

SENSORY STIMULATION ACTIVITIES FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Additional Documents to support this document
[shortbread recipe](#)

Sensory stimulating activities have become increasingly popular for those living with dementia. Focusing on the five senses: sight; smell; taste, touch and hearing; sensory stimulation exercises the parts of the brain responsible for thinking, concentration and memory. For people with dementia, these are often the parts of the brain most affected, so exercising them can help to slow down the deterioration.

Sensory activities also help to engage those living with dementia and encourage socialisation improving their communication and generally increasing their quality of life. Here are five sensory stimulating activities for you to try, each focusing on a different sense:

Bake Biscuits

Taste is a fantastic tool for evoking memories as part of a reminiscence activity. Using food as part of an activity can help to elicit memories, perhaps of a favourite dish they used enjoy eating with their family, or of a specific event in their life where food was central. Baking biscuits is a relatively easy activity for a person living with dementia to get involved in, and there are many aspects such as kneading or spooning the biscuits on to a tray which are suitable.



This [shortbread recipe](#) requires very few ingredients and cooks relatively quickly. Once the biscuits have cooled, the treats can be enjoyed with a cup of tea and a chat about memories of baking in the past.

For some people living with dementia, appetite and taste buds can start to diminish as they move on in their journey, so they may enjoy taking part in the baking aspect of the activity, rather than the eating side. If this is the case then focus on the touch of the ingredients and the smells that the baking biscuits produce.

Hand Massage

Touch can be very powerful in helping to calm and reduce agitation in someone living with dementia. Using a lightly scented lotion when carrying out the massage, perhaps with lavender, known for its sleep-inducing properties, can help to stimulate sense of smell as well as touch, leaving your loved one feeling relaxed and secure.

Soundscape

In a quiet and comfortable room, play a CD which features sounds such as the sea or the forest which are brilliant for relaxing and evoking memories. Whilst the CD plays ask questions to your loved one such as how they feel, have the sounds triggered any emotions, and do the sounds elicit any memories from the past. Once the CD has been playing for a while, gently turn the volume down and allow your loved one to bring their focus back to the room.

This is a great opportunity to discuss any emotions or memories that the session evoked. As part of the soundscape experience, scents which match the sounds such as the scent of the ocean can help to further the sensory experience. This can be great as both an individual or group activity.

Sensory Garden

Create a sensory garden in a window box. Pick flowers or herbs with strong scents such as lavender, mint and rosemary. Encourage your loved one to get involved with making the garden, pouring out the soil, planting the flowers and watering the garden regularly, all excellent for stimulating the senses. Position the window box in a place that they walk past frequently. This will mean that every time they are near the garden, they will get the scents of the flowers and visual stimulus. They will also gain a sense of achievement as they watch their garden grow.

Calm Painting Session

In a quiet room set up a painting activity. Participants can paint whatever they wish, be it landscape scenery, a still life that you have created for them or perhaps reflect on how they are currently feeling. Make sure the paint palette has calming colours, such as greens, blues and pale pinks. Once their artwork is completed and dried, they can hang it on the wall, which will elicit feelings of accomplishment as well as evoking feelings of calm as they take in the relaxing colours of their painting.

There are many different sensory stimulating activities which can have a multitude of benefits for someone living with dementia, whether it's evoking memories, eliciting feelings of calm or encouraging socialisation. Try different activities with your loved one and see how their mood and sense of self improves.



MHM Wales | Union Offices | Quarella Road | Bridgend | CF31 1JW T:
01656 650 451 W: www.mhmwales.org | Facebook://mhmwales
Twitter://mhmwales Just
Giving <https://www.justgiving.com/mentalhealthmatterswales> Registered
Charity Number: 1123842 Company Number: 6468412

