...but how? And when?

The time is NOW, because you are already on your way! All of the above demonstrate an awareness of the role dementia is playing in the lives of your community members. That role is growing, and you want your library to grow in its response. You are saying YES! to being not only dementia-aware, but Dementia Inclusive.

To be Dementia Inclusive is not a one-day practice, but an everyday commitment. It is not the work of some staff, but of all staff. But Dementia Inclusive library practice is entirely scalable—to your size of library footprint, staff, and budget and to your community context.



CONSIDER | Community Needs and Culture

- What are the demographics of your community—at what rate is your community aging and what are the projections for the next 1-5 years? Your local Chamber of Commerce or public health department may have already gathered this data. The latest Census may also provide the information you need. Keep in mind that although older age is a risk factor for dementia, some younger people are diagnosed with early onset dementia (including individuals with developmental disabilities and these individuals should be included in your planning).
- What are the community growth priorities already in place? Is your community focused on retaining population, growing local business, developing housing opportunities, addressing public health equity concerns, etc.? City or Town Council reports or meeting minutes can provide a window into community priorities. Reach out to your mayor, your council people, your business leaders, and other community organizers to learn more about their hopes for the future.

- What efforts are already in place in your community to serve and engage community members living with cognitive changes or dementia and their care partners? Has your community undertaken an age-friendly or livable community initiative of which dementia inclusion should be a part?
- Will your library's Dementia Inclusive initiative be a part of an already-established DEIAB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Belonging) library or community effort, or will it be a first step in highlighting and broadening an understanding of full acceptance and inclusion? If your community has engaged in conversations about diversity and inclusion, have age and/or ability been a part of that discussion?
- Starting small to ensure first successes is often the best place to start. And small efforts may be all that your current budget, staff size, and ongoing commitments make possible at this time. What resources—in money, space, staff time, materials, and promotion—can you designate now for the launch of your Dementia Inclusive initiative? How do you envision growth over time? Remember, every small effort matters!
- Who on your staff has the passion, energy, and leadership skills to activate those same qualities throughout your staff, and what will be your very next steps?



CHECKLIST | Creating Your Dementia Inclusive Implementation Team

- ☒ Determine the staff member who will lead your efforts to be a Dementia Inclusive library.
 - In a small library, this determination may be an easy one—it may be you, the reader, the Director, or, depending on your first steps, it may even be your HR Director. Where staff is more numerous, consider a programming coordinator, adult services manager, or perhaps a co-leadership between internal and outreach service coordinators.
- ☒ Assemble your Dementia Inclusive Team.
 - Internally, find library staff throughout all levels of the organization who have the interest and confidence to grow their knowledge base in order to engage others in this effort. Consider what both professional and para-professionals, public service and support providers can bring to the table as you craft your initiative for your library and the greater community.
 - Make sure your team includes people with lived experiences, people living with dementia or care partners, who are willing to advise you on what they truly need.
- ☒ Engage volunteers as needed and as available.
 - In some libraries, Friends of the Library groups can provide volunteer support and/or public-facing advocacy for the library and its services to those living with cognitive changes and/or dementia. In others, local service organizations may have members ready to step in and play a role. As with any engagement of volunteers, training is critically important to ensure that library values and messaging are consistently communicated and made visible. (Volunteers can serve as Team members or as volunteers in the larger effort.)

- ☑ Inform all staff of the Team’s members and its mission.
 - Be sure to share the “why” of this new effort, including much of what has been shared here already about the role of the library in the community and the compelling story that data tells about the need for Dementia Inclusive practice. This initial communication need not be lengthy—a 10-minute news-sharing at a staff meeting, a two-to-three paragraph all-staff e-mail, and/or a brief write-up in a staff newsletter—but it must be only the first in your ongoing communication about the “how” and “what” of your growth as a Dementia Inclusive library.
- ☑ Put a plan in place for staff updates.
 - Decide how often staff updates will be issued, and their content, including talking points for public-facing staff. Will the responsibility for communication be shared among Team members or will this be assumed by one designated Team member? Communication is as critical as staff development in the success of any new initiative.
- ☑ Develop staff and volunteers.
 - Dementia Friends is your best resource for in-person and/or virtual learning around recognizing and supporting customers with cognitive changes. (Staff who, in turn, wish to become Dementia Friends trainers themselves can continue with “Champions” training.) More about Dementia Friends sessions and training for libraries and related resources through Ohio’s state lead, Ohio Council for Cognitive Health, is found in subsequent sections of this guide.
 - Staff (and volunteer) development can be implemented on a no- or low-cost basis and be responsive to time and travel constraints and must not be limited to Team members only. It is essential that all staff—public and non-public facing—of your organization receive this education as all represent your library both within your building’s walls and in the larger community. Any staff member may interact with a library customer and it is essential that every customer experiences welcome and inclusion.

STORY IS POWERFUL: Tell the library’s dementia story!



TIPS | Creating Your Team & Launching Your Initiative

- Library structure—administrative depth, Board involvement, government or school district oversight—varies throughout the Ohio public library world. Use the data provided above, and the powerful information shared by organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Association and Dementia Action Alliance, to build your case for the Dementia Inclusive Library where needed. Include not just numbers, but also local anecdotes of family, generational library customers, neighbors, and friends who have been impacted by dementia.
- Do the same when seeking staff buy-in. There are few of us who have not been impacted in some way by dementia. Ask staff to think of that one person for whom they wish they could have done more—and then challenge them to join you in doing just that.
- Ensure that staff and volunteer training is ongoing, and that new participants receive training in a timely fashion. Make Dementia Friends education a part of your onboarding process for all staff, and require that refresher work with the Dementia Friends website or perhaps curated readings with reader discussion or reflection be accomplished annually.
- While building your Team from within, also look outward to those groups with whom the library is already engaged and for those new relationships that can be built to support your efforts. We’ll talk more about this as we explore Dementia Friends opportunities below.

Educating Library Staff and Dementia Inclusive Library Volunteers

The Dementia Friendly America and Dementia Friendly Ohio initiatives are catalyzing a movement to more effectively support and serve those across America and our great state who are living with dementia and their care partners. The lead organizations represent all sectors of community and are collectively leveraging their national and state reach to activate their local affiliates, members, and branches to convene, participate in, and support dementia friendly community efforts at a local level. The Ohio Council for Cognitive Health is the Ohio lead for both the Dementia Friendly Ohio and Dementia Friends Ohio initiatives.

Dementia Friends is the program education tool many communities use as part of the first step toward creating a dementia friendly community.

Dementia Friends is a free one-hour education and call-to-action program that is open to anyone. It focuses on five key messages that everyone should know about dementia:

- Dementia is not a natural part of aging.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
- It is not just about losing your memory.
- It's possible to live well with dementia.
- There is more to the person than dementia.

Dementia Friendly Communities strive to have:

- Residents of the community who are aware of and have learned about dementia
- People living with dementia who are supported to continue to make decisions about their own lives
- Health care professionals who are educated about dementia and assist care partners with needed services
- Businesses that have staff who understand dementia and know how to communicate effectively and provide extra assistance as needed
- Buildings that are accessible and enable people living with dementia to move about safely
- Social groups that welcome members living with dementia and their care partners

Formal designation as a Dementia Friendly Community is made by Dementia Friendly America and is awarded through an application process that demonstrates cross-sector commitment. You and your community allies can learn more and apply here:

<https://www.dfamerica.org/what-is-dfa>

There is a Dementia Friends education session designed specifically for libraries.

This program, presented in libraries across the state, is changing the way Ohio library staff serve customers with dementia and their care partners. Session participants learn tips for communicating and engaging with library patrons who are living with memory changes, creating dementia friendly physical spaces, taking library services to senior care communities, hosting dementia education programs, support groups, and Memory Cafes, and much more. After the one-hour session, staff leave empowered by information and greater confidence.

Once any individual attends a Dementia Friends session, the person can volunteer to participate in an additional 90-minute training and become a Dementia Friends Champion. Dementia Friends Champions volunteer to deliver Dementia Friends sessions in their communities. Library staff can become Dementia Friends Champions and host their own Dementia Friends sessions. All handouts and training materials are provided free of charge by Dementia Friends Ohio.

Contact the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health team member Marty Williman:

mwilliman@ocfch.org



CONSIDER | Becoming a Dementia Friend

- What is the best method—in person or virtual—for your sessions? Consider, too, number of sessions needed, day of week and time, and if a departmental or all-staff education approach will better allow you to reach your goals and foster a high level of staff enthusiasm.
- What are your administrative expectations of staff with respect to this education? If your library sets education goals for employees, will this mandatory education work toward satisfying those goals or is this over and above individual expectations?
- What will Dementia Friends session follow-up look like in your organization? How will you engage with staff after each session, welcoming feedback, reflection, and ideas? How will you reinforce the ways in which this education will impact daily service?
- Once a staff person attends a Dementia Friends session, they can participate in an additional and free 90-minute training to become a Dementia Friends Champion. Dementia Friends Champions provide Dementia Friends sessions in their communities. Do you want to seek or designate staff to receive this extra training? Should this be a requirement of your Dementia Inclusive Library Team members?
- As you participate in Dementia Friends sessions, consider what role this education, offered to a general audience, could play in your Dementia Inclusive Library initiative. We'll give this additional consideration in considering programming later in this Guide.



CHECKLIST | For Staff and Volunteer Dementia Friends Education

CHECKLIST: Checklist for Staff and Volunteer Dementia Friends Education

- ☒ Contact the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health to schedule your Dementia Friends sessions.
- ☒ Communicate with staff the logistics of sessions and information about the content and day-of expectations.
- ☒ Share with staff what they can expect from the Team regarding education follow-up.
- ☒ Determine what role Champions education will play, if any, in your Dementia Inclusive initiative and follow the steps above to schedule and implement this next-level commitment.



TIPS | For Staff and Volunteer Dementia Friends Education

- Share the benefits of upcoming Dementia Friends sessions with those responsible for library oversight and be sure to convey that this impactful professional development is free of charge.
- Position education for attendees within the “why” of your initiative and the “why” of continuing education. Dementia Inclusive practice is not “another thing to do” on an already full library plate, but is providing improved, more confident, and more effective service to an already-established customer constituency.
- Be sure to give plenty of notice regarding the date and time of the sessions and clear instructions for attendance—log-in information for virtual sessions, parking information for in-person sessions, expectations regarding note-taking and assessment, if any, and more.
- Use open-ended questions, scenarios for consideration, and invitations for new library service ideas as follow-up to training. Consider ways to refer back to session points in upcoming staff communication.
- Engage staff in brainstorming community allies who can help extend the reach of dementia inclusion beyond the library.

Exploring Community Partnerships

It may sound cliché but it is no less true—everything in life is relationship, relationship, relationship. Moreover, in the public library we are in the people business, and we all thrive because libraries are able to strengthen connections between community members working toward common goals. Finally, in bringing folks together, we can highlight the unique approaches and skillsets that can be combined to achieve a mission greater than any one agency can achieve.

While libraries can be the first in their communities to adopt a Dementia Inclusive perspective, in identifying our community allies in this work of dementia inclusion, we have the opportunity to work together to increase and evaluate community impact and grow ever more successful in ensuring that wherever community members with a dementia diagnosis engage in our community, they are celebrated for their competence, talents, and purpose. As you form your team of allies, make sure to include people living with dementia, care partners, or those with lived experiences on that team.



CONSIDER | Building Relationships

- In what community sectors do potential Dementia Inclusive allies reside? Public health, the faith community, first responders, local schools and institutions of post-secondary education, arts, culture, parks & rec institutions, food banks, health care organizations, senior centers, veterans service organizations, developmental disabilities organizations, other social service agencies—all of these and more are places where potential allies await your invitation to engage.
- What form will that initial invitation take? A group meeting, individual outreach, or a casual conversation around service efforts?
- When is the right time for your organization to take this next step? Does your library have the capacity to lead an informal, or perhaps a more coordinated, cross-sector community effort? If so, who on your Dementia Inclusive Team will take those steps and do that work?
- What role might Community Allies play in the early and later growth stages of the library's own Dementia Inclusive initiative?



CHECKLIST | Finding Community Allies

- ☒ Determine your Community Ally Lead from within your Team.
- ☒ Assess current relationships.
 - Identify organizations, government agencies, and community groups with which your library already works to improve community outcomes.
- ☒ Make a wish list of potential Community Allies.

- ☑ Determine a timeline for engaging these groups.
 - Issue an invitation to learn more when library capacity makes reaching out possible. Reaching out could ultimately result in lessening the library load, but initially community groups will be in a learning phase and the library will be the leader in this.
- ☑ Schedule learning opportunities.
 - Be prepared to share the library's story of commitment to Dementia Inclusive service and the impact of that commitment on daily customer experiences.
 - Determine the level of Dementia Inclusive activity desired by interested allies.
 - Include individuals living with dementia and care partners (past and present) in discussion groups and planning.



TIPS | Finding Community Allies

- Community Allies can be identified through community research, but also discovered through informal conversation across the reference or circulation desks. Engage all library staff in sharing what they know about community service and activism.
- Use the Community Ally Invitation in the Additional Resources as a template for reaching out to others in the community.
- You may find that what forms first among Community Allies is an informal group that meets periodically to share successes and challenges, and to occasionally craft collaborative programming and projects. It is possible that your group continues in this way indefinitely, weathering changes in leadership, budget fortunes and misfortunes, staff turnover, and the reworking of missions and goals. Alignment may need to be reassessed, and you may find that some groups drop out, and perhaps then in again, as circumstances change.
- It is also possible that you may determine that a more formal structure, and the benefits of belonging to a larger network, are desired by your Community Allies. If so, membership in the network of Dementia Friendly Communities should be sought. Dementia Friendly Communities are committed to expanding the types of supports for people with dementia and their families, enhancing public awareness and participation, promoting high quality and affordable care, and including persons with dementia in decisions about care and related health and social services.

LAUNCHING YOUR INITIATIVE

“When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, we become wiser, more inclusive, and better as an organization.” – Pat Wadors



Educating your staff in how to better serve your library customers with dementia, and their care partners, with kindness, competence, and confidence was a critical first step in growing your Dementia Inclusive library. Having the tools of communication and connection, and demonstrating acceptance and inclusion within and beyond the library walls, centers your staff and resources at the heart of a caring community that welcomes everyone’s full participation in a life well-lived.

As a next step, you may want to develop a means of recording personalized service information that can facilitate continued library engagement: a customer’s preferred name or nickname; frequently selected authors, subject, and media types; next of kin/emergency contact information; and helpful techniques and names of staff persons most familiar with assisting the individual living with dementia.

Always keeping in mind the factors of staffing, budget, library and community culture and context, and complexity of timelines for programmatic growth, you are ready now to examine other aspects of Dementia Inclusive library practice for possible implementation. These next steps will engage physical and virtual spaces, programming, and materials and resources.

The Prepared Library Environment

The library space that is prepared to welcome and support customers with dementia and their care partners is one that makes both independence and engagement possible. Your informed staff will be ready to offer guidance, support, and resources where needed. For the customer who has been a lifelong library user, continued navigation of a once familiar space results in successful outcomes in both interpersonal experience and materials circulation. For the new library customer, a welcoming, prepared environment reflects understanding and designates your library as a safe place for repeated visits.



CONSIDER | Revising Library Spaces

- Have you already been considering changes to your library space(s)?
- Have accessibility and inclusion played a role in planning changes?
- What is the timeline for those small or big revisions and/or renovations?
- Are there small changes and additions that can be made now that do not require a capital campaign, but may be funded by your Friends of the Library group, a local retailer, a small foundation grant, or your community's service organizations?
- Have you included the voices and lived experiences of library customers, including those with differing abilities, in your brainstorming around these changes?
- How will you share the news of environmental changes at the library that support full inclusion?



CHECKLIST | Creating a Prepared Library Environment

- ☒ Conduct a series of listening sessions.
 - Invite members of the disability community to learn more about how they use the library, how they would like to use the library, and what the fully accessible and inclusive library of their imaginations looks like.
- ☒ Identify entrances, pathways, and bathrooms that are not clearly marked.
 - Signage should be in a simple, large type with a contrasting background color. For example, a bright green sign background with white letters or a white background with black letters. Avoid using all capital letters for signs. Improvements to wayfinding will make more independent navigation possible.
- ☒ Ensure bathrooms are marked and accessible.
 - Family, multi-sex, or gender-neutral bathrooms make care partner assistance possible and self-care with dignity more accessible. Ensure that a restroom of this type is available and clearly marked as noted above.

- ☑ Choose non-glare flooring.
 - If considering new flooring in public spaces, plain, non-glare surfaces should be your choice to minimize the perception of obstacles or slippery surfaces and facilitate transitions throughout the building.
- ☑ Identify “quiet zones” where customers feeling overwhelmed can find respite.
 - Look for spaces that are available at all times (for this reason meeting rooms may not be ideal, but a quiet hallway might accomplish your goal), and make seating available. Keep these spaces free of clutter; they should not become default storage areas.
- ☑ Take sensory needs into consideration.
 - Cognitive impairment can impact sensory integration, resulting in new or further-developed sensory needs. Purchase sensory-inclusive resources—a small, weighted lap blanket, noise-canceling headphones, fidget blankets or fabric books—and have these available at all times.



TIPS | The Prepared Library Environment

- Control glare by avoiding fixtures with exposed light bulbs. Choose white light LED or florescent bulbs with shades. Be aware of shadows on tables and on the floor and make sure lighting is sufficient enough to minimize shadows. Use shades or sheers on windows that can be adjusted to minimize glare from the sun as needed. Curtains may also be needed in the evenings to cover windows and prevent images of people inside the library from reflecting in the windows.
- Listening sessions should be intersectional, inviting participation across neighborhoods, professions, age, abilities, gender identification, and more. There is nothing that can replace lived experience as a source for information and creativity.
- If available, look to your own staff and maker spaces as work is underway in replacing signage. Alternatively, consider local graphic arts programs in vocational and post-secondary educational settings as a place to launch a signage project and inform the work of future community leaders.
- Visual cues are often preferable to the written word. Where possible, include both written and graphic representations on signage.
- Sensory Bags, with the items mentioned above, are available for purchase. Priced separately, they may prove less expensive because you will not be paying for overall branding. Also check in with your local Board of Developmental Disabilities. They may have Sensory Bags already developed that they can make available to the library at no or low cost.
- Use clear signage to indicate the location of both sensory resources and quiet zones. Be sure that all staff, both public and non-public service, are aware of changes being made throughout your library, and the location of new materials and designated areas, so that anyone on your team can provide support when needed. Be sure to include the “why,” as well as the “what” and “how,” when educating staff and volunteers.

Library Website as a Dementia Inclusive Gateway

Your library's website is a virtual doorway into collections, services, and programming opportunities around learning, recreation, and entertainment. It is the place to share information about your library's ongoing evolution, and to reinforce the library's core values of excellence, service, and inclusion. It is not until visiting the library website that many customers gain a full appreciation of all that is available with their library card, while organizations referred to the library's website often discover important resources to share with their constituencies. Your website is the place to tell your library's Dementia Inclusive story.



CONSIDER | Revising the Library Website

- Will you develop a separate webpage within your website for your Dementia Inclusive initiative or will all information be available on the library's home page?
- If a separate page is created, what will be the path through which customers access this information? Under Accessibility? Adult Services? How many clicks are too many for the user seeking information?
- Do you have the capacity to update this information on a regular basis, adding new resources and ensuring that all included links are operational and relevant?
- How will you reach customers and potential customers who do not have access to devices and/or robust internet service?



CHECKLIST | Updating the Library Website

- ☒ Identify interested Dementia Inclusive Team members, including those living with dementia and their care partners.
 - Invite Team members to work with web design staff to share design suggestions, website accessibility best practices, and content.
- ☒ Determine a timeline for this website content's launch and a schedule for regular review and content additions.
- ☒ Determine a protocol for adding content.
 - Will only library resources be shared, or will resources from vetted outside organizations be included? If the latter, will these additions be approved by all Team members or only those assigned website responsibilities?
- ☒ Communicate effectively with staff.
 - Upon implementation, alert all library staff to its website location and content. Continue to do so with every review and addition.

- ☑ Invite Community Allies to visit and share the website.
- Explore with Community Allies how to improve access to this important library information for those without devices or adequate connectivity.



TIPS | Updating the Library Website

- Include in your Dementia Inclusive website information about the “why” of the library’s Dementia Inclusive efforts. Here you can talk about the growing number of community members with a dementia diagnosis and the importance of their continued community participation and individual purpose and contribution.
- Be sure to alert customers to individualized library services that allow for one-to-one assistance with finding materials of interest, using devices that assist with connection and independence, and scheduling drive-thru or homebased delivery for when navigating building spaces is not possible at a given time.
- Share library materials in all media that may be of interest, and be sure to include database resources that contribute to brain health, support hobbies and interests, and introduce new avenues for exploration.
- As your Team learns more about organizations that, like the library, support removing the stigma of a dementia diagnosis and living well with dementia, consider adding links to their work, always letting customers know why the library considers these links valuable enough to be included.
- A social story about a visit to the library—with simple text and large photos—can be a useful tool when preparing for a next visit to the library. Reviewing a social story prior to visiting, or printing a copy from the library’s website to bring along, can ease fears about entering an unfamiliar space (by sharing what to expect and how a visit might make the library customer with a dementia diagnosis feel). Your local chapter of the Autism Society or your local Development Disabilities Board can assist you with developing a social story for your library as a whole and/or stories for individual locations or departments.

DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE LIBRARY PROGRAMMING AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In the public library, a community space dedicated to serving everyone, programs are open to all. Presenters, either library staff or contracted performers or content experts, as well as participants, should expect to see among a program's attendees people of all abilities. Therefore, it is a bit inaccurate to label library programs as Dementia Inclusive, as a cognitive impairment does not preclude library participation.

However, there is a role for programming that is offered with a different sort of intentionality, with the purpose of serving those with a dementia diagnosis and their care partners with a sharing of information and opportunities to acknowledge common experiences, challenges, and moments of joy.



CONSIDER | Identifying Opportunities for New Programming

- Who on the library's Dementia Inclusive Initiative Team will lead the development of a programming schedule and marshal staff expertise and community talent, while acknowledging other library programming demands?
- All of your library staff are now Dementia Friends. Are any staff Dementia Friends Champions?
- What programming/activities are already available in your community for customers living with dementia? Identify the location, time of day, day of week, content, and intended audience. Are there opportunities to provide something wholly unique?
- Are there opportunities to support existing community programming? Reach out to those already doing programming in which the library could have a role. For example, a support group for care partners may meet in a community space for which there is a rental fee. Can the library offer free meeting space and periodic updates about library resources and services?
- Will you offer a regular schedule of Dementia Inclusive programming or occasional one-off events?
- Reach out to area memory care residential and day programs. Are they able and willing to bring their program participants and staff to the library? Can the library bring Memory Café-like programming to their programs on a schedule that works with your staffing capacity?
- Given the size of your staff, how can you make individual, one-to-one appointments available to the persons living with dementia and their care partners?
- Can Community Allies offer assistance with funding, content, and/or promotion of the library's Dementia Inclusive programming?



CHECKLIST | Designing Dementia Inclusive Library Programming

- ☒ Create Memory Activity Kits for in-library use (and/or checkout).
 - This Guide contains detailed lists and instructions for making Kits designed especially for library use that are closely aligned with the five key messages of the library's Dementia Friends approach. Beginning on page 40, you will find everything you need to get your library started in offering these innovative and interactive activities for care partners and people living with dementia.
 - While pre-packaged memory kits are available for purchase from retailers, you will see that the Memory Activity Kits recommended here are quite different. They provide flexible and scalable alternatives for libraries of every financial and staffing capacity and offer an opportunity to engage patrons' preserved abilities and more closely align with patrons' unique interests and roles in daily life. Originally developed for customers of the Akron-Summit County Public Library, these Kits provide the opportunity to serve patrons in a new, truly responsive way.
 - In-library use of these Kits offers opportunities for in-house library participation that is not tied to a given day or time. Patrons living with dementia and their care partners can enjoy the social setting of the library while engaging with Kits on their own best schedule.
- ☒ Display dementia friendly materials.
 - Include themed, highly illustrated, and colorful large print books and magazines; local history books and biographies; short stories and excerpts; poetry; audio books; music; and videos.
- ☒ Create a Dementia Resource Center.
 - Provide resources to learn more about dementia.
 - Consider putting together caregiver "bundles," which include materials for self-care, support, education, inspiration, relaxation, humor, etc., in various media forms.
- ☒ Schedule informational programming.
 - Include programming on brain health, Dementia 101, support for care partners, and local services. Dementia Champions can offer Dementia Friends sessions for general community audiences. (Dementia Friends sessions can also be offered in sectors throughout the community by library staff Champions.)
- ☒ Plan Memory Café-type experiences.
 - Memory Cafés are occasions for talking about living the abundant life, and should be planned around participants' interests and with their input and active leadership. Memory Cafes are not gatherings to discuss the clinical aspects of a diagnosis, but rather social, interactive adult library programming in which participants can enjoy typical library participation among those with shared experiences and challenges. Guidelines are available through this resource: [Memory Cafe Guide to Leadership and Other Meaningful Roles for People Living with Dementia.pdf \(jfcsboston.org\)](https://www.jfcsboston.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Memory-Cafe-Guide-to-Leadership-and-Other-Meaningful-Roles-for-People-Living-with-Dementia.pdf)

- ☑ Host a Memory Book workshop.
 - Following the guidelines for creating memory books in *Memory and Communication Aids for People with Dementia* by Michelle Bourgeois, offer classes to help get families started in creating specialized memory books (that differ from scrap books) for those living with cognitive impairment. Or, families and libraries can download this free resource: [Caregiver's Guide to Creating Memory and Communication Supports for People with Dementia - Health Professions Press \(healthpropress.com\)](https://www.healthpropress.com/Caregivers-Guide-to-Creating-Memory-and-Communication-Supports-for-People-with-Dementia)
- ☑ Host creative workshops in your maker spaces.
 - Invite care partners and other community members to create fidget blankets and weighted lap blankets. These can be a source of comfort for those living with dementia.
 - Invite participants to design and create t-shirts and buttons that reflect their experience living well with dementia.
 - Invite members of the dementia community to create short films sharing their experiences to encourage the newly diagnosed to address initial fears, remain engaged, and inspire hope.
- ☑ Invite those living with dementia and their care partners to work with a variety of materials in an open-studio setting located in your meeting room or on the public floor.
 - Provide prompts such as “What brings you joy?” “Where would you like to travel?” or “What brings you hope?” or no prompt at all. Let imaginations soar and stories unfold.
 - Consider varied motor skills and sensory needs when choosing materials; consulting with your local Board of Developmental Disabilities can provide insight into what to include.
- ☑ Invite local artists to share their work and their skills in a short-term library residency program. In this, do not neglect the written arts (poetry, journaling, memoir, and more), oral storytelling, and creative dramatics and improvisation.
 - Library residencies can include programming opportunities for general audiences and for identified groups of customers, including those living with dementia.
 - Be sure to share the library's expectations of inclusive practice, including strategies for communication, flexibility, and adaptation. (See “Tips” below.)



TIPS | Library Programming

- Talk with library customers living with dementia, care partners, and community members working in this space about the best day of the week and time of the day to offer programming for care partners alone, and for customers living with dementia.
- As a general rule, all performer agreements must include a statement regarding participation by all. This allows the presenter to share an inclusive experience and prepare for possible adaptation. That adaptation could include slowing the pace of the presentation, using a microphone, adjusting lighting, and expecting unintentional or unplanned movement throughout the program.
- Before a program begins, remind participants of the location of restrooms and the availability of sensory-inclusive resources and quiet zones.
- As with all library programming, don't be afraid to try, fail, and try again. If customers do not come to you, determine where they are and how you can go to them. Market Dementia Inclusive programming widely—the parents of school-agers may also be care partners for parents or grandparents with a dementia diagnosis! Enlist the assistance of faith leaders, community organizers, health care professionals, and first responders in sharing the library's Dementia Inclusive story.
- Programming outside library walls is a terrific opportunity to reinforce community respect for the power, potential, and capability of the person living with dementia. Never forget to include the “why” of the library's participation as well as the “why” of that day's gathering.

MORE ABOUT MEMORY ACTIVITY KITS

“We didn’t realize we were making memories, we just knew we were having fun.”
– A.A. Milne

Earlier in this Guide, Ohio’s enthusiasm for innovation, creativity, and collaborative problem-solving and invention was acknowledged, along with the role of its public libraries in meeting customers where they are with the services they need to live their best lives. So it is perhaps no surprise that it was in an Ohio public library that the first-of-their-kind Memory Activity Kits were introduced. As you will learn in the following pages, while scalable to your library context, these Kits do call for an investment of time, talent, and patience not required with pre-packaged memory kits available from a number of retailers. That investment is, however, returned manyfold in the powerful connections made by Kit users and their care partners to continued purpose and potential.

A customer returning our In the Kitchen Memory Activity Kit, noted that her husband had been a chemist in his professional life. Because of his cognitive impairment, he was no longer able to work in the lab. His wife was excited to share that he had found a new way to use his lab skills in the kitchen, by mixing, measuring, and discovering the “reaction” of ingredients in the recipes included in the Kit. He had never been much of a cook before, but he was finding new fulfillment through his new hobby.

Memory Activity Kits are designed to incorporate activities that utilize the preserved strengths of people living with dementia. The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways for individuals to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one’s abilities such as attention, fine motors skills, balance, coordinated movements, reading, communicating, and hand-eye coordination. The activities can be completed by the person with dementia by oneself, or with a friend or family member.

Care partners, and their friend or family member living with dementia, select Kits based on what they know of their strengths, needs, and interests. Participation in meaningful activities that are of personal interest provides a sense of purpose, enhances self-esteem, and encourages independence.

Memory Activity Kit Contents

Each Kit contains:

- Basic information about dementia
- Tips for the care partner
- Help for getting started with an activity, including FAQs
- An inventory of Kit contents
- Step-by-step directions for each activity
- A list of community resources related to dementia
- Handouts from the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health about the following topics:
 - Overview of Dementia
 - Supporting Memory
 - Brain Health
 - Supporting Communication
 - Responsive Behaviors
 - Walking About
 - Self-Care
 - Decluttering

How Will Patrons Use Your Library's Memory Activity Kits?

People living with dementia and their care partners can select Kits with themes and activities that interest them. Suggested themes include Home Life, Office Life, Working with Tools, In the Kitchen, In the Garden, At the Beach, and more. (Detailed information about Kit topics and contents is available in Part II of this Guide.) Kits may be used in the library, or checked out just like other library materials (see below for more information). Each Kit includes activities that can be enjoyed individually or with a care partner or family member. Many Kits suggest additional activities related to the theme that can easily be done at home.

Memory Activity Kit Example

Laundry Activity: Sock Matching

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.



Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Assorted socks

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Color and pattern matching
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Address hand-eye coordination
- Contribute to the family
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship and helping others

Suggestions

- If all of the socks in the basket seem too overwhelming, try leaving only 2 pairs in the basket that need to be matched and slowly increase the number of socks as the person becomes more comfortable with the task.



Sock Matching Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of socks on the mat.
3. Pick out one sock and place it on the table.
4. Look through the basket and find the matching sock.
5. Place the second sock on top of the first sock.
6. Next, pick out another sock and place it on the table.
7. Continue matching and placing socks until they are all matched.
8. When finished, place all of the socks back in the basket.
9. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.

Memory Activity Kits in Your Library: From Creation to Circulation

You've made the decision to make Memory Activity Kits a part of your Dementia Inclusive initiative. After sharing the information above about the nature and impact of the proposed Kits, your library's administration (and perhaps Board, if needed) agrees that the Memory Activity Kits proposed here (rather than those available, pre-packaged, from retailers) will serve your community, and perhaps your financial capacity, best. Customers living with dementia, their care partners, and home or residential care providers will have the opportunity to facilitate interaction and skill reinforcement, and create moments of connection, interest, and joy, around these new resources. As with all additions to services and resources, budget, staffing, and space constraints will play an important role in the breadth and depth of implementation.

If your Dementia Inclusive Team is larger in size, you likely have already identified those members who are interested in particular aspects of the project—Dementia Friends education, website creation, programming, etc.--and created sub-groups from within the whole of the Team. Determine those on your Team who have enthusiasm for adding new resources to the collection; they will be your Memory Activity Kit champions and creators.

Purchasing, Packaging, Cataloging

While it is clear that budget, staffing, and space will have a great influence on decision-making around adding Memory Activity Kits to your collection, there are additional choices that will impact Kit relevance, use, and longevity. Your Memory Activity Kit sub-group will be making some of these additional choices in collaboration with your technical services/processing department, including your cataloging staff. In small libraries, Memory Activity Kit group members may be the very same staff who will be responsible for bringing these Kits to the public you serve. The same decisions, regardless of the size of your library, will need to be made.

In Additional Resources, there is a list of sources for Montessori materials referenced in this Guide. While purchasing high quality Montessori materials is sometimes recommended (especially for those Kits that will be for in-house use only), the cost may be prohibitive or impractical. Where that is the case, it is possible to assemble Kits with inexpensive items found in hardware, grocery, and discount stores. For example, Sound Cylinders can be made from empty jam jars filled with different substances (e.g., sand, small pebbles, jingle bells, etc.). Color Tablets can be made inexpensively from paint color strips, which are free at most paint supply and hardware stores.



CONSIDER

- What do your circulation statistics tell you about interests and passions in your community? What adult and family programs draw the greatest audience, and what evergreen programs (e.g., book discussion or crafting groups) are attended by the same customers for years, and perhaps decades?
- How do the majority of your customers find materials to borrow? Do you find that many or few are browsers? Do they phone in requested titles and run in for pick-up but rarely stay to see what's on display or new on the shelves?
- For those considering in-house Kits, what have you observed about those customers who do come to visit for longer periods of time? Do they come with a friend or loved one? Do they enjoy doing puzzles, adult coloring, and other passive programming? Do they read the newspaper? Spend time on the computer interacting with friends and family on social media?
- If you are already circulating non-traditional items, which of those have had the greatest appeal? What has customer feedback revealed about your community's comfort level with borrowing beyond what is "typical" of library collections?
- What is the mechanism for transporting Kits throughout your system or community? What are the stressors on materials that impact collection wear and tear?



CHECKLIST | Purchasing, Packaging, Cataloging

- ☒ Reviewing the detailed list of Memory Activity Kit collection choices (in Part II of this Guide), choose the topics/themes that your Memory Activity Kit sub-group believes will have the greatest appeal across your community.
 - Keep in mind that borrowers or in-house users may be seeking to support retained abilities, find occasion for conversation and interaction, and/or spark new interests.
 - While extremely rewarding, the work of purchasing, sorting, and preparing Kit items for circulation can be time-intensive. Consider setting aside a regular day of the week/ time of the day for these tasks, and workspace for Kit assembly.
 - Remember, too, that some topics can be kept "on deck," to be added as the collection grows.
- ☒ Create a list of items needed and their source(s). (See Additional Resources for some recommended sources.)
 - Create a spreadsheet or chart to track dates of order and delivery, and expenses. Depending on the size and nature of your sub-group, and the way in which library purchases are made in your organization, you may want to assign the gathering of materials to **one member** to avoid duplication and ensure careful oversight.

- ☑ Sort ordered materials as they arrive.
 - Remember that to each circulating Kit will be added introductory material and an envelope of Quick Tips to remain with the customer when the Kit is returned. A laminated instruction and inventory list will be in all Kits, in-house or circulating.
- ☑ Determine the size of containers needed.
 - Clear, plastic storage boxes with locking lids are recommended, and sizes should be fairly consistent, with only one or two chosen for stacking ease. Note those instances where more than one activity can be contained in a single box without the box size having to be too unwieldy. Weight should also be a consideration when contemplating combining activities in a single box. (Note: Already available, branded library tote bags may be a cost-effective alternative.)
- ☑ Make clear and concise labels.
 - Labels should be easy for both customers and staff to read and provide the information needed. In some libraries, the graphic design department will play a role in label and handout creation to ensure brand consistency.
 - List title of the Kit and name of activities contained within the box; indicate 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc., and include a Small Parts warning. On circulating Kits, duplicate barcodes should be on the individual boxes of a single Kit, i.e., one barcode per Kit, not activity. Label and barcode placement are matters of practicality and efficiency; your circulation staff can assist you in making that decision.
- ☑ When cataloging the Memory Activity Kits, consider how best your customers can access each Kit with Title, Subject, and Keyword searches.
- ☑ Consider also a Series listing, e.g., Dementia Inclusive Library, with a description of the goals of Memory Activity Kit use. Contents of the Kits and a Small Pieces warning should be included in Item Summary, Notes, or Content fields (or all three).



TIPS | Purchasing, Packaging, Cataloging

- You can expect Memory Activity Kit material to wander. For example, placemats can be inadvertently gathered up with a borrower's own placemats, kitchen tools may look identical to those owned by the customer, socks can end up in home sock drawers, pens may be put in a pocket rather than returned to the Office Life Kit. For this reason, it is highly recommended that those items that can be purchased at **discount stores or thrift shops** (in excellent condition only) be gathered in that way. Inexpensive purchases allow for the building of inventory and easy replenishing of missing Kit contents, and responsible purchasing is a key part of being a good steward of taxpayer funds.
- Consider also a request for donations and other fundraising/grant opportunities. Community Allies may prove especially helpful in this regard as they may be able to connect you with community members with whom your project may especially resonate (See Additional Resources for a sample donation letter).

- Reinforce with staff that you will not be charging for all (or most) of the items that go missing. Ensure that they understand that most items were purchased at minimal cost and that the complexity of living life with dementia makes misplaced and lost items expected.
- Have extra containers and duplicate labels on hand to replace what is damaged, to grow the collection, and to make changes needed over time to improve the borrowing experience.
- Don't hesitate to look to other libraries similar to yours in size and budget for ideas about processing and cataloging Library of Things items in general, and Memory Activity Kits in particular. We have so many terrific colleagues in Ohio—reach out and learn more.

Circulation



CONSIDER

- Is your library new to circulating items other than books, music, and movies? If multi-piece items for use by customers is a new type of resource for your library, you may want to first add Kits for in-house use only, allowing customers time to explore their use and staff time to weigh in on the pros and cons of growing the circulating collection in this way. (If you are not currently lending non-traditional items, but would like to start, you may choose to begin with just a small number of circulating Kits, or perhaps a mix of in-house and circulating, and expand with lessons learned and customer feedback.)
- Some Memory Activity Kits are best-suited to in-house use only—they contain more individual pieces, components that are more easily replaced on-site and after each use, and/or items that are more likely to need staff guidance during use. Does your library have the public shelf space for these Kits, or would it be preferable to make them available upon request? If the latter, how will your customers know that Kits are available for use? What guidance and talking points will you provide for staff regarding the use of Memory Activity Kits in the Library? Consider, too, where in your library customers can enjoy the in-house Kits—on the public floor, in designated meeting spaces, in your outdoor reading garden?
- If you are a seasoned Library of Things lending library, you will have already developed purchasing, packaging, cataloging, and circulation procedures for your library's non-traditional items. How will these procedures need to be adapted for these new resources? Consider the demands of daily life for your intended audience when reviewing procedures and rules in order to remove any barriers to access.
- How will you inform customers and potential customers about your circulating Memory Activity Kits? Will there be a period of display before circulation begins to raise awareness and interest? Will you prepare an article for your library newsletter or local newspaper, post a blog for your website and promote the Kits on social media platforms, add borrowing information to your Dementia Inclusive web page, and/or issue a press release? Or is a "soft open" preferred, allowing word of mouth and meetings with Community Allies to spread the news slowly?



CHECKLIST | Circulation

- ☑ Share with all staff preliminary information about your library's new Memory Activity Kits.
 - Include the “why,” while assuring your coworkers that they will learn more about the “what” and “how” as the new collection takes shape.
- ☑ Determine if Memory Activity Kits will have the same circulation parameters as other Library of Things items in your collection. Your Integrated Library System may limit the number of different loan rules permitted systemwide.
- ☑ Craft loan rules to create the ease and flexibility that best suits customers who may find planned trips to the library unexpectedly interrupted.
- ☑ Permitting Memory Activity Kits to circulate fine-free and to renew at least one time reflects an understanding of your customers' sometimes unique challenges, as does charging replacement fees for only the most expensive items, if any. Kit items may find their way into the drawers, etc., of borrowers' homes, and may very likely be returned at a later date.
- ☑ Limiting circulation to adult cards only ensures that there is a better chance that necessary details of borrowing and use will be shared in full with the user(s).
 - The number of Kits that can be borrowed at one time will depend greatly on the number added to the collection, anticipated demand, and length of loan period.
- ☑ Determine whether customers must take all boxes in a Kit at check out, or whether individual boxes can be borrowed and “traded” for others during the loan period.
 - Each Kit contains multiple activities, increasing the opportunity for engagement as some activities within a topic may be of interest while others less so. Where this results in multiple boxes for each Kit, customers may be reluctant to borrow, or be concerned about carrying or keeping track of, multiple boxes at one time.
- ☑ Make checkout easy.
 - When possible, picking up Memory Activity Kits should not require coming into the library building, although interaction with in-house experiences is always to be encouraged. Curbside pickup where a Drive-Thru window is not available will increase access to this collection.
- ☑ Work with staff to determine the best location for your Kits when they are not in circulation.
 - In some libraries, the circulation department may assume complete responsibility, in others adult services or outreach services may be the department of choice. In making this decision, select the department in which staffing is adequate to be responsible for checking Kit contents upon return, notifying customers of missing items (if needed), and replenishing disposables and other missing contents.
- ☑ Structure your loan procedures so that Kits return to this owning department between holds.
 - In this scenario, staff will need to be instructed to override holds that come up imme-

diately upon check-in. The owning department will fill the next hold upon checking the Kit and preparing it for the next customer. While this adds a bit of time between customers, it ensures a better customer experience.

- ☑ Communicate with all staff about the ins and outs of the new collection, and include talking points for all staff that include Memory Activity Kit benefits and topics, and borrowing procedures.
 - Prior to announcing the addition of the Memory Activity Kit collection, detailed, step-by-step circulation instructions should be distributed to all responsible for serving customers in this way.
- ☑ Determine how often staff and customers will be surveyed about Memory Activity Kit use and impact.
 - Be sure to include questions about borrowing procedures. Expect to re-evaluate Memory Activity Kit circulation after the first six months, and to make adjustments as needed at that time. Adjustments may be made to loan rules, topics, contents, and more, and these changes may result in additional purchasing, cataloging, and training.



TIPS | Circulation

- When purchasing Kit contents, purchase extra supply as budget allows to make replenishing items easier and timelier.
- When creating your Kits, create two of each. At the launch of the new collection, one Kit of each topic can be available for checkout, while the second travels throughout your single library building, between multiple library system locations, and/or among Community Allies to promote the service in displays and at local events. Be sure to share with staff a detailed schedule for moving Kits for display throughout your library.
- Belted, canvas straps can be used to hold multi-box Kits together during transport by library delivery. The straps should be removed when shared with the customer, allowing the boxes to be moved individually into the car and home as needed. Belts can also be difficult for those with impaired mobility to fasten and unfasten; removing the belt prior to checkout will ensure ease of access.

CONCLUSION — YOUR DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE LIBRARY

This Guide is your roadmap. The journey to your Dementia Inclusive Library begins with your passion for serving the needs of your community, your commitment to innovation, and your vision of lifelong library participation by all. In this, you are touching the very heart of public library service and harnessing its energy and expertise to turn mission and vision into reality in your everyday practice.

Here, too, you recognize the importance of relationship with community neighbors in the business, arts, faith, recreation, social service, and government sectors. Among the early steps in this journey is recognizing where the work of these sectors, with the library at the community's heart, can ally to make living well with dementia an imperative for all. We are stronger together because we are richer for the knowledge each of us brings to that collaborative “table.”

Learning is a key part of the Dementia Inclusive Library's early steps. Learning who among staff will lead this work, and learning as a whole staff what it means to be a Dementia Friend and how inclusive communication can bring lived experience into focus so that it can shape the library work ahead.

Having reached this important place in your journey, capacity, interest, and your community context will determine your next steps. The size of your commitment going forward will match your staffing, funding, and community profile, as will the ways in which you currently serve, and would like to serve, all in your neighborhood, county, region, or state. Environmental changes within your library walls, expanded programming in your meeting rooms, on the public floor, and in locations beyond your building, a place to land on your website when seeking dementia-related resources, and/or the addition of Memory Activity Kits—guidance for creation and implementation is here in these pages.

More than a few great initiatives have fallen silent when spreading the word of their existence is an after-thought. The Additional Resources in this Guide include sample and template documents to help you raise and sustain the profile of your Dementia Inclusive Library. Important, too, is your ongoing commitment to refreshing both the content of your Dementia Inclusive Library's tools and resources, and your campaign of awareness, on a regular basis. Your Community Allies, your staff, and your library customers living with dementia and their care partners will remain critical to this ongoing effort.

You can be, will be, a Dementia Inclusive Library. Return to this Guide again and again, for ideas, inspiration, and energy. And know, too, that you have our ongoing gratitude for your commitment to being the change—changing the narrative around dementia to one of empowerment and purpose—that we need right now.

Section II

Memory Activity Kits



Ohio
Council for
Cognitive
Health

The Dementia Inclusive Public Library Guide

Section I | Roadmap to Implementation

➤ Section II | Memory Activity Kits

Section III | Additional Resources

Created by the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health

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NOTE TO LIBRARY STAFF

Memory Activity Kits provide individuals living with dementia the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities that are of personal interest, foster a sense of purpose, enhance self-esteem, and encourage independence.

Memory Activity Kits differ from traditional memory kits in quite a few ways. Most manufactured, pre-made memory kits currently on the market are designed to spark conversation and reminiscence by looking at photos, videos, or objects. Memory Activity Kits are something different. These activities utilize the preserved strengths of people living with dementia. The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways for individuals to participate in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one's abilities such as attention, fine motors skills, balance, coordinated movements, reading, communicating, and hand-eye coordination. And in the process, new memories are made.

The Kits can be used in the library or checked out just like other library materials. Each Kit includes activities that can be enjoyed individually or with a care partner. Many Kits suggest additional activities related to the theme that can easily be done at home.

How Were These Activities Chosen?

The activities in these Kits were chosen to appeal to people with a broad range of interests and skills. While some activities are designed to help the person living with dementia maintain the skills needed for living independently, others appeal to people's need for creativity or desire to continue engaging in previously enjoyed hobbies. We encourage individuals and their care partners to select Kits that appeal to the individual's strengths, needs, and interests.

Who Are These Kits For?

These Memory Activity Kits have been designed for individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions and their care partners. We use the term care partners to refer to anyone who engages in a meaningful way with the individual with memory concerns. This can include family members, friends, and home helpers.

How to Assemble These Kits

When putting together the Kits, make sure that the Introductory Packet (Welcome, Handouts, and How to Use This Kit) are included in every Kit. The handouts may need to be replenished between check-outs as we are inviting patrons to keep any handouts they wish to. You will also need to include the Information for the Care Partner and Directions specific to the activities included in each of the Kits.

MEMORY ACTIVITY KIT THEMES

Home Life

Pouring
Spoonning
Transferring with Tongs
Sock Matching
Towel Folding
Button Sorting
Button Sewing
Lacing
Running Stitch
Embroidery
Ribbon Weaving
Shoe Polishing
Metal Polishing

Office Life

Organizing Office Supplies
Information Files
Brain Games
Correspondence

Working with Tools

Locks and Keys
Nuts and Bolts
Using a Screwdriver
Tool Matching Three-Part Cards
Wood Sanding

In the Kitchen

Recipes
Cookbook
Cooking Tool Matching
Ingredient Category Sort
Cookie Cutter Sort Activity
Smelling Spices
On-Your-Own Activity: Slicing

In the Garden

Flowers and Plants Three-Part Cards
Reading *A Sidewalk Garden*
Felt Flowers / Leaves Sorting
Wooden Mandalas

Planting Seeds

Sensory Exploration

Fabric Swatches
Sound Cylinders
Tangrams
Liquid Bubbler
Movement with Scarves
Sounds of Nature
Mystery Bag

In the Night Sky

Viewing Constellations
Constellation Three-Part Cards
Constellation Lacing
On-Your-Own Activity: Make Your Own Constellation

Backyard Birds

Backyard Bird Guide & Binoculars
Backyard Birds Three-Part Cards
Bird Call Identification
Make a Bird Feeder

At the Beach

Shell Sorting
Shell Matching
Shore and Water Birds Three-Part Cards
Sensory Sand Tray
Sounds of the Sea

Art Appreciation

Art Appreciation Book
Color Tablets: Matching Colors
Color Tablets: Grading Colors
Masterpiece Matching

Continent Studies

Travel Guide
Puzzle Map of South America
Flag Matching & Coloring
Flag Three-Part Cards

Introductory Packet for Each Kit



The pages in this section are meant to be printed out by the library, and inserted into the Kits. They are information and instructions for the person who will use the Kit.

[Click here to download and print all pages and tip sheets from the packet.](#)

DOWNLOAD PACKET

Welcome

Thank you for checking out a Memory Activity Kit.

These *Kits* have been designed for individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions and their care partners. The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways for individuals to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one's abilities such as attention, fine motors skills, balance, coordinated movements, reading, communicating, and hand-eye coordination. The activities can be completed by the person with dementia independently or with a care partner.

Please be aware that several of the Kits contain small pieces and may not be appropriate for everyone at every stage of dementia. Care partners will need to use their judgement about which Kits are appropriate for their friend or loved one based on their knowledge of the person's habits and abilities.

Handouts

You are welcome to keep any of these handouts that you find helpful.

- Basic information about dementia
- Tips for the care partner
- Help for getting started with an activity
- Frequently asked questions
- Handouts from the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health:
 - Overview of Dementia
 - Supporting Memory
 - Brain Health
 - Supporting Communication
 - Responsive Behaviors
 - Walking About
 - Self-Care
 - Decluttering



How to Use This Kit

Each Memory Activity Kit contains a variety of activities. With each activity, you will find Information for the Care Partner (including the necessary materials, benefits, suggestions, and more ideas to try), as well as large-print step-by-step Directions to follow while enjoying the activity. When finished please return all the activity directions and materials to their boxes.

Basic Information About Dementia

Dementia is the term used to describe a group of brain disorders that cause loss of memory and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. It is not a disease itself, but a group of symptoms that characterize several diseases and conditions.

The loss of cognitive ability that occurs with dementia includes impairments of memory, reasoning, planning, personality, and expressive and receptive language. Dementia is often divided into three general stages: early, moderate, and late-stage dementia. These stages are characterized by deficits, strengths, and traits that persons with dementia commonly develop. While stages can be useful in understanding what to expect from a person, they are broad, generalized categories and will not apply to every person. Everyone reacts to the experience of dementia in a different way. The experience means different things to different people.

There are many strengths that people with dementia may retain, such as:

- Ability to use one's imagination
- Socializing with friends, helping others
- Playing games
- Enjoying family events
- Ability to identify numbers, shapes, colors
- Ability to follow directions with written and verbal cues
- Enjoying time spent outside
- Appreciating listening to and making music
- Creating poetry, dance, photography, hobbies, and other forms of self-expression
- Ability to reminisce, looking at old family photos, telling stories
- Reading skills
- Ability to understand body language and facial expressions
- Desire to be needed and asked for advice
- Desire to have meaningful work

We can engage people with dementia by providing activities that utilize these preserved strengths. Look for activities that will appeal to the person's interests and abilities. Engagement in meaningful activities provides a sense of purpose, enhances self-esteem, and encourages independence.

Tips for the Care Partner

Tone of Voice

Sometimes when a person doesn't immediately understand, there is a tendency for the speaker to shout. This can distort speech, which can upset the person with dementia and will make communication more difficult. Speak in a warm, easy-going manner using the tone of voice that you would like people to use when speaking with you.

Body Language

People with dementia are aware of nonverbal communication and they will pay attention to it. Be aware of how you are holding your body and the gestures and facial expression you are using. Pay attention to the person's gestures and facial expressions because they will communicate what the person cannot say with words.

Offering Choice

Providing choice questions is a very helpful strategy. A choice question is a request phrased so the listener has a choice between two things. When you use a choice question, you are providing the information that the person can use in the answer.

"Would you like to fold towels or sew?"

This is much easier for a person with dementia to answer than an open-ended question, such as *"What would you like to do today?"*

Once the person makes a choice, add to the conversation. *"I think I'll sew too. I would like to make a present for my granddaughter."* The person might then be encouraged to make a comment about the sewing or about a grandchild.

Questions that can be answered with a yes or no won't extend or prolong a conversation, but they are an effective means of giving someone a choice and keeping information simple.

You can write the choices on an index card and show them to the person when you ask which they prefer. The person can point to the card to answer if they are unable to answer verbally.

Help for Getting Started with an Activity

Preparing to engage in a new activity:

- Read through the directions on your own first to make sure you understand the steps for each activity.
- Prepare the work area by clearing off a table or counter so that there is nothing else there to distract the person or get in the way.

Introducing your partner to a new activity:

- Invite your partner to join you in doing something fun.
- Show your partner the Kit and invite your partner to select an activity.
- Demonstrate the activity. Use as few words as possible while demonstrating so your partner can watch your movements and not become distracted.
- Invite your partner to engage in the activity by asking, *“Would you like a turn?”* (You may have to prompt your partner step by step using the directions provided as a guide.)
- Observe your partner and make notes of any changes that are needed to make the activity simpler, more complex, or more enjoyable.
- Encourage your partner; only help if needed.
- Allow your partner as much time as needed to enjoy the activity without feeling rushed. When you think your partner is finished, ask, *“Are you finished, or would you like more time?”*
- Assist your partner in cleaning up.
- Say, *“Thank you, would you like to do this again sometime?”*

Frequently Asked Questions

I am already so busy! How can I add one more thing to my To Do list?

Working on a Kit together gives each of you a chance to experience a moment in partnership, sharing the time during which you can make a new memory. When people living with dementia are engaged in activities they enjoy, their levels of anxiety and depression may be reduced, and they will engage in fewer responsive behaviors, such as repetitive questioning, walking about, and rummaging. This makes the day go much better for both of you. And because we know that people living with dementia can learn new skills and routines with practice (even if they don't remember it), the more they practice, the more independent they can become with familiar activities. This is a significant boost to a person's self-esteem. So often, people living with dementia struggle to complete tasks. By participating in these familiar activities over and over, the person can become better and better at it. What a wonderful feeling it is to succeed! Both of you benefit when your partner is making meaningful contributions to the home. So try not to think of this as one more thing to add to your to do list, but instead, something to add to your "ta da!" list!

What if my partner doesn't want to do the activity?

The activity will not be successful if it feels forced. Invite your partner to join you in trying something new. You could ask your partner if they would help you "test out" this new activity. If your partner declines, be understanding and let them know you'll invite them again another time. You could try doing the activity yourself; in some cases, your partner might decide to join you.

What if my partner is using the materials incorrectly?

The primary goal of these activities is to engage your partner in something enjoyable. If the person is not using the materials properly, try not to correct them (unless the person's actions are unsafe). But if your partner is engaging with the activity in some way, then you can follow this lead. You may need to demonstrate the activity several times before your partner understands how to do it independently. People with dementia can learn new skills with practice – even if they don't remember the practice! You may notice your partner's skills improving with a particular activity over time.

What should I do if my partner used to be able to complete the activity, but now struggles?

Your partner's interests and abilities may change over time. Pay close attention. You can ask yourself, "What about this activity is too challenging? What supports can I provide to help my loved one be more successful?" For example, if your partner is struggling to steady the pitcher for pouring, you might provide hand over hand support. You may also observe that your partner needs an activity to be more challenging. In that case, think about how you can modify the activity to make it harder or more interesting.

What should I do if my partner is speaking to me, but I can't understand what they are talking about?

Don't worry if you can't understand what your partner is saying. Smile and act interested in whatever the person is talking about even if you're not quite sure what is being said. You can gently guide the conversation by commenting on the activity you are doing together. Reassure your partner and help out when he or she gets stuck and can't find a word. Try not to correct or contradict something your partner says. Instead, simply enjoy the fact that the person is engaging with you.

How can I engage my partner in more activities like this one?

You can create activities like these at home. For example, you might invite your partner to fold clean laundry each morning after breakfast. If you invite your partner to practice at the same time every day, it may become a routine over time. To encourage independence, you might write "Folding laundry" on a dry erase board in the kitchen. Or you might set out the basket of hand towels to fold with a sign that says, "Please fold the towels."



MEMORY ACTIVITY KIT DIRECTIONS

Home Life

Pouring

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- 1 clear pitcher
- 1 drinking glass
- Container of beads

Benefits

- Maintain skills for independent eating
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the pitcher is too heavy, help support pouring by holding the handle with them and/or supporting the bottom of the pitcher with your hand.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, move on to pouring colored liquids that are easy to see. Once this skill is mastered, invite your partner to pour their own beverages throughout the day.

Pouring Activity Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the pitcher and the glass on the mat.
3. Fill the pitcher halfway with beads.
4. Pick up the pitcher with the beads with your dominant hand, supporting the bottom of the pitcher with your other hand if needed.
5. Move the spout of the pitcher with beads over to the center of the empty glass and slowly pour the beads from the first pitcher into the glass.
6. Place the pitcher back on the tray.
7. Pick up any spilled beads, one at a time, and place them back into the pitcher with beads.
8. Pour the beads back into the pitcher and repeat as many times as desired.
9. Place all the materials back in the Activity Kit.



Spooning

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Two bowls
- 1 large spoon
- Container of beads

Benefits

- Maintain skills for independent eating
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

You can support the person's hand by gently placing your hand underneath and guiding it.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, practice spooning during a meal (e.g., eating cereal or soup).

Spooning Activity Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the two bowls and spoon on the mat.
3. Pour the beads into one of the bowls.
4. Pick up the spoon with your dominant hand.
5. Dip the spoon into the bowl of beads and scoop some into the spoon.
6. Slowly move the spoon over the other bowl.
7. Tip the spoon and pour the beads into the bowl.
8. Continue until all the beads have been moved from one bowl to the other.
9. Place the spoon back on the mat.
10. Pick up any spilled beads, one at a time, and place them back into the bowl with the beads.
11. Repeat as many times as desired.
12. Place all the materials back in the Activity Kit.



Transferring with Tongs

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Two bowls
- Pair of short-handled tongs with rubber grips
- Basket of large pompoms

Benefits

- Maintain skills for independent eating
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

You can support the person's hand by gently placing your hand underneath and guiding it.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, move on to tonguing smaller objects with tweezers.

Transferring with Tongs Activity Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the two bowls and tongs on the mat.
3. Pour the pom poms into one of the bowls.
4. Pick up the tongs with your dominant hand.
5. Grasp one pom pom with the tongs.
6. Slowly move the tongs over the other bowl.
7. Release the tongs so the pom pom lands in the bowl.
8. Continue until all the pom poms have been moved from one bowl to the other.
9. Place the tongs back on the mat.
10. Pick up any spilled pom poms, one at a time, and place them back into the bowl.
11. Repeat as many times as desired.
12. Place all the materials back in the Activity Kit.



Sock Matching

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Assorted socks

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to dressing
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Make a meaningful contribution to the household
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If all of the socks in the basket seem too overwhelming, try leaving only 2 pairs in the basket that need to be matched and slowly increase the number of socks as the person becomes more comfortable with the task.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, suggest that sock matching become a regular role for your friend or loved one.

Sock Matching Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of socks on the mat.
3. Pick out one sock and place it on the table.
4. Look through the basket and find the matching sock.
5. Place the second sock on top of the first sock.
6. Next, pick out another sock and place it on the table.
7. Continue matching and placing socks until they are all matched.
8. When finished, place all of the socks back in the basket.
9. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Towel Folding

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- A basket labeled “Unfolded”
- A basket labeled “Folded”
- Unfolded towels

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to homecare
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Make a meaningful contribution to the household
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the number of towels in the basket seems too overwhelming, try leaving only 2-3 towels in the basket and slowly increase the number of towels as the person becomes more comfortable with the task.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, suggest that folding clean towels becomes a regular role for your friend or loved one.

Towel Folding Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of unfolded towels on one side of the mat.
3. Place the basket for folded towels on the other side of the mat.
4. Pick up one towel and place it on the mat.
5. Fold the towel in half.
6. Fold the towel in half in the other direction.
7. Place the towel in the basket labeled “Folded.”
8. Continue folding the towels until they are all in the basket labeled “Folded.”
9. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Button Sorting

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment. This is a great activity for someone who enjoyed sewing, mending, or making clothes.

Materials

- Placemat
- Jar of buttons
- 4 small containers

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to dressing
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the number of buttons is overwhelming, reduce the quantity being displayed. If the person is struggling to differentiate the buttons, choose buttons that are quite different from one another in size, shape, and color.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, move on to sorting more items or organizing a sewing box. Other things around the house that can be sorted include utensils, plastic food storage containers, nuts and bolts, fishing tackle, coins, stamps, etc.

Button Sorting Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the small containers along the top of the mat.
3. Empty the buttons onto the mat below where the containers are placed.
4. Invite the person to look at and pick up some of the buttons and tell you about their shapes and colors.
5. Let the person know that you are going to sort the buttons based on their color.
6. One by one place buttons into the containers, one color per container. Name each color as you go and let the person know that only that specific color belongs in the assigned container.
7. Invite the person to continue the activity on his or her own. If s/he seems unsure of what to do, you can repeat the steps above until s/he feels comfortable taking over the activity.
8. After all the buttons have been sorted, ask the person if s/he would like to do it again. If s/he is not interested, let the person know where the buttons and the containers can be found.
9. Gather all the buttons back into the jar.
10. Return materials to the Activity Kit.



Button Sewing

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, or those related to previous hobbies, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Embroidery hoop with fabric fitted inside
- Extra fabric squares
- Spool of thread
- A sharp needle with a large eye (pre-threaded)
- Needle threader
- Assorted buttons
- Scissors
- Pin cushion

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination

Suggestions

Demonstrate how to wrap the thread a few times between the button and the fabric to make the button easier to grasp.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, invite your friend or loved one to repair items of clothing with missing buttons.

Button Sewing Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place all the items on the placemat.
3. Hold the button and the sewing surface together in the non-dominant hand.
4. Pick up the threaded needle with the dominant hand.
5. Start with the needle on the back side of the fabric.
6. Push the needle up through the fabric and one of the buttonholes.
7. Pull the needle and thread all the way through slowly until all of the thread is out.
8. Poke the needle through the diagonal buttonhole and push down until the needle comes out the back.
9. Pull the needle through all the way until the thread is completely out.
10. Poke the needle through from the back on the third buttonhole.
11. Pull the needle and thread all the way through slowly until all of the thread is out.
12. Poke the needle through the diagonal buttonhole and push down until the needle comes out the back.
13. Continue making crisscross stitches until the button is firmly attached to the fabric.
14. After the final stitch, when the needle and thread are on the underside of the fabric, make a knot and cut the thread.
15. Return the unused materials back to the Activity Kit.



Lacing

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, or those related to previous hobbies, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Laces
- Lacing cards (designed for adults, not children)

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to dressing
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

You can make your own lacing cards by punching holes around the edges of a postcard. A brightly colored shoelace can be used for lacing.

Lacing Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Choose a lacing card and a lace.
3. Smooth out the lace on the mat to be sure there are no knots or tangles.
4. Tie a knot in the end of the lace.
5. Hold the lacing card in your non-dominant hand and the end of the string (without the knot) in the dominant hand.

6. Put the end of the string through any hole.
7. Grasp the end of the string on the other side of the card. Pull the string all the way through until it is stopped at the knot.
8. Put the end of the string through an adjacent hole to the one where it just came out. Pull the string on the other side until it is tight.
9. Continue in this way until the card is completely laced.
10. To remove the string, hook your index finger through the very last stitch and pull.
11. Flip the lacing card to remove the next stitch. Continue in this way until all the stitches are removed.
12. Remove the string by pulling the knotted end until the string is completely out.
13. Return all of the materials to the Activity Kit.



Embroidery

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, or those related to previous hobbies, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Embroidery hoop with burlap fitted inside
- Extra pieces of burlap
- Embroidery thread
- Scissors
- Thick plastic or metal needle (pre-threaded)
- Pin cushion
- Permanent marker

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Pre-draw the shapes on the burlap.
- Prompt your partner with phrases such as “Up from the bottom” and “Down from the top.”

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, invite your friend or loved one to engage in simple sewing projects that use the running stitch, such as making a pillowcase.

Embroidery Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place all the items on the placemat.
3. Draw a shape on the burlap with the permanent marker.
4. Pick up the threaded needle with the dominant hand.
5. Start with the needle on the back side of the burlap on the traced line of the image. Push the needle and yarn through the back of the burlap.
6. Pull the needle and thread through the front of the burlap.
7. Push the needle down through the next open space on the image line.
8. Continue making stitches until the design is complete.
9. Tie a knot in the yarn that hangs off the back of the burlap.
10. Use scissors to trim off the extra thread.
11. Return the unused materials back to the Activity Kit.



Ribbon Weaving

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities give them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, or those related to previous hobbies, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket of ribbons
- Table loom

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

You can use yarn instead of ribbon. The person can even collect items from nature, such as grass, flowers, and leaves, and weave them into the design!

Try This

If the person enjoys this, try other types of weaving and yarn crafts.

Ribbon Weaving Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the loom on the placemat.
3. Place the basket of ribbons on the mat.
4. Select a ribbon.
5. Using the dominant hand, pull the ribbon in and out between the threads of the loom until it reaches the other side.
6. Gently press the ribbon to the bottom of the loom.
7. Continue weaving ribbons for as long as desired. (It may take several sessions to complete the project.)
8. When finished, remove the ribbons from the loom.
9. Return the items to the Activity Kit.



On-Your-Own Activity: Shoe Polishing

(Supplies Not Included)

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Paper placemat
- Pair of leather shoes (adult or child)
- Shoe polishing sponge

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to self-care and dressing
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Make a meaningful contribution to the household
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Offer to polish shoes for family and friends.
- Use shoe polish, a soft cloth, and a shoe brush rather than using a shining sponge.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, invite your friend or loved one to polish their own shoes.

Shoe Polishing Directions

1. Place the paper mat on the table.
2. Place one shoe on the middle of the mat.
3. Pick up the shoe polishing sponge and remove the cap.
4. Place one hand on the shoe to hold it in place.
5. Pick up the shoe polishing sponge in the other hand and rub in a circular motion around the shoe until it is clean.
6. Repeat for the second shoe.
7. Place cap back on the shoe polishing sponge.
8. Return polished shoes to owner.



On-Your-Own Activity: Metal Polishing

(Supplies Not Included)

Information for the Caregiver

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Tarnished metal items
- Polishing cloth or polishing paste, and a small rag or sponge

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Volunteer to clean tarnished items that belong to family and friends with non-toxic metal polish.
- Make your own polish out of vinegar (1 Tbsp), flour (1 Tbsp), and salt (1 Tbsp). Mix the ingredients into a paste and smear on the metal item. Rub gently. Allow the paste to dry for one hour. Rinse the piece with warm water and buff dry with a soft cloth.
- Polish wood items with wood polish and soft cloths.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, invite your friend or loved one to polish other tarnished items around the house. This can be developed into a regular role.

Metal Polishing Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place one of the tarnished items on the mat.
3. Place the cleaning cloth on your dominant hand side.
4. With the dominant hand, pick up the cleaning cloth.
5. In a circular motion, polish the object from top to bottom.
6. Place cleaning cloth to the side.
7. Place polished item back on the tray.
8. Repeat for the rest of the objects.
9. Return the polished items to their owner.



Office Life

Organizing Office Supplies

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Desk organizer
- Calculator
- Lined pads
- Pens and pencils
- Post-it notes
- Paper clips
- Template

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the template is not helpful to your partner, they can put the office supplies wherever they wish in the desk organizer.

Try This

Invite your partner to organize other drawers in the house. (Supply inexpensive drawer organizers or plastic baskets of various sizes.)

Organizing Office Supplies Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the desk organizer on one side of the mat.
3. Place the template on the other side of the mat.
4. Lay out all of the office supplies on the mat.
5. Pick up one of the office supplies.
6. Referring to the template, place it in the desk organizer.
7. Continue until all of the office supplies have been stored in the desk organizer.
8. Return all of the items to the Activity Kit.



Information Files

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- File box
- Labeled file folders
- Large-print information pages

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Facilitate language skills
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

Invite your partner to create their own information card (in an area of interest/expertise) to add to the file.

Information Files Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Explore information page(s) in each file folder.
3. Pose an “I wonder...” question to your partner. Suggest to your partner that they may be able to help you answer the question by referring to one of the information pages. (Make sure that your question is one that can be answered by the information pages included in the Kit.)



Brain Games

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Folder(s) of large-print puzzles
- Clipboard
- Pen/pencil

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Facilitate language and problem-solving skills
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- You may wish to review how the puzzle works before beginning.
- Your partner may need prompting for each step of the puzzle – or may be able to complete the puzzle independently.

Try This

If your partner enjoys these puzzles, invest in a few books of puzzles and make this a part of their daily routine. Printable, copyright-free puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty may also be found on the Internet.

Brain Games Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place folder(s) on the mat.
3. Select a puzzle.
4. Attach the puzzle to the clipboard.
5. Complete the puzzle.
6. Return the clipboard, pen/pencil, and any unused puzzles to the Activity Kit.



Correspondence

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar activities brings enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Writing is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living.

Materials

- Placemat
- Stationery
- Envelopes
- A selection of pens

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain social connections
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- If your partner does not have the fine motor skills necessary to write legibly, offer to serve as a scribe, so your partner can dictate a personalized letter or card.
- Help your partner find the addresses needed in order to send the letters.
- Take a stroll to the nearest mailbox to mail the letters.

Try This

Operation Gratitude is a project that invites people to send letters to deployed troops, veterans, first responders, wounded heroes and caregivers, and military families in order to show support.

<https://www.operationgratitude.com>

Correspondence Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place all of the materials on the mat.
3. Select a piece of stationery.
4. Write a note on the stationery.
5. Address the envelope or postcard.
6. Place a stamp on the envelope or postcard, if needed. (Not included.)
7. Mail or deliver the note to a friend or family member!
8. Return unused materials to the Kit.



Working with Tools

Locks and Keys

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- 3 locks and keys of different sizes/colors

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to living independently
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If three locks at a time is too much, you can bring out one lock and key set at a time.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, invite your friend or loved one to practice with their house keys.

Locks and Keys Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place locks on the mat with the largest on the left.
3. Place the matching keys on the mat in order, left to right.
4. Pick up the largest lock in one hand and the largest key in the other hand.
5. Look at the bottom of the lock to determine how the key will go in, insert the key, and turn it.
6. Pull the shackle (u-shaped part of the padlock) up and open it all the way to the right.
7. Place the lock and key back on the mat.
8. Repeat with the other locks.
9. Go back and pick up the largest lock.
10. Turn the shackle back to the left and push it into the lock.
11. Place the lock back onto the mat.
12. Repeat with the other locks.
13. Remove the largest key and place it back into the basket.
14. Repeat with the other keys.
15. Return all of the materials to the Activity Kit.



Nuts and Bolts

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Assorted screws and nuts
- Sorting container with images of each item inside each compartment

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Limit the number of nuts/bolts rather than pouring them all from the container at the same time.
- For those who may like more of a challenge, work with varying types and sizes.
- Sort only the larger nuts and bolts with people with poor pincer grasp.

Try This

Look for assorted fasteners in the basement or garage and organize them into containers by size.

Nuts and Bolts Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Take out the nuts and bolts from the sorting container.
3. Beginning with the first nut/bolt, match it to the corresponding picture inside the sorting container.
4. Repeat with the remaining nuts/bolts.
5. Continue until all items have been sorted.
6. Return the nuts and bolts, in the sorting container, to the Activity Kit.



Using a Screwdriver

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Screwdriver
- Wooden block with 5 screws screwed all the way into the wood. This material is called a bolt board.

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Use fewer screws if the number is too overwhelming.

Try This

- Apply this skill to a project such as assembling a birdhouse.
- Paint the birdhouse if desired.
- Mount the birdhouse in a place visible from a window of the home.

Using a Screwdriver Directions

Unscrewing Screws:

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the block on the center of the mat.
3. Place the non-dominant hand on the wood block to hold it down.

4. Take the screwdriver with the dominant hand.
5. Insert the screwdriver into the left-hand screw, holding the screwdriver vertically with the left hand.
6. Turn the screwdriver to the left to start unscrewing the screw.
7. When the screw becomes wobbly, place the screwdriver on the mat.
8. Use the dominant hand to finish unscrewing the screw.
9. Place the screw on the mat above the wooden block, to the far left.
10. Repeat with the remaining screws.

Replacing the Screws:

1. Pick up one screw with the dominant hand and screw it into the far-left hole on the block.
2. When the screw gets some resistance, pick up the screwdriver in the dominant hand and place the non-dominant hand on the block to hold it down.
3. Take the screwdriver and insert it in the top left-hand corner screw.
4. Turn the screwdriver to the right to screw the screw back in until the top of the screw meets the wooden block.
5. Repeat with the rest of the screws.
6. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Tool Matching Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

Invite your friend or loved one to assist with a household project that involves tools.

Tool Matching Three-Part Cards Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Wood Sanding

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Book about woodworking
- Wood pieces
- Sandpaper

Benefits

- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Make a meaningful contribution to the household
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

Invite your partner to sand something in the home that needs repair.

Purchase a piece of unfinished furniture for your partner to prepare for painting.

Wood Sanding Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Put the basket of wood blocks on the mat.
3. Put the sandpaper on the mat.
4. Select a wood block to sand.
5. Hold the wood block in the non-dominant hand.
6. Hold the sander in the dominant hand.
7. Press the flat plane of the sandpaper to the surface of the block.
8. Move the sandpaper back and forth or in smooth circles across the surface of the block.
9. Continue until all sides of the block have been sanded.
10. Repeat with additional blocks if desired.
11. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



In the Kitchen

Recipes

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Making a meal engages all of the senses, brings back memories, and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of recipes (included)
- Tools and ingredients indicated on the recipe (not included)

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to food preparation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain reading and language skills
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Recipe Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the recipe on the mat.
3. Assemble the required ingredients.
4. Follow the directions on the recipe step-by-step.
5. Enjoy the snack!

Suggestions

- Place the ingredients needed for each step in front of your partner to reduce confusion.
- If your partner is unable to stand to complete the tasks, set up the ingredients at the kitchen table instead.
- Invite your partner to prepare and serve the dish to friends or family.

Try This

In this Kit there are 6 easy recipes you can make at home.



Recipe: Guacamole and Chips

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed:

- Tray to hold supplies
- Potato masher
- Cutting board
- Mixing bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Citrus juicer
- Knife
- Serving bowl
- Small serving spoon

Ingredients Needed:

- 2 avocados
- Salt
- Small bunch of cilantro
- 1 small tomato
- 1 lime
- Tortilla chips

Directions

1. Carefully cut avocado in half. Scoop out seed with spoon.
2. Place the avocado in a bowl and mash with potato masher.
3. Cut lime in half. Juice one half of lime using juicer.
4. Pour lime juice over avocado and stir with spoon.
5. Add a pinch of salt to the avocado and mix in.
6. Cut tomato in half, dig fingers into middle and pull out all seeds and fleshy middle.
7. Chop the tomato into small pieces and add to avocado.
8. Wash 3-4 sprigs of cilantro. Pick off the leaves, discarding the stems.
9. Chop the cilantro into small piece and stir into avocado.
10. Place chips in a serving bowl and enjoy!



Recipe: Watermelon Feta Bites

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Toothpicks
- Platter for serving

Ingredients Needed

- 10 oz feta cheese
- 10 oz watermelon
- Bunch of mint leaves
- Balsamic vinegar (optional)

Directions

1. Cut feta into 1-inch cubes.
2. Cut watermelon into 1-inch cubes.
3. Wash mint and pull the leaves from the stems.
4. Place a watermelon cube, a feta cube, and a mint leaf on each toothpick.
5. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar (optional)
6. Place on a serving platter and enjoy!

Recipe: Rainbow Fruit Kabobs

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed

- Wooden kabob skewers
- Platter

Ingredients Needed

- Strawberries
(de-stemmed and cut in half if large)
- Cantaloupe chunks or peeled clementine slices
- Peach or pineapple slices
- Green grapes
- Blueberries
- Purple/red grapes

Directions

1. Place one strawberry on each skewer.
2. Add one cantaloupe or mandarin orange slice onto each skewer.
3. Add one peach or pineapple piece to each skewer.
4. Add one green grape to each skewer.
5. Add one blueberry to each skewer.
6. Add one purple grape onto each skewer.
7. Serve on a platter.



Recipe: Veggies and Dip

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed

- Whisk
- Bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Cutting board
- Herb scissors
- Tablespoon
- Vegetable chopper
- Serving bowl
- Platter

Ingredients Needed

- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 3 Tbsp. milk
- Fresh basil
- Fresh chives
- Fresh parsley
- Red pepper
- Celery stalks
- Baby carrots
- Pinch of salt

Directions

1. Whisk together cream cheese and milk.
2. Use herb scissors to chop up the basil until you have 3 tablespoons.
3. Use herb scissors to chop up the chives until you have 2 tablespoons.
4. Use herb scissors to chop up the parsley until you have 3 tablespoons.
5. Add basil, parsley, chives, and parsley to the dip and whisk.
6. Add salt to taste.
7. Scoop the dip into a bowl.
8. Cut the red pepper into strips.
9. Trim the ends off the celery stalks. Cut each in half.
10. Arrange the red pepper strips, celery stalks, and baby carrots on the platter with the bowl of dip.



Recipe: Caprese Skewers

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed

- Toothpicks
- Paring knife
- Mixing bowl
- Serving plate
- Scissors

Ingredients Needed

- 20 grape tomatoes
- Mozzarella cheese balls
- 2 tablespoons basil leaves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch black pepper

Directions

1. Combine olive oil, salt, and pepper together in a bowl.
2. Add the mozzarella balls to the bowl and mix until well coated.
3. Cut large basil leaves in half; leave smaller leaves whole.
4. Slice grape tomatoes in half.
5. Skewer one tomato (flat side down), one basil leaf, and one piece of mozzarella cheese on each toothpick.
6. Drizzle skewers with olive oil.
7. Place on a serving platter and enjoy!

Recipe: Trail Mix

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials Needed

- Large mixing bowl
- Large spoon
- Measuring cups
- Small serving bowl

Suggested Ingredients

- 2 cups granola or rice chex
- 1 ½ cups mini pretzels
- 1/2 cup dried pineapple
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup yogurt covered raisins
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips

Substitute any ingredients to your taste!

Directions

1. Measure the ingredients above and add to a large bowl.
2. Gently fold all of the ingredients together.
3. Scoop a portion into smaller bowls and enjoy!
4. Store the rest in an airtight container for up to one week.



Cookbook

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Making a meal engages all of the senses, brings back memories, and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Note: Please review all ingredients in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions. Additionally, supervising use of kitchen tools may be necessary.

Materials

- Placemat
- Cookbook
- Tools and ingredients indicated on the chosen recipe (not included)

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to food preparation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain reading and language skills
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Engage in a familiar role and routine
- Make a meaningful contribution to the household
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Place the ingredients needed for each step in front of your partner to reduce confusion.
- If your partner is unable to stand to complete the tasks, set up the ingredients at the kitchen table instead.
- Look at the cookbook that is included and choose a recipe to make together.

Try This

Write out a favorite family recipe and make it together or mail recipe cards to family members.

Cookbook Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Lay out the cookbook on the mat.
3. Select a recipe.
4. Assemble the required ingredients and cooking tools.
5. Follow the instructions listed in the recipe.
6. When finished, return the cookbook to the Activity Kit.



Cooking Tool Matching

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Manipulating familiar cooking tools engages all of the senses, brings back memories, and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Tray with familiar cooking tools
- Basket of laminated label cards naming the kitchen items
- Answer key

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to food preparation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Begin with matching two items with two labels to simplify the task and increase the number of items as the person becomes more familiar with the activity.

Try This

Collect cooking tools and utensils from your home, create labels, and make your own matching game.

Cooking Tool Matching Directions

1. Place the placemat on the table.
2. One by one, remove all of the kitchen items from the tray and place them neatly on the placemat, leaving space between each one.
3. Select one label and read it aloud.
4. Place the label just below or next to the item to which it belongs.
5. Continue until all of the labels have been placed.
6. Remove the answer key from the Activity Kit and see if the labels have been matched to the correct items.
7. Place all of the materials back in the tray and return the items and labels to the Activity Kit.



Ingredient Category Sort

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Viewing and discussing familiar ingredients brings back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket of laminated cards featuring text that names objects in two distinct categories: pizza and cupcakes
- 2 category label cards
- Colored dots on the back of the cards to serve as a way to check answers

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

To make the activity simpler, begin by reviewing just one category at a time, rather than following the directions and sorting two categories at once.

Try this

- Create your own using well-known family recipes.
- Look through the cookbook in the Kit and pick a new recipe to make that you have never tried before.
- Make a small recipe book of family favorites to share with others.

Ingredient Category Sort Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place all the items on the mat.
3. Place the two category label cards (PIZZA, CUPCAKES) at the top of the mat.
4. Select a photo or word card from the basket.
5. Place it under the appropriate category label.
6. Continue until all of the cards have been placed.
7. Flip over the cards to see if they have been placed correctly by matching the colored dot on the back to the colored category card. All the cards that belong to the same category, will have the same color dot on the back.
8. Return materials to the Activity Kit.



Ingredient Category Sort



Library: Please print, cut and laminate to include in Kit.

Pizza	Cupcakes
Dough	Flour
Cheese	Sugar
Sauce	Eggs
Pepperoni	Milk
Mushrooms	Vanilla
Green Peppers	Cocoa Powder
Onions	Powdered Sugar
Garlic	Butter



Cookie Cutter Sort Activity

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Using familiar kitchen tools can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Assortment of cookie cutters in various shapes
- Category labels, such as “Winter Holidays,” “Springtime,” and/or “Autumn”

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the number of cookie cutters is overwhelming, reduce the number you put in the basket. If three categories are too many, reduce to two categories.

Try This

Use the cookie cutters to make and decorate cookies!

Cookie Cutter Sort Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of cookie cutters on the mat.
3. Place two (or three) category labels at the top of the mat.
4. Select a cookie cutter.
5. Place it in under the appropriate label.
6. Continue until all the cookie cutters have been placed.
7. Return the items to the Activity Kit.



Smelling Spices

Information for the Care Partner

Cooking is an enjoyable activity for many, as well as a familiar role or chore that happens on a daily basis. Smelling and discussing familiar ingredients brings back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Note: Please review the ingredients in this activity in light of dietary and allergy-related restrictions.

Materials

- Placemat
- Sets of smelling jars (clear or opaque) with color sticker dots on the bottom
- Fragrant items in each jar (lemon peel, garlic clove, cinnamon stick, coffee beans, peppercorns, sprig of basil, sprig of rosemary, sprig of mint, etc.)
- Laminated and labeled pictures of items in jars with color sticker dots on the back

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If clear jars are too easy, cover the jars with paper.

Try This

- Taste some favorite spices and garnishes.
- Pick some fresh herbs from the garden.
- Prepare a dish with some familiar spices.

Smelling Spices Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Line up smelling jars along the left side of the mat.
3. Line up the photos along the right side of the mat.
4. Pick up a smelling jar. Holding it under the nose, take a slow sniff.
5. Describe the scent. Is it faint or pungent? Sweet or spicy? Pleasant or unpleasant?
6. Place the jar next to the photo you think is a match.
7. Continue until all of the jars have been matched with a photo.
8. Flip over each jar and card to see if the color dots on them match.
9. Place all of the materials back in the Activity Kit.



Smelling Spices



Library: Please print, cut and laminate to include in Kit.



garlic



lemon



cinnamon



pepper



Smelling Spices



Library: Please print, cut and laminate to include in Kit.



rosemary



mint



lavender



coconut



On-Your-Own Activity: Slicing

(Supplies Not Included)

Information for the Care Partner

Inviting people to engage in meaningful activities gives them a sense of purpose. Simple activities of daily living, in which people take care of themselves or the home, increase independence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. When people take care of others or contribute to the household, they maintain their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Materials

- Placemat
- Two bowls – one for items being sliced, one for slices
- Non-skid cutting board
- Slicer

Benefits

- Maintain skills for independent eating
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Invite your friend or loved one to help prepare a salad, fruit and cheese plate, or other dish that involves slicing.

Try This

Nylon knives and wavy choppers can also be purchased for additional safe methods of food preparation.

Slicing Activity Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the cutting board on the mat.
3. Place the slicer on the cutting board.
4. Place the item to be sliced on the cutting board.
5. Demonstrate how the slicer works.
6. Place sliced items in the bowl.
7. Invite the person to take a turn.
8. Continue until all the items have been sliced.
9. Enjoy a healthy snack together!
10. Throw away the garbage.



In the Garden

Flowers and Plants Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Gardening is a familiar and enjoyable activity for many. Talking about flowers and plants can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

- Take a walk through a garden or other nature space.
- Arrange fresh or artificial flowers in a vase to beautify the home.

Flowers and Plants Three-Part Cards Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Reading *A Sidewalk Garden*

Information for the Care Partner

Reading aloud is a preserved ability in dementia, and many individuals, even those in the later stage of the disease, enjoy reading to others. However, older adults often find books designed for children to be unappealing, inappropriate for them to read, or condescending. With short, illustrated stories designed to accommodate their reading needs, people with dementia can participate with ease and enjoyment in the reading experience.

When choosing your own books, look for stories that feature:

- Large-print text about topics of interest to adults, not children's books
- Colorful, high-contrast illustrations

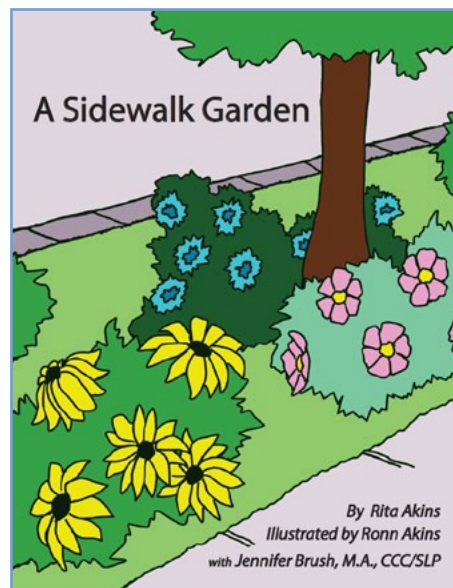
In this Kit, we have included a book designed for adults living with dementia that contains colorful high-contrast illustrations on one side of the page and large text on the other page. Each page includes a question at the bottom of the page that encourages conversation.

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- A person with dementia can read the story alone, either silently or aloud. Most enjoy reading aloud.
- The story follows an intergenerational theme to interest both older adults and children. A person with dementia can read to a child or with a child and experience the positive effects of interaction with children.
- A care partner can read the story aloud to a person with dementia and use the question at the end of each page to inspire discussion.



© Montessori Images

Try This

Look for other dementia-friendly reading materials at the library to enjoy with your friend or loved one.



Felt Flowers / Leaves Sorting

Information for the Care Partner

Creative expression is a preserved ability in dementia, and many individuals, even those in the later stage of the disease, enjoy opportunities to be artistic and creative. Creative activities provide a sense of comfort and relaxation and are fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Assorted felt flowers and leaves
- Category labels (“Flowers” and “Leaves”)

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Write your own category labels and sort by other characteristics, such as “Large” & “Small” or “Red,” “Yellow,” & “Green.”
- Invite your partner to create a unique design or pattern.

Try This

If your friend or loved one enjoys sorting, you can collect items from nature and write your own labels to create a variety of sorting projects.

Felt Flowers/Leaves Sorting Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of felt pieces next to the mat.
3. Place the two category labels (“Flowers” and “Leaves”) at the top of the mat.
4. Select a felt shape from the basket.
5. Place it under the correct category label.
6. Continue until all of the felt shapes have been sorted.
7. Return the materials to the Kit.



Wooden Mandalas

Information for the Care Partner

Creative expression is a preserved ability in dementia, and many individuals, even those in the later stage of the disease, enjoy opportunities to be artistic and creative. Creative activities provide a sense of comfort and relaxation and are fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Pattern Cards
- Basket of assorted wooden pieces

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Invite your partner to recreate the pattern card by placing the wooden shapes next to the pattern card (directly on the placemat) instead of on top of the pattern card.
- Invite your partner to create a unique design or pattern.

Try This

If your friend or loved one enjoys making mandalas, you can collect items from nature for them to use.

Wooden Mandala Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of wooden pieces on the mat.
3. Select a pattern card and place it on the mat.
4. Select a wooden piece that matches one of the shapes on the pattern card.
5. Place the wooden piece on top of the matching shape on the card.
6. Continue until the entire design is filled.
7. Return the materials to the Kit.



Planting Seeds

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in familiar hobbies that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Materials

- Placemat
- Seeds
- Soil pods
- Small clay pots
- Small watering can
- Sponge
- Craft sticks
- Permanent markers

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Enjoy a connection to nature
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

You can have the craft sticks already labeled to simplify this activity.

Try This

- Transplant the seeds that were started into the garden.
- Plan an outing for sensory exploration/ experiences.

Planting Seeds Directions

1. Choose a type of seed to plant.
2. Read the planting and care instructions.
3. Place your pot on the paper placemat.
4. Place a soil pod in the pot.
5. Water the pod until the soil is moist.
6. Allow the soil pod 3–5 minutes to expand.
7. Open seed packet and place 3–4 seeds in pot, pressing them down just below the surface of the soil.
8. Place the pot in a sunny spot.
9. Write the name of the plant on the upper half of the craft stick.
10. Place the craft stick in the pot.
11. Wipe up your work surface with a damp sponge.
12. Return the remaining materials to the Kit.
13. Don't forget to water daily!



Sensory Exploration

Fabric Squares

Information for the Care Partner

Fabric can be used as a sensorial approach for enhancing the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences in everyday life can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Fabric squares

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Place the squares on the table directly in front of the person or in the person's lap.
- Sit back and observe, allowing the person to experience the activity in their own way. There is no wrong or right way to experience this activity.

Try This

Make your own set of fabric squares/swatches from old clothes that have personal meaning.

Fabric Squares Directions

1. Place a mat on the table.
2. Place the fabric squares on the mat.
3. Run your fingers along the first fabric. Share how it feels and looks, such as "This fabric is fuzzy like fur. The brown color makes me think of a teddy bear," or "This fabric is bumpy. Red is my favorite color."
4. Continue to explore each square.
5. When finished, return the squares to the Activity Kit.



Sound Cylinders

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of Montessori Sound Cylinders

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If this activity is initially difficult for the person, try limiting the number of cylinders to 2 that sound very different from one another.

Try This

Make your own set of sound cylinders from glass jars or plastic bottles. Fill them with a variety of objects that make distinctly different sounds.

Sound Cylinder Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Take out the red sound cylinders and line them up along the left edge of the mat.
3. Take out the blue sound cylinders and line them up along the right edge of the mat.
4. Pick up the red sound cylinder that is at the top of the column.
5. Gently shake the bottle. Listen to the sound.
6. Put the sound cylinder back in its spot.
7. Pick up the next red sound cylinder in the column and repeat.
8. Continue listening to all of the red sound cylinders.
9. Again, pick up and listen to the red sound cylinder that is at the top of the column on the left.
10. Then pick up and listen to the blue sound cylinder that is at the top of the column on the right.
11. If the sounds are different, place the bottle from the right column back in its place.
12. Continue listening to the blue sound cylinders in the right column until finding the match.
13. When two sound cylinders match, close their lids and place them side by side in the center of the mat.
14. Choose the next red sound cylinder in the column on the left and compare with the blue sound cylinders in the column on the right.
15. Continue until all of the sound cylinders have been matched.
16. Flip the sound cylinders over to see if the color dots match.
17. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Tangrams

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of tangrams with pattern cards
- Basket for tangrams
- Tray for pattern cards

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and motor skills
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Invite your partner to recreate the pattern card by placing the tangrams next to the pattern card (directly on the placemat) instead of on top of the pattern card.

Try This

Invite your partner to create a unique design.

Tangram Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of tangrams on the mat.
3. Select a pattern card and place it on the mat.
4. Select a tangram that matches one of the shapes on the pattern card.
5. Place the tangram on top of the matching shape on the card.
6. Continue until the entire design is filled.
7. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Liquid Bubbler

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Liquid motion bubbler

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Play relaxing music while your partner watches the bubblers.
- Ask questions, such as:
 - “What colors do you see?”
 - “What do you notice?”
 - “How does this make you feel?”
- Bring out a favorite snow globe.

Try This

Make your own liquid bubbler with a glass jar, water, oil, and food coloring.

Liquid Bubbler Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Set the liquid bubblers on the mat. Observe.
3. Turn the bubblers over. Observe.
4. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Movement with Scarves

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Assortment of colorful scarves
- Movement cards

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain movement and balance
- Maintain manual dexterity and motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Standing side by side, demonstrate each movement so that your friend or loved one mimics your motions.

Try This

Try this activity with music playing. Invite your partner to make up their own movements to match the music.

Movement with Scarves Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of movement cards on the mat.
3. Place the basket of scarves next to the mat.
4. Choose a card.
5. Choose a scarf.
6. Act out the motion on the card with the scarf. (For example: wave, twist, swirl, zig zag, etc.)
7. Continue choosing cards and scarves until you have tried all of them.
8. Feel free to make up some motions of your own!
9. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Sounds of Nature

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Sounds of Nature CD
- CD player
- Headphones (optional)

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- Enjoy a connection to nature
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

Experiment with listening to other CDs featuring relaxing sounds, guided meditations, or favorite music.

Sounds of Nature Instructions

1. This Activity Kit contains a CD of nature sounds to enjoy for relaxation, reminiscence, and sound identification.
2. Find a quiet location that has a comfortable place to sit or lie down.
3. Relax, let your mind rest, and just enjoy the sounds.
4. Or, as you listen to the sounds, try to identify what you are hearing. Do you hear wind, rain, birds, leaves rustling on the trees?
5. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Mystery Bag

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Placemat
- Drawstring bag in a bright color
- Small objects
- Labeled photos of the objects

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice focusing and paying attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestion

If any of the objects spark a memory or interest, pause to reminisce and engage in conversation.

Try This

- Ask your partner to share a special collection with you.
- More objects can be placed in the bag for additional challenge.
- Invite your partner to share the mystery bag with another friend or family member.

Mystery Bag Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place each photo card on the mat, arranged in any order (but not overlapping each other so they can be read easily).
3. Place the bag flat on the table with the opening near you.
4. Put one of your hands into the bag.
5. Choose one object to feel.
6. Feel the object and describe what you feel, e.g., “I feel something soft, fluffy, light,” etc.
7. Once you think you know what you are feeling, say the object’s name out loud: e.g., “I think this is a cotton ball.”
8. Pull the object out of the bag and place it on the card that matches.
9. When finished, return all the materials to the Activity Kit.



Mystery Bag



Library: Please print, cut and laminate to include in Kit.

Mystery Bag

pinecone



key



shell



paintbrush





Mystery Bag



Library: Please print, cut and laminate to include in Kit.

Mystery Bag

quarter



spoon



rubber ball



cotton ball





In the Night Sky

Viewing Constellations

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying constellations was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature, imaginative storytelling, and a sense of wonder about the universe.

Materials

- Placemat
- Astronomy binoculars
- Book of constellations

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Enjoy a connection to nature
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Try locating the North Star (Polaris)
- Try locating the moon – Can you see any craters on its surface?
- Try locating Jupiter – Can you see its four moons?
- Try locating Saturn – Do you see the rings?

Try This

Download an app for your smartphone, such as Stellarium or Google Sky. After downloading the app, point your phone skyward. The names of major stars, planets, and constellations will be visible on the phone screen.

Viewing Constellations Directions

1. Sit at a table near a window with a view of the night sky.
2. Place the mat on the table.
3. Place the book of constellations and the binoculars on the mat.
4. Hold the binoculars up to your eyes and look toward an object in the night sky.
5. Focus the binoculars if needed.
6. Use the book of constellations to identify and learn more about each constellation
7. When finished, return all the materials to the Activity Kit.



Constellation Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying constellations was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature, imaginative storytelling, and a sense of wonder about the universe.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

Download an app for your smartphone, such as Stellarium or Google Sky. After downloading the app, point your phone skyward. The names of major stars, planets, and constellations will be visible on the phone screen.

Constellation Three-Part Cards Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Constellation Lacing

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying constellations was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature, imaginative storytelling, and a sense of wonder about the universe.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Constellation lacing cards
- Laces

Benefits

- Maintain skills related to dressing
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

To simplify this activity, start with laces that already have a knot at one end.

Try This

Read a constellation book first (one is included in this In the Night Sky Kit) and then choose a constellation lacing card that corresponds to a picture or information in the book.

Constellation Lacing Cards Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Choose a constellation card and one lace.
3. Tie a knot in one end of the lace.
4. Start with the lace on the back side of the constellation card.
5. Push the end of the lace through a hole in the back of the card.
6. As the lace comes far enough through the front of the card, use your dominant hand to pull the end of the lace through the hole.
7. Locate the next hole and push the lace down through the hole.
8. Pull the lace down through the back of the card.
9. Repeat the sewing steps until the outline of the image is complete.
10. When all of the images are laced, remove the laces.
11. Return materials to the Activity Kit.



On-Your-Own Activity: Make Your Own Constellation

(Supplies Not Included)

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying constellations was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature, imaginative storytelling, and a sense of wonder about the universe.

Materials

- Placemat
- Black construction paper
- Silver star stickers
- Silver permanent marker or white crayon
- Constellation 3-part cards
- Book of constellations

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- When completed with other people, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use a three-part card, lacing card, or photo in a book as a guide.
- Recreate a night sky scene that you observed with the binoculars.
- Use the book included in this In the Night Sky Kit to find out how a constellation got its name.

Make Your Own Constellation Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the black construction paper in the center of the mat.
3. Select a constellation.
4. Place silver star stickers on the black construction paper to match the constellation.
5. Draw lines between the star stickers to replicate the constellation design.
6. Write the name of the constellation on the paper.



Backyard Birds

Backyard Bird Guide & Binoculars

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying backyard birds was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature.

Materials

- Placemat
- Book of backyard birds
- Pair of binoculars

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain reading and language skills
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

Keep a bird feeder outside a window of your home. Make sure there is a comfortable chair, book of birds, and pair of binoculars in a basket near this chair. Enjoy bird watching on a daily basis!

Backyard Bird Book Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the book on the mat.
3. Place the binoculars on the mat.
4. Look through the book of backyard birds.
5. Use the binoculars to spot the birds in your own backyard.
6. Use the book to identify the birds you see.
7. When finished, return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Backyard Bird Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying backyard birds was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

Keep a bird feeder outside a window of your home. Make sure there is a comfortable chair, book of birds, and pair of binoculars in a basket near this chair. Enjoy bird watching on a daily basis!

Backyard Bird Three-Part Card Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Bird Call Identification

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying backyard birds was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature.

Materials

- Placemat
- Book that includes recordings of bird calls

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If trying to learn the calls of certain birds, start with just two or three at time before trying to learn more.

Try This

Try to identify the calls of birds in your own backyard.

Bird Call Identification Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the bird call book on the mat.
3. Listen to various bird calls. Are there any you recognize?
4. Select a favorite bird call. Learn more about the bird that makes that call.
5. When finished, return the materials to the Activity Kit.



On-Your-Own Activity: Make A Bird Feeder

(Supplies Not Included)

Note: Please review all materials in light of allergy-related restrictions.

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying backyard birds was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature.

Materials

- Paper placemat
- Pinecone
- Crisco (or nut butter)
- Small spreader
- Bowl
- Birdseed mixture
- String
- Scissors

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Nut butters can be used instead of Crisco, if the person does not have a nut allergy.

Make a Bird Feeder Directions

1. Place the paper placemat on the table.
2. Place the pinecone, the spreader, and the peanut butter on the paper placemat.
3. Use the spreader to apply peanut butter to the pinecone.
4. When the pinecone is covered in peanut butter, put it aside.
5. Pour some birdseed into a shallow bowl.
6. Pick up the pinecone and roll it in the birdseed until it is fully covered.
7. Tie a string to the top of the pinecone, cutting off any excess string.
8. Tie the pinecone to a nearby tree branch.
9. Observe to see which birds come to feed.



At the Beach

Shell Sorting

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in sensory activities that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. This activity provides sensory stimulation, a connection to nature, and may spark reminiscence about time spent at the beach.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Assortment of shells of different sizes and shapes
- Category labels (such as “Small,” “Large,” “Rough,” “Smooth,” etc.)

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Shell Sorting Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of shells on the mat.
3. Place two category labels at the top of the mat.
4. Select a shell from the basket.
5. Place it in the appropriate column.
6. Continue until all the shells have been sorted.
7. Return the items to the Activity Kit.

Suggestions

If the number of shells is overwhelming, reduce the quantity being displayed. If the person is struggling to differentiate the shells, choose shells that are quite different from one another in size, shape, and color.

Try This

Once this skill is mastered, move on to sorting more items or organizing a sewing box. Other things around the house that can be sorted include utensils, plastic food storage containers, nuts and bolts, fishing tackle, coins, stamps, etc.



Shell Matching

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in sensory activities that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. This activity provides sensory stimulation, a connection to nature, and may spark reminiscence about time spent at the beach.

Materials

- Placemat
- Basket
- Set of shells
- Set of shell photo cards

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the number of shells and cards is overwhelming, reduce the quantity being displayed.

Try This

Create other types of matching activities with objects collected from nature.

Shell Matching Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the basket of shells on the mat.
3. Place the shell cards across the top of the mat.
4. Select a shell.
5. Compare the shell to each of the shell cards.
6. Place the shell on top of the matching card.
7. Continue until all the shells have been matched.
8. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Shore and Water Birds Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Hobbies bring enjoyment and relaxation, as well as a sense of accomplishment. Even if identifying birds was not a previous hobby, it may become a new one. This activity promotes a connection to nature.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

Select a card featuring one of the birds to trace and color or draw freehand.

Shore and Water Birds Three-Part Cards Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Sensory Sand Tray

Information for the Care Partner

Engaging in sensory activities that allow people to work with their hands is a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. This activity provides sensory stimulation, a connection to nature, and may spark reminiscence about time spent at the beach.

Materials

- Placemat
- Tray with sides at least 5 inches
- Sand to fill the tray to at least 3 inches
- Items to bury in the sand (shells, coral, stones, small sea creatures, etc.)
- Small scoop
- Small sieve

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- Enjoy a connection to nature
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Name and discuss the objects as they are all found.

Try This

Create your own sensory tray with a plastic shoe box filled with shredded paper or potting soil.

Sensory Sand Tray Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the sand tray on the mat.
3. Place the scoop and sieve next to the sand tray.
4. Dig and sift through the sand with the scoop or the sieve.
5. When you find an object, remove it from the sand tray and place it on the mat.
6. Continue looking for objects until they have all been found.
7. Return the objects to the sand tray.
8. Return the items to the Activity Kit.



Sounds of the Sea

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory stimulation can enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in later stages of the disease. Sensory experiences can provide ongoing pleasure and stimulate brain activities that can assist in improving function and performance for movements such as dressing and self-care.

Materials

- Sounds of the Sea CD
- CD player
- Headphones (optional)

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Provide a sense of comfort and relaxation
- Enjoy a connection to nature
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Try This

Experiment with listening to other CDs featuring relaxing sounds, guided meditations, or favorite music.

CD Directions

1. This Activity Kit contains a CD of ocean sounds to enjoy for relaxation and reminiscence.
2. Find a quiet location that has a comfortable place to sit or lie down.
3. Relax, let your mind rest, and just enjoy the sounds.
4. Or, as you listen to the sounds, try to identify what you are hearing. Do you hear waves, wind, rain, birds?



Art Appreciation

Art Appreciation Book

Information for the Care Partner

Many people enjoy art appreciation. Exploring familiar famous artworks is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Art appreciation book

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain reading and language skills
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Take turns reading aloud to each other or simply enjoy looking at the artworks.

Try This

Visit a local museum or gallery.

Art Appreciation Book Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the book on the mat.
3. Enjoy looking through the book together.
4. Comment on masterpieces you like.
5. Ask the person to tell you about pieces they like.
6. Encourage the person to reminisce or tell you stories related to these artworks.
7. Return the items to the Activity Kit.



Color Tablets: Matching Colors

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory activities that allow people to work with their hands are a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Activities that engage the senses bring enjoyment and stimulation.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of Montessori Color Tablets (Box 2)

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Matching all the pairs may be overwhelming; you may wish to start with three or four pairs to start.

Try This

Go on a color hunt outside! Look for various colors as you stroll through nature.

Matching Colors Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Set the color tablet box on the mat.
3. Place one set of color tablets across the left side of the mat.
4. Place the other set of color tablets across the right side of the mat.
5. Select a tablet from the left side column.
6. Compare it to the tablets on in the right column.
7. Place it next to the matching color.
8. Continue matching the tablets.
9. When finished, return the color tablets to the box.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Color Tablets: Grading Colors

Information for the Care Partner

Sensory activities that allow people to work with their hands are a great way to maintain fine motor and visual spatial skills that promote independence in all other areas of living. Activities that engage the senses bring enjoyment and stimulation.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of Montessori Color Tablets (Box 3)

Benefits

- Sensory stimulation
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Grading all the groupings may be overwhelming; you may wish to start with just one group of color tablets.

Try This

Go on a color hunt outside! Look for various colors as you stroll through nature.

Grading Colors Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Set the color tablet box on the mat.
3. Place one group of color tablets on the mat.
4. Arrange the color tablets from darkest to lightest or lightest to darkest.
5. Continue with other color groupings if you wish.
6. When finished, return the color tablets to the box.
7. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Masterpiece Matching

Information for the Care Partner

Many people enjoy art appreciation. Exploring familiar famous artworks is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Set of Masterpiece Matching Cards

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Fulfill the need for creativity and imagination
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the number of paintings is too overwhelming, you can reduce the number of pairs.

Try This

Visit a local museum or gallery.

Masterpiece Matching Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place one set of painting cards along the left side of the mat.
3. Place the other set of painting cards along the right side of the mat.
4. Choose a painting from the column on the left.
5. Compare it to the paintings in the column on the right.
6. Place it next to the matching painting.
7. Continue until all of the paintings have been matched.
8. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.



Continent Studies

Travel Guide

Information for the Care Partner

Many people have enjoyed traveling to different parts of the world. Others enjoy studying maps and learning about other parts of the world. Exploring travel books and maps can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Travel guide

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain reading and language skills
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship and helping others

Suggestions

Take turns reading aloud to each other or simply enjoy the photographs in the book.

Try This

Look through a photo album of travel photos.

Travel Guide Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the travel guide on the mat.
3. Enjoy looking through the guide together.
4. Comment on photos and items of interest.
5. Ask the person questions about trips they have taken.
6. Return the items to the Activity Kit.



Puzzle Map of South America

Information for the Care Partner

Many people have enjoyed traveling to different parts of the world. Others enjoy studying maps and learning about other parts of the world. Exploring travel books and maps can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Montessori Puzzle Map
- Laminated control map

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

If the person would like more of a challenge, the puzzle pieces can be used as stencils to draw a map of the continent on a large piece of white paper.

Try This

Look at a map or through an atlas together. Identify places your friend or loved one has visited.

Puzzle Map Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the puzzle map next to the mat on the table.
3. Place the black and white control chart on the mat.
4. Select a piece from the puzzle.
5. Gripping it by the small knob, lift the puzzle piece out of the frame and place it on the corresponding section of the control chart.
6. If the person would like, they can name the country as they place it.
7. Continue until all of the pieces have been placed.
8. Then return each piece of the puzzle back to the frame.
9. Return all of the items to the Activity Kit.



Flag Matching & Coloring

Information for the Care Partner

Many people have enjoyed traveling to different parts of the world. Others enjoy studying maps and learning about other parts of the world. Exploring travel books and maps can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- Montessori flags of a continent
- Blackline masters for coloring
- Brush markers

Benefits

- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Maintain visual perception skills
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

Colored pencils or watercolors can be used instead of markers.

Try This

Look at a map or through an atlas together. Identify places your friend or loved one has visited.

Flag Matching & Coloring Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the flag stand on the mat.
3. Select a flag.
4. Find the blank postcard of the same flag.
5. Enjoy coloring in the blank postcard to match the colors of the real flag.
6. Return the placemat, flags, markers, and unused posters to the Activity Kit.



Flag Three-Part Cards

Information for the Care Partner

Many people have enjoyed traveling to different parts of the world. Others enjoy studying maps and learning about other parts of the world. Exploring travel books and maps can bring back memories and is fun to do with others for socialization and connection.

Materials

- Placemat
- 3-part wooden tray
- 3-part laminated photo and label cards

Benefits

- Maintain language and reading skills
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Vocabulary reinforcement
- Spark reminiscence
- When completed with another person, fulfills the need for companionship

Suggestions

- Use only three cards.
- Remove labels, match pictures only.
- Match objects on picture cards.
- Begin with picture cards.

Try This

Provide an outline of a simple flag design. Invite your friend or loved one to paint or color it in.

Flag Three-Part Card Directions

1. Place the mat on the table.
2. Place the wooden tray next to (or above) the mat.
3. Remove all of the control cards (the cards with the pictures and labels), and line them up along the left side of the mat.
4. Select a picture card (no label) and compare it to each control card. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
5. Continue until all the pictures have been matched.
6. Pick a label (words) and compare it to each control card.
7. When you find the matching control card, place them side by side.
8. Continue until all the labels have been matched.
9. Return all of the cards to the container.
10. Return the materials to the Activity Kit.

Section III

Additional Resources



Ohio
Council for
Cognitive
Health

The Dementia Inclusive Public Library Guide

Section I | Roadmap to Implementation

Section II | Memory Activity Kits

► Section III | Additional Resources

Created by the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health

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Sample Donation Letter

Dear _____,

The _____ Public Library is committed to inclusivity for all, including patrons with memory loss and their friends and family. We are proud to announce that we have created Memory Activity Kits for individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions. Each Kit will contain a variety of interactive, hands-on activities on a certain theme that can be checked out from the library and enjoyed individually or with a care partner.

The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways for individuals to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one's abilities, such as attention, fine motors skills, balance, coordinated movements, reading, communicating, and hand-eye coordination. Research indicates that engagement in meaningful activities provides people with memory loss a continued sense of purpose, enhances self-esteem, and encourages independence.

Each Kit includes:

- Basic information about dementia and tips for the care partner
- Help for getting started with an activity, including FAQs
- An inventory of Kit contents
- Step-by step directions for each activity included in the Kit
- Handouts from the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health that individuals may keep

We need your help! We are currently collecting the materials needed for these Memory Activity Kits. We need the following items:

[This list is customized based on what you need.]

If you are able to donate items for our Memory Activity Kits – or if you prefer to make a monetary donation – this gift may be tax deductible. In addition, we will feature the name of your business in the literature that accompanies each Kit and on the Donors page of our website.

If you would like to make a donation or learn more about this project, please contact:

[Name, Title, Phone Number, Email]

We hope you will choose to support this important work that allows our library patrons with memory loss to continue to enjoy engaging and meaningful activities.

With gratitude,

[Name, Title]

Sample Volunteer Letter

Dear _____,

The _____ Public Library is committed to inclusivity for all, including patrons with memory loss and their friends and family. We are proud to announce that we have received a grant from _____ to create Memory Activity Kits for individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions. Each Kit will contain a variety of interactive, hands-on activities on a certain theme that can be checked out from the library and enjoyed individually or with a care partner.

The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways for individuals to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one's abilities, such as attention, fine motors skills, balance, coordinated movements, reading, communicating, and hand-eye coordination. Research indicates that engagement in meaningful activities provides people with memory loss a continued sense of purpose, enhances self-esteem, and encourages independence.

Each Kit includes:

- Basic information about dementia and tips for the care partner
- Help for getting started with an activity, including FAQs
- An inventory of Kit contents
- Step-by step directions for each activity included in the Kit
- Handouts from the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health that individuals may keep

We need your help! We are currently assembling a team of volunteers to assemble these Kits for our library. We are asking for volunteers to sign up for a time slot at [link].

If you have questions or would like to learn more about this project, please contact:
[Name, Title, Phone Number, Email]

The gift of your time can make a meaningful difference in the life of someone living with memory concerns or cognitive impairment and their family.

With gratitude,

[Name, Title]

Sample Community Ally Invitation

Dear _____,

Engaged collaboration with community organizations and agencies that are seeking to improve the wellbeing of all is an important part of the _____ Public Library’s mission. The library is currently developing an exciting new initiative to ensure Dementia Inclusive service, with a commitment to purposeful living and continued community participation by individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions. We anticipate that this initiative, now in its early stages of development, will include new resources, programming, and community partnerships.

[Name of organization/agency] shares common goals and vision with the library. We are seeking to bring together representatives of like-minded organizations to learn more about each other’s projects and priorities, and to discuss how we can work together to strengthen and support our current work and future goals.

If I have piqued your interest, please share your availability for a meeting within the next month, and I will work to bring together all interested parties.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from, and meeting with, you soon.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title]

Sample Promotional Materials

This is an example of a rack card with Dementia Inclusive Library information on one side and Memory Activity Kit information on the other.

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Dementia-Inclusive Library

The Akron-Summit County Public Library is committed to providing Dementia-Inclusive access to Library resources that make the abundant life possible—a life of inclusion and empowerment at your Library and beyond.

Memory Kits

The Library's Memory Kits provide meaningful ways for individuals to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain one's abilities, such as attention, fine motor skills, balance, reading, communication, and hand-eye coordination. Activities can be completed by the person with dementia or with a friend or family member.

Memory Kit topics include:

- **Home Life**
- **Office Life**
- **Sensory Exploration**
- **In The Garden**
- **In The Night Sky**
- **In The Kitchen**
- **Working With Tools**

Reserve online at akronlibrary.org/dementia-inclusive or by calling your local branch.

Check out Memory Kits for two weeks.

Pick up and Return through the Drive-up Window at Main Library or any Branch location.



Visit akronlibrary.org/dementia-inclusive for information and valuable resources, including:

Quick tips and videos about:

- Brain Health and Dementia.
- Communication and Conversation.
- Understanding Behaviors.
- Decluttering and the Dementia Friendly Home.
- Self-Care and Hiring Home Care.
- Creating a Memory Center and Making Memory Books.
- Memory Kits are available from your Library (see reverse).

Links to valuable resources:

- **BrainHQ:** more than two dozen brain-training exercises to explore on your computer or mobile device.
- **Side by Side:** free dementia support and assistance from the Alzheimer's Association.

Our *Dementia Friends*-trained staff continually updates the webpage with additional valuable resources.



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**Akron-Summit County
Public Library**

Sample Website Page

This is an example of a Dementia Inclusive Library section of a website.

[Dementia-Inclusive | Akron-Summit County Public Library](#)

Reprinted by permission of The Akron-Summit County Public Library.

The screenshot shows the website for the Akron-Summit County Public Library. The header includes the library's logo and navigation links: BOOKS & MORE, LOCATIONS, FOR YOU, RESEARCH, SERVICES, and EVENTS. A search bar is prominently displayed with the text "SEARCH THE CATALOG". Below the search bar are tabs for CATALOG, EVENTS, and WEBSITE. The main content area is titled "YOUR DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE LIBRARY" and includes a paragraph about the library's commitment to inclusive access. To the right of this text is a logo for "Dementia-Inclusive Library" featuring a blue circular graphic with a bar chart. Below the paragraph is a link to the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health's Dementia-Friends page. A section titled "MEMORY KITS FOR INDIVIDUAL ENJOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CARE PARTNERS:" lists various memory kits in two columns. Below this list is a paragraph explaining the purpose of the memory kits and a list of activities they include. At the bottom, there is a section titled "A SHORT VIDEO ABOUT YOUR LIBRARY'S MEMORY KITS" which features a video player showing a memory kit and a "Watch on YouTube" button.

Akron-Summit County Public Library

BOOKS & MORE ▾ LOCATIONS ▾ FOR YOU ▾ RESEARCH ▾ SERVICES ▾ EVENTS ▾

SEARCH THE CATALOG

CATALOG EVENTS WEBSITE

ABOUT | ACCESSIBILITY | DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE

YOUR DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE LIBRARY

The Akron-Summit County Public Library is committed to inclusive access to Library resources and engaged participation by all Library customers. A diagnosis of memory loss impacts both the individual and their care partners, but Library use can and should continue. The Akron-Summit County Public Library is committed to providing Dementia-Inclusive resources to allow for continued participation in your Library, and resources for maintaining the skills and interests that make the abundant life possible beyond our Library walls.

Dementia-Inclusive Library

All ASCPL staff members have received *Dementia-Friends* certification from the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health. For more about *Dementia-Friends*, visit <https://ocfch.org/df/dementia-friends/>.

MEMORY KITS FOR INDIVIDUAL ENJOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CARE PARTNERS:

- Home Life
- Office Life
- Working With Tools
- In The Kitchen
- In The Garden
- In The Night Sky
- Sensory Exploration

Memory Kits are designed for individuals who have memory concerns or cognitive impairment resulting from dementia or similar conditions. The purpose of these activities is to provide meaningful, enjoyable ways to engage in life while completing familiar tasks that maintain:

- Attention
- Fine Motor Skills
- Balance
- Coordinated Movements
- Reading
- Communication;
- Hand-Eye Coordination

Memory Kits are located at Main Library, can be placed on hold by adult cardholders, and are picked up and returned at the Drive-In Window at Main Library and at Branch locations. Kits circulate for two weeks (no renewals at this time). No late fees accrue, but replacement fees may apply.

A SHORT VIDEO ABOUT YOUR LIBRARY'S MEMORY KITS

Dementia-Inclusive Library: Memory Kits

Watch later Share

Watch on YouTube

VISIT AND EXPLORE

Sample Blog Post / Article

This is an example of an article introducing Memory Activity Kits.
Insight VOL. 26, ISSUE 4, SUMMER 2022, Page 7. Author: Mary Ethridge

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EXPLORE

INSIGHT

Introducing New Services

MEMORY KITS

The library's Memory Kits are ready for check out. The kits, designed for those with dementia, and the people who care for them, can be checked out and taken home (or to congregate settings) for two weeks. The kits feature hands-on activities that invite engagement in familiar tasks and discovery of new interests while stimulating the senses, supporting skills such as eye-hand coordination and easing conversation.

The kits can be used by the person with dementia alone or with a friend, family member, or care provider and include guidance for use through the stages of the dementia journey.



Memory Kits Woodworking



Memory Kits Organizing Office Supplies



Memory Kits Cooking Tool Match

Currently, there are seven Memory Kits; each Kit has two to five boxes of activities. The topics are:

- Home Life
- Office Life
- Working With Tools
- In The Kitchen
- In The Garden
- Sensory Exploration
- In The Night Sky

The Memory Kits are part of the Library's Dementia-Inclusive Initiative. Kits may be placed online or by calling the Main Library or any branch. Pick up at Main or another convenient Akron-Summit County Public Library location.



SUMMER 2022 7

Sample Memory Activity Kit Evaluation Form

Please tell us about your experience with this Memory Activity Kit.

Overall, how satisfied were you with using the Memory Activity Kit?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Please tell us why: _____

Overall, how satisfied were you with the topic choices of the Memory Activity Kits?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Please tell us why: _____

Overall, how satisfied were you with the checkout procedure for Memory Activity Kits?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Please tell us why: _____

My favorite part about the Memory Activity Kit was _____

I wish there was a Memory Activity Kit about _____

I did not like _____

Thank you for completing our survey!

Suppliers of Materials for Memory Activity Kits

While many of the materials in the Kits can be purchased from discount and housewares stores, some of the Kits do use specialized Montessori materials. When purchasing materials from companies that make Montessori materials for the classroom, keep in mind that we don't want to give adults materials that look like they are for children. Many of these companies, however, do offer materials that are appropriate for both children and adults. Use a discriminating eye when selecting materials for adults. Make sure they are adult-sized and do not look like toys.

Montessori Images

(materials made especially for adults living with dementia)

<https://montessori-images.com/>

Montessori Services

<https://www.montessoriservices.com/>

Nienhuis

<https://www.nienhuis.com/us/>

Alison's Montessori

<https://www.alisonsmontessori.com/>

Maitri Learning

<https://www.maitrilearning.com/pages/about-us>

Free Printables:

Montessori for Everyone

https://montessoriforeveryone.com/Free-Downloads_ep_35-1.html

Montessori Nature

<https://www.montessorinature.com/category/free-printables/>



We see dementia differently.

Rather than doing for people living with dementia, our Hand in Hand approach means that we partner with them, their loved ones, and their community. The goal of The Ohio Council for Cognitive Health is for Ohioans living with cognitive impairment to have a life filled with meaning, purpose and joy.

ocfch.org