

# Handmade Wellbeing

## Educational Model

To coach arts & crafts professionals to design and carry out arts and crafts activities in elderly care settings.

### Meta

#### Being aware of your personal perception of the elderly

this is linked with everything. the base on which you practically build your work.  
what could there be under this heading?

- Also older people are individuals
- Old people have a lot of life-experience, that is part of the work
- Is linked with the perception of humanity/human being, and the values in life
- This is not permanent and unchanging
- Remember elderly is not an homogeneous group!!! To get to know what to expect and what your group looks like, visit the care settings in advance. Talk to staff members and if possible, also residents and clients. Think about older people that you have met and whom you know better: it might make visible and fight your own stereotypes.
- Reflect on it (HOW), gather information and be willing to change your perception
  - Information in advance + during action
- Consider them as adults, not children – they still are people themselves and can make their own decisions.
- There is a good probability that elderly residents are actually, intellectually in a “higher” position than you.
- General knowledge of cultural differences, how to teach students to overcome these & respect but not be afraid or too careful & sensitive
- Awareness of personal backgrounds
- Social backgrounds
- In the working process it's not mainly about age it's about personal skills and wishes. To see and feel your the person you are working with. That shows in the work with the people. Personal interaction and support.
- Contact, Trust
- Prepare practitioner mentally for challenging information (but an arts & crafts instructor shouldn't know everything → limits)
- Cultural traditions
- E.g. soviet time vs western culture + other examples
- Country people, city people
- Personal space and touching

- Rapidly changing culture within generations (e.g. technology, women working full time )
- We are all different, individual
- Different times, generation, society, class, living environment
  - Influences e.g. to relationship to materials and making
  - Influences to relationship to art and self expression
- Gender issues: think about breaking traditional gender roles
- Remember!! Don't get caught up in your own prejudice. Cultural background or any other aspect of identity (age, gender etc) influences, but it doesn't define anyone. You don't know about individuals until you ask, get to know them and try different things.
- People are people.

### Being aware of the perception of the older person

- Introduction
- Finding out individuals history
- Creating safe exchange
- Body language can help
- facial expression eyes
- Looking for reaction in these reading expressions
- Discussion through reminiscences
- Any connections of activity to historical/life stories
- Odours encountered in home
- Personal odour accentuated by Dementia can affect close proximity working
- Offend clients by exposure of body during activity
- How clients address clothing culture/age
- Consideration of what you are wearing take apron rather than old clothes for activity
- Our responses their responses
- Trying to make sure presence and presentation don't hinder clients getting involved

### Being aware of your perception of the situation and your own role

What is the relation between you and the people you work with?

- We are invited into THEIR home, not the other way
- Training - treating individual residents as if it is their own home
- Be aware of and respect the hierarchical position of you and the elderly specify, what is meant by this?

- There is a difference between teacher/learner relationship and artist/collaborator relationship you are on the same level, contributing creatively collaboratively and individually. There is no hierarchy.

Awareness of hierarchy but being as equal as possible

- The word 'hierarchy' is a bit of a harsh word to use but an understanding of this is vital.
- Be flexible
- Real interest to the person you are working with (getting to know the people you work with) showing the respect to the workers and their experience on the field of caring and understanding old people.
- It should be easier to bring new ways to work in
- Don't create situations which would make clients feel insecure
- What we can learn from older participants in stories
- Be aware they may have more skills than yourself
- duty of care
- Treating all with respect and understanding
- Acting as facilitators
- Allowing the activity to evolve through mutual cooperation
- Contact, sharing thoughts and communication is most important
- Be interested, open-minded as well as honest and reflective on your own feelings and behaving.
- Do not stress yourself, enjoy work WITH people.

## Being aware of the purpose

why do you do this? why is it important? what's in it for participants, you, society?

- Sharing of knowledge and experience - Boat making session we talked about making boats as a child. Travel stories etc
- A different way of communicating
- Inclusivity - not setting Older People outside society.
- For the artist - satisfaction of seeing people engaged and enjoying themselves.
- Social interactions. Gaining experience in delivering arts sessions in general. People and stories inspire other offshoots other projects.
- The main target: to make the elderly feel good about themselves, Empowering the participants Opportunity to engage and keep motor skills. Choice - you don't often have much choice in a care setting, creativity and arts provide this. To learn from each others across the ages (the age is not a limitation, "even I am young/old I do know things").
- Wake up feeling positive and empowered

- There are no mistakes, there is learning (and always the learning isn't important, just the doing something together)
  - We felt that it is also important if participant feels that he is not satisfied with his work he has an opportunity to tell that out loud and contemplate it. Denying that opportunity may not be empowering.
- To aim for/reach a target can validate a person's day
- Opportunity to social interaction is a target - For textile printing workshop ex army man while he was telling us about his life in the army he choose to structure his printed design that reflected his lifestyle as army personnel.
- Opportunity to train motor skills & brains
- It is not important to reach one specific target, more important to reach some/any appropriate targets - clay sessions - one person participating for 5 mins then sleeping. Others staying and being active for the whole session. Each is a valid way of participating. Flexible expectations.
- Things can go totally wrong and the idea may not work, but what's the risk. Maybe old people have mercy towards you.
- Getting experience of adjusting to a slower environment.
  - Giving enough time to older people to think and give response, because the time is relative subject and can take sometimes long time.
  - Still remember that not all old people are slow, personal styles remains
- Gaining experience of working with older people, maybe benefit when seeking for a job. Understanding ageing: you get older, your relatives and friends get older
- To work with different social groups. Older People and Aging is not integrated in our society. Its separated. Its important to create exchange, appreciation and contact within different groups and older people.
- Aims and objectives
- Visually show work at certain stages
- Discuss
- Being aware of targets/aims
- Opportunities for all participants
- When do we feel the work is finished? Do we respect their understanding of a finished piece.
- Suggestions

## Developing own philosophy & culture

connected with your perception of elderly, your role, purpose and targets on meta level - and realised in practice and action

- Philosophy of bringing good things
- Changing the space within the care setting. Example: boring dining rooms comes alive with Mary's clay session, mess and creative chaos brings people alive.

Noticing something different is happening. Meeting someone different, communicating differently. Improving the quality of day to day life.

- Ownership. - Creating something residents have ownership of.
- More awareness of your work as an artist or as a workshop leader
  - Having delivered a number of workshops, I need to force myself to stop doing things for the participants, even when they ask me to do it. I need to pay attention to encouraging them to do it as it is their activity.
- Reflecting after a project is very important
  - Improves future practice. Noticing the small things, what has happened in the session, often a lot has happened and you don't realise until you sit and reflect.
- Not for the person but with the person
- Communication
- Building trust
- Exchange and learn from each other: get the opportunity to observe the working methods of others, expand the horizons of our work with their experience, to provide impulses in every imaginable direction and also to personally approach.
- A multi sensory approach
- To work to a theme which is understandable to the client group
- To bring in their own stories Reminiscence in their work
- To develop work over a period of time which allows the opportunity to develop continuing story around the work.

## Practical aspects

### Structures

- Do not be afraid of engaging with the staff, take full advantage of their experience and knowledge.
  - This is imperative. The care staff know the residents well and can provide important information about their health and mood that day. Find a few minutes before the start of the session to explain your plans and to invite them to support you in particular ways, bearing in mind that they are often a) under pressure b) unsure of their role in a creative session. For example, you might ask how a particular resident is feeling. You might ask them to sit with one of the participants and make sure that they are managing a more challenging technique.
  - But remember, they have their job and you have yours; you don't need to be a nurse
- Ensure you know how to access help in emergency situations.

- Engage proactively with your helpers and volunteers. Give them direction/guidance when needed. Remember to thank them and ask for their feedback.
- Be aware and respectful of care home staff structures.
- Knowing the care home culture
- Environments and working cultures are very different
  - They could be developed also with this kind of projects if you have an option to continue working
- The staff must be available
  - Preferably present. Query if this doesn't happen. Ask for staff support.
- You had to make contact with the director and other staff members to get permission to work in the care home/day center
  - First director. Social and health care environments can be quite hierarchical, respect this
- Discuss how they can be involved in the work
- Find the place: talk to director
  - But ask the workers first so you won't be "stepping on toes" of workers or director
- How to get the group together
  - Find out do they use some kind of advertising, take it to use and maybe bring new ways too
- Find the room
- Find the room for yourself and your own ideas and personal input
  - Tell about your principles, way of working and special skills
- Legal aspects
  - If photos/ filming is required you should obtain written permission from elderly and/or relatives, also staff members
  - Confirm all needs with director (and what if you get no answers?)
- **Economic resources**
  - Budgets and available money (for material, for tools, for salary, for exhibition)
  - Who will find and pay for materials (you? Is there something you can use in care home)
- Bookkeeping (how the money is appropriated and spent. )
- Information from director
- to search for additional project money
- How to find interesting and creative solutions for working even if the economical resources are not good
- The material & costs = what is possible & be creative
- Recycling is way of see old technics in new way
- Hard materials like wood require more space and machinery
- Who brings the materials? Be prepared to find funding for materials too and bring them with you. The care home may not have financial and time resources to look for materials.

- Do co-operation with other organisation (for example nearest school or university, recycling centers etc.... Find out the possibilities and new ways to work with locals )

### Structures of activities Care Homes

- Pre-visit
- Manager
- Activities Coordinator
- Area for Work
- Planning around ability
- Duration
- Time of day in setting - differences in medication

### Structures of the Workshop

- Previsit
- Email around activity
- Promotion of Activity/workshop
- Risk Assessment hazards (little steps) issues in home
- Preparation room prep and resources
- Appropriate Materials
- Multi sensory
- inclusivity for impairment - for impairment adaption of tools
- Consider differentiation/ability
- Timings individual stages

## Planning the workshop

### Getting to know the group

- Knowing the names of the participant is very important
- If possible, observe or visit prior to sessions. Demand this!! Very important to know the group and individuals
  - I observed an art session at two care homes, one with advanced dementia patients and one with mixed ability residents. This visit helped me decide where to deliver my art session to fit the ability of the participants. X visited a care home before delivering a series of sessions. It informed decisions of how to adapt the dining room to be suitable for a clay session.
- Gather background information about the members of the group beforehand
  - By meeting and talking with the elderly residents themselves
  - Activities coordinator, manager and carers
  - Relatives & friends
  - Nursing staff & social workers
  - Speak to a peer practitioner

- Work with elderly people alongside someone known to elderly people
- There is generally very little chance of this, if any, as there are different participants to each session, and residents decide whether they wish to attend on the day.
- It isn't always possible to gather information about participants in advance. In fact, care home staff themselves, may not be able to predict who will attend on a particular day. Confidentiality rules may prevent them from sharing even basic information about project participants. This means that the practitioner has to think on their feet, be hyper-observant, extremely flexible and open minded in terms of expectations. For example, artist noticed that someone had very poor grip and was unable to grasp a paintbrush. He was able, however, to use a large foam roller to make a mark. Artist had come prepared with a variety of equipment knowing that she would encounter people with a range of needs.
- People in the group from diverse backgrounds & current situations (Different times, generation, society, class, living environment). Important to listen to what they say to you
  - Influences e.g. to relationship to materials and making
  - Influences to relationship to art and self expression
  - Will you encourage people to step outside their comfort zone? Or is it ok to stay there?
  - Residents in care home or who live at home
  - X was an assistant artist at a textile art session. Most of the group were painting, but one lady wanted to do embellishment. X had the chance to give this lady 1to1 support, encourage her to do the activity, despite she constantly saying 'you do it'. In the meantime she occasionally told stories of her youth and memories.
  - Y run a session to make cork boats with residents and had a boat race. This was silly and fun, and gave an opportunity to people to do something they've not done before.
- Actively listen to their wishes and ask about their views at all stages
- Always take into account the welfare and needs of of the residents. This is paramount.
  - Z experienced a lady in a wheelchair. She was uncomfortable at her position at the table so it was adjusted to suit her. This made her comfortable and she was able to take part in the activity.
- You need to know how your audience is "hearing" you, what kind of methods you need to use, to make everyone understand and not make them feel unsure or pressured.
  - Y made a worksheet of how to make the cork boat, providing a visual guidance. This allowed people to work individually if wanted to. She then explained the steps by showing the process in steps. This was a second visual guide. Afterwards she kept going around the table to assist



- individuals with their progress. She considers this was a gentle way of holding the group, rather than acting as a teacher.
  - Z provided mock up examples of the finished product to show how the process is. Keep repeating if necessary to help the progress and re-awake participants' attention.
- It's good to know about some medical conditions: Appropriate to activity & for safety of all & for benefit of elderly people
  - e.g. dyslexia, epilepsy, schizophrenia, memory disorders, hearing & visual impairments etc
  - No need to know individual diagnoses, more something general: some examples & knowledge about e.g. dementia, how it might influence communication, what might occur
  - The staff is responsible of medical things, not you
  - X had a participant who brought the wrong glasses to the session and he couldn't see. An assistant artist was able to give him 1to1 support, thus enabling the gentleman to take active part and end up with the finished product at the end of the session.
  - At another session there was a lady who is known to get aggressive. Staff were concerned whether she should join the session as she had violent spell earlier in the morning. Unfortunately staff didn't inform the staff of this, it only came up at a later conversation.

## Targets

- To find and set their own targets too by involving them at every stage in decision making.
- Pay attention to the body language, for example they may not say they are tired or need help, but you will notice it if you pay attention in it, or if person has difficulties to speak
- Offer the materials closer
- Restrict the number of options if needed, for example you can decide together that next colour will be red and she/he will choose between three tones of red
- Give time to play without target - to encourage creativity
  - This must depend on the ability of the participant to make choices. Some older people with dementia become overwhelmed by too much choice. In this case you might offer a limited choice of, for example in a printing activity, you might offer a choice of two printing blocks and in a textile activity, you might offer a limited range of colours or a few different textures to work with.
  - Flexibility becomes important once participants start working with the materials. It is important to allow open ended outcomes and to give people freedom to experiment and to encourage exploration. For example, in a fabric printing activity using fabric paints, a participant might

pick up a paintbrush and begin to paint freehand onto the fabric. This should be encouraged. It isn't 'wrong'. The materials themselves inspire and when they are manipulated, the muscle memory often kicks in and past memories of working this way are triggered. For example, a childhood memory of potato printing might emerge from a printing session. This is an ideal opportunity to explore this memory by starting a conversation.

- The materials you provide can be chosen to allow for open-ended outcomes. For example, in a badge making activity, an older person may not feel confident to make their own designs. They might cut out and use some photocopied examples (even though that might not have been the original intention of the workshop leader). In doing this, the older person may feel greater satisfaction with the aesthetic outcome and still have manipulated the materials themselves using fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination etc. The role of the activity leader is not to control but to facilitate, leading the participant towards that feeling of satisfaction in producing a piece that pleases them.
- The right to choose what they want
- Pushing, how much is too much?
- Encouraging to try
- Introducing new techniques and way of doing things is refreshing
- You have to remember the possibility that people most likely choose something they have done and what they like -> pushing on the edge of the comfort zone can open new possibilities and experiences
  - For example wet felting is familiar, but needle felting can be new technique for elderly. It is also physically light.
  - For example using familiar technique and trying to bring new variations
  - Maybe not a good idea to always ask: "what do you want to do and make"
- The main target & steps to achieve it
- Flexible targets
- You have to be ready to work in the moment
- Have a back-up plan
- The importance of the process, communication
- It is not important to reach one specific target, more important to reach some/any appropriate targets
  - Important to think about targets in advance, but it is not possible to know everything beforehand, e.g. what are appropriate targets for this specific group. You learn when you work with them and can then specify the targets
- Opportunity to social interaction is a target
  - Interaction between the elderly and the young,
  - Interaction among the elderly

- To have as a target 'interaction between residents' is important. This outcome is something that has a lasting legacy. It endures beyond the workshop. The workshop leader can manage pairings, putting somebody more socially confident next to a more reticent person. You can guide people to help each other for example 'Betty, why don't you help Dot to cut out that shape?' This makes Betty feel useful and Dot feel supported. They may enjoy these feelings and seek to recreate them in other situations.
- Communication between generations & understanding of each other
- Elderly people can show or tell how things used to be
- Different things are sometimes important to young and old people
- To do things together
- Opportunity to train motor skills & brains
  - Use it or lose it
  - Feeling empowered about remaining skills and learning new skills
  - Often people think and say they can't do something anymore, but they can, once they get started
  - To wake up your memories of the muscles, how they worked when you were younger and made these things
  - Trust & encourage the memory of the elderly (body&mind)
  - Activating all senses: smell etc
  - Body remembers the skills even though the mind doesn't
- Talk with care home staff and volunteers about the targets. They should be aware, otherwise they may undermine your work.
- If you work with a colleague, you should discuss and determine the targets together
- The meaning of the product
  - Feeling of being useful
  - Proud of your own work and the praise you get
  - Sharing stories of what you have made, past and present
  - Tangible outcome of learning and making, might bring good memories afterwards if the making situation was nice
- When people create a collaborative piece, the targets of social interaction, team identity and having a common purpose can be long lasting. For example, when a group of residents collaborated with an artist to make a large scale wall hanging from clay hand portraits, they felt great pride in the result. It was displayed in a communal area of their home. The contributors felt pride in seeing it on the wall. It was something to show to visitors, a daily reminder of their team work and the warm feeling that their participation engendered.
- Thinking of an alternative plan
- Inner attitude; trust in learners & yourself & the target
  - Teacher should be open-minded & connected to the target
  - If you don't feel good about what you are doing, the result won't be good

- Accessible by all
- Enjoyable
- inclusive
- looking at an end product but not the most important
- Possibility making things to see so that it can fund other activities
- Doing something useful/.practical ? Age related
- Reminiscence
- Create activity to develop motor skills
- Opportunity to develop cultural/historical art connections through activity
- Opportunities to remember skills with similarities Clay work/baking knitting/weaving
- Transferable skills
- Bringing in songs, smells/flowers seeds
- Flexibility changing the pace adapting changing outcomes.

## Working methods

- Collaboration
  - cannot show the work (?) ?
  - You have a specific aim as an artist
  - Our aim is it to give the older people space to make experiences in the creative process on their own. We show possibilities which are orientated on their possibilities and what they are able to do.
  - The others contribute, help them to do the work
- Co-operation
  - Develop the aim collaboratively
  - You give an input and observe what they are doing
- Co-creation: together with the elderly
  - Find the best strategies of working together with older people. Try to find the balance between letting them to do the work themselves and doing the work for them (which can also be rewarding because there is still the feeling of being involved).
  - Background is important: you show what you can do, then let's try something together
  - Next time they can more freely choose as they are familiar with the techniques already
- Encourage them to feel comfortable and more open minded leading up to the working process.
  - In the first session of our workshop, our main goal was to create open and comfortable atmosphere. We encouraged them to share their stories and memories. Those personal stories about the chosen theme (nature) led us into working process.

- The number of participants per teacher
  - 5-7 for 1 artist + 1 carer/nurse?
  - The number depends on the medical condition and needs of participants, the room, the economic, the activity
  - Very good to have two teachers
  - Be familiar with co-teaching process and share responsibilities beforehand
  - Plan together with the local staff?
- Shared working spaces & equipment with other community members
  - Young and old together. Intergenerational sessions.
  - We work in interdisciplinary and intergenerational teams in order to create exchange and inspiring atmosphere in the working process. Also it opens the possibility to create new images in how we perceive different social groups and for helping each other.
- Using (information) technology
  - Some elderly people are up to speed using modern technology, but not all. Others might like to have a go and would welcome the opportunity to learn a new skill.
- Sometimes it's good to let the elderly lead themselves (and let them teach each other demonstrating their acquired skills and knowledge.).
- Actively listen to their wishes and ask about their views at all stages
- when starting the work and for inspiration: sharing thoughts about the theme together, this encourages communication but also helps & promotes inspiration, design, working, trust, bonding (especially nice if making something collaborative)
- Ideation & Design methods??? Examples
- How to develop the theme or starting point?
  - Work with older people in the same way as with other social groups. Its about Equality. So we try to focus on the person and their individual need.
  - Its about playing with materials. There is no focus on the product its about the process. The work is seen as a creative process in which its about exploring, playing and creating art. Its about to give the older people support and possible direction in this process. For example: work with clay in a group of 3 participants, one artist and one learner. During the working process the idea came up to cover it with paper in order to experiment with different materials and to get the shape of the heavy clay sculpture. So it was about the fun (for the artists as well as the older people) to explore the material. In a next step we worked with latex and created a new sculpture out of the clay sculpture.

## Techniques

- Knowing which materials and techniques are suitable for certain target group
- Some materials are liked more than others

- Plastic cups were used but maybe it was not so well understood why they were used because cups are for drinking. It could be an option - or not. This was not co-operation, it was collaboration.
- Soft materials are liked **that appeal to the senses**. **Fabric (To tie and print) Clay and wool**
- Generations can have different opinions of materials and their usage. **F.e. The did not like plastic cups. Positiv was the idea to do variation from that what they know.**
- (Using) Material that people are used to. Familiarity is good.
  - **But also new is good = learning, experiment, play. You don't know until you try**
  - **Textil, because they were used to sew, wool because they were used to knit, to knot, to crochet.**
  - **Try new things like koolaid dyeing**
  - **Maybe you can develop the techniques and ways to use the materials with the old people?**
- With much older/very frail people you need to find a technique that they are able to do, like stamping, the fabric to computer → print → develop further. **We make the things bigger.** We give them the idea, that they can support each other. Important for example: all colours don't have contrast enough, yellow is too light, people can't see. **However yellow and reds are key dementia colours, often the last that people can recognise.**
- Building trust through your skills
  - For example they'll check the seams and if they are ok, people start to trust you. **Embrace their skills and knowledge.**
  - Older people have lifelong knowledge and they might check if you have it too. Be prepared to answer questions and be honest if you don't know the answers. **→ aim to be on the same level**
- Not too small items etc/suitability for elders
  - **But don't underestimate!**
  - **We and the day care center staff were a bit worried beforehand about needle felting because the needles are very sharp. But it's important not to pamper. Therefore when we started I told about my own experiences as a warning. In the end we were all positively surprised. There were zero accidents.**
- **If Non traditional materials rational for using them is explained**
- **Previsit learn about abilities**
- **Sound of materials**
- **Smell of materials**
- **Texture of materials**
- **Show examples**
- **Visual references**
- **Be prepared to show your own working**

## Motivating the participants & the staff

- It's complex! **Well worth the time and effort.**
- You need to know with whom you are working with
- You need to be prepared that you will not succeed 100% always. **It's a learning process.**
- People are allowed to choose, you'll need to accept that, and all other things they are giving you back. **Learn from this.**
- Strongly related to the atmosphere, social structure, the premises
- Motivating is easier if staff are participating to the workshop. **It's worth aiming for this and engaging with everyone who drops in.**

## Conducting the workshop

- Look at and adapt the working environment before you start the session/workshop, make space for your own resources and equipment, monitor the group size and make a name plan.
  - **In the first session of our workshop we presented only the most essential materials and equipment that were needed to get started. Participant had more limited choice. The next time we worked with the same materials but we offered more freedom to choose.**
- **It is important to arrange the room before the session, ideally before the participants arrive. Equipment laid out in advance leads to a feeling of anticipation and excitement when the participants enter. Be aware of how wheelchair users will access equipment, materials and the space. Is it safe? Are fire exits accessible? Will everyone have enough room? How high is the table? Will they be able to see your demonstration, will you be able to get amongst them to offer guidance, is the room echoey? Is there enough light? Can everyone reach the resources, can they engage in social interaction with each other? Is it warm enough? Will you be disturbed? Can people get in and out easily if they need to use toilet facilities?**
- **Are there enough resources for everyone? Is the group the right size for the activity? If too big, you might want to consider splitting the group and holding additional sessions at another time. Do you have enough help and support? Will use of the materials create any hazards? Does the equipment need to be modified in any way?**
- set out the room in a way that it's possible to engage in conversations easily, but at the same time they are not forced to do anything they don't want.
  - **In one workshop we were sitting in a circle on the comfortable chairs and sofas and everyone had their opportunity to tell their memories of nature or gardens etc. Sitting in a circle made it possible to participate face to face and being part of the group whether you talk more or less**
- Aesthetic preparation (of the room and the process) to support the aims in the best way

- In some care homes they have used nice calming colours and paintings on the walls.
- Clear, well prepared
  - We talk about the background of what we will do in the workshop (material, thema, idea.....)
- Short presentation
  - Show picture examples, short video as input / impulse
- Actively listen to their wishes and ask about their views at all stages
  - Needle felting was a good technique for participants that had different motor skills and energy levels because it's possible to work less or more or just observe
- Try to motivate during the activity but do not force > be respectful and patient
  - Sometimes during the workshop we had to ask participant few times if they wanted to participate. It was important to give an opportunity to observe first and think once more if they wanted to participate or not. However it was important for them to be part of the group even if they didn't make the concrete piece of craft.
- Music while working? If ok for participants
  - We listened to music in the beginning of one session to help to inspire the participants. Important thing to think about is what suits all?
  - At the end of last session, we gave an opportunity to participants to choose the music. The aim was to conclude the workshop with the feeling of togetherness and calmness.
- We ask the participants what kind of music they prefer and make a decision
- Find the right loudness
- how the environmental and physical conditions are affecting the emotional wellbeing
  - Make sure that it's easy to move around with wheelchair if someone uses one.
- how to change the environment to make it more supportive to wellbeing
  - Make sure the lighting is good and that the air is fresh.
  - Remove the unnecessary background noises and use clear voice yourself.
  - Bring the nature in with flowers and other nice smells. For example we are working with a forest theme in one project and will bring twigs and (recorded) bird sounds to the room.
- Check the venue prior the workshops to see if there's everything you need (electricity, water, technology etc)
- Think about the location of the workshop
  - Near bedrooms room
  - A private room if possible with fewer external distractions.
  - A toilet nearby the working room
  - Working outside if the weather is nice
- Previsit
- Email around activity



- Promotion of Activity/workshop
- Risk Assessment hazards (little steps) issues in home
- Preparation room prep and resources
- Appropriate Materials
- Multi sensory
- inclusivity for impairment - for impairment adaption of tools
- Consider differentiation/ability
- Timings individual stages
- Adapting environment

## Feedback

- Learn from their experiences yourself and let them know this
- Give positive feedback and praise
- Joint feedback sessions: everyone can tell about their working that day, introduce their work, give and receive feedback
- Exhibition
- Circle discussions
- Conversation during working, praise
- Feedback from relatives, care home staff
  - It can be hard to know how to plan workshops if the feedback is too restricting
- Think about how to display the finished products/artwork
  - acknowledge the work and each individual's effort
  - use e.g. names to show who has participated
  - E.g. an exhibition or sharing images.

## Concrete examples:

- Feedback in the planning phase before the workshops has influence
  - On choosing techniques
  - Meeting older people
  - Finding own way to work
  - Self esteem as planning and doing
- Receiving feedback from the workers is important, but it can be very restricting and the way of doing and nothing is changing in workshops (too little/too much feedback, maybe there's never too much information about the people you work with but too much about the ways you should work)
- Taking consideration the feedback you get but still finding the own way to work (respecting the knowledge and mixing it to the things we learned/ is important to you)
- Material cost is restrict to arrangements of workshops
- You don't know much about the old people you are 'teaching' at first - it takes time

- Too general feedback from homecare workers (“it was really nice”), sometimes the workers left us alone in the room
- Exhibition, Pictures etc. to make visible what is invisible. To create a situation in which it is possible to show and discuss the work/ sculptures/ artpieces...In this way it is possible to get feedback and discuss the process.

## Interaction & communication

- To work with people (old and young) is to work in relation to them
- To be authentic is important (don't play happy if you are not)
- Look people in the eyes (mindful of their cultural differences)
- Use humour (but take care!) and encourage humour
- Listen actively, let people speak
- Exchange experiences (not only interview)
- Be aware that we all deal with emotions
- Respect
- Treating as adults
- Think about your voice level and tone.
  - Some old people have trouble of hearing and need the words to be clear and well-articulated. If the participant has hearing problems he/she can be able to read the words from your lips so pay attention and be face to face when talking to them.
- Consider the way you speak to elderly residents
- Be clear in your speech and be prepared to repeat yourself.
- Be aware of names/words that provoke certain images
- To know the language of the elderly and the different words they may use.
  - Some concepts and words are not familiar to them and vice versa, but this might provoke fun conversations
- If they wish to talk about death: let them, but you don't have to be a therapist and it's ok to say if the subject is confusing
- Avoid using the word no, find a positive way to say something needs to be changed (persons with memory disorders)
- Let them talk about their worries, ill health etc but gently lead them to more positive topics (working); you (or other participants) are not the one taking care of such things, your part is art
- Encourage
- Don't rush– give them space and freedom
- Smile and adopt positive body language.
  - Your body reveals what you feel more than your words, be honest.
- Treat people in an equal manner
- Encourage them to speak and communicate with each other

- Ask questions but with respect
  - they don't need to answer if they do not want to
  - Don't interrigate but offer an opportunity to tell a story. There is a difference between asking and having a conversation.
- Consider the way you touch them - or not. Make sure it is ok & follow their wishes.
  - The staff has to take care of lifting and such
- How to prepare the group situation
- Think about how you introduce yourself and the institution you represent
  - We avoided saying we are teachers to avoid teacher-student mindset.
- Pay attention to how you start and finish your group process
- Invite the elderly to introduce themselves. Give them time.
  - It isn't imperative to do this in a formal way, as some participants feel uncomfortable drawing attention to themselves. There are ways of making people feel welcome without a formal register, or around-the-room introduction. For example, the practiser might say 'Mary, how nice to see you today. I'm sorry that you were ill last week. We missed you.'
  - A good way of remembering each other's names is to give everyone something to personalise. For example a folder to label and decorate.
  - It is sometimes good to gauge the feeling and energy in the room at the beginning and end of the session. Has the mood changed? There might be some post it notes available with a choice of a smiley face, a straight face or a sad face. Each person might pick one to indicate how they are feeling that day. They may even say why, although are not pressurised into doing so. Have we more smiley faces at the end of the session?
- It is good to do introductions each time, because the group can change or there are people living with dementia (or memory issues.).
- Try different kind of introductions
  - so called name games or wear a name badge
- Singing without hearing is a possibility to communicate to other people???
- Name preference
- The practitioner should have some strategies, that can make elderly people talk to each other, for example some open questions, that encourage them to have discussions.. Example topics: daily news, food, childhood, events, gardens, holidays etc. [crafts](#), [art](#), [Reminiscing](#).
- Also when starting the work and for inspiration: sharing thoughts about the theme together, this encourages communication but also helps & promotes inspiration, design, working, trust, bonding (especially nice if making something collaborative)
- Remember silence is not a bad thing! When carried away with making by hands, it is often unnecessary to talk. You can reflect afterwards. Also remember some are distracted by conversation and can't concentrate.
- CHALLENGING SITUATIONS: what might happen and how to manage
- Communication without words

## Practice & examples

- Previous successful/not successful projects in general and in this particular place (e.g. care home)
  - Talk with the staff about possibilities and limitations
  - St Peter's projects (exhibition, food, dressing up)
  - Working with senses and memories
  - Information from care settings is important. Real life examples.
  - Exploring previous projects. Important to be guided because easy to get lost. However independent research is also important.
  - EXAMPLE: Projects at St. Peter
  - Verbal Information from Activities EXAMPLE Daniella (Eggenberg)
- Previous studies and research
  - Similar to above but more theoretical. Important to understand how different disciplines present their results. Practical versus theoretical projects? Good to combine these approaches. Both needed. Different perspectives.
  - EXAMPLE: Recent Art project
- Learning in the process
  - Keeping diaries, reflection, feedback is crucial.
  - Peer group reflection.
  - Always reflect, find the time.
  - if new to the field you might not understand the importance of this. Guidance on how to learn the process for reflection. There are tools available.
- Share the information, cross disciplinary
  - And learn from others
- Not all information is shared. We need to share more. Better use of resources. Written or verbal. Who do we share with? Especially good to share 'thinking out of the box' and 'out of your comfort zone' experiences
- As above...no boundaries to sharing.. transferable knowledge ..working with different age groups. increasingly important. many young people do not have a connection to elderly people. There is a need to understand the language of a discipline. Easy to misread so guidance is helpful and an understanding of perspectives and goals.