



Planning

EFFECTIVE GROUP ACTIVITIES

*A Supplementary Guide to the
AIC Wellness Programme and Other Group Activities
for the Community Care Sector*



Connecting You
to Community Care





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Contents

04

Introduction

06

BEFORE Conducting Group Activities

- Planning and Preparing Activities

16

DURING Group Activities

- Adapting Activities
- Group Facilitation
- Group Management

30

AFTER Group Activities

- Evaluation

36

Appendices

- 1 - Working with Clients with Physical Limitations
- 2 - Working with Clients with Cognitive Limitations
- 3 - Facilitating Activities Virtually
- 4 - Group Information Sheet Template
- 5 - Activity Plan Template
- 6 - Individual Progress Report Template
- 7 - Group Activity Record Template

59

References



Introduction



Activities play an important role in our lives. It enables the learning of new information, connecting with others, being active, taking stock and contributing back to the community. In the process, choices are exercised; capabilities are maintained and contributions to the community are made which benefit self-esteem and purpose.

While these motivations do not change with age nor with the alteration of physical or mental abilities, being able to meaningfully contribute to the community may require new approaches.

This Guide has been developed to offer tips to Community Care staff and volunteers who plan and conduct group activities for seniors and/or clients who have experienced changes to their physical/mental abilities.

While designed to be paired with “ready-to-use” toolkits and resources under the Agency for Integrated Care’s (AIC) Wellness Programme (<https://aic.buzz/aic-wellness>), these principles can also be applied to other activities. Suggestions on how group activity facilitators can better contextualise activities for different care settings are also included.



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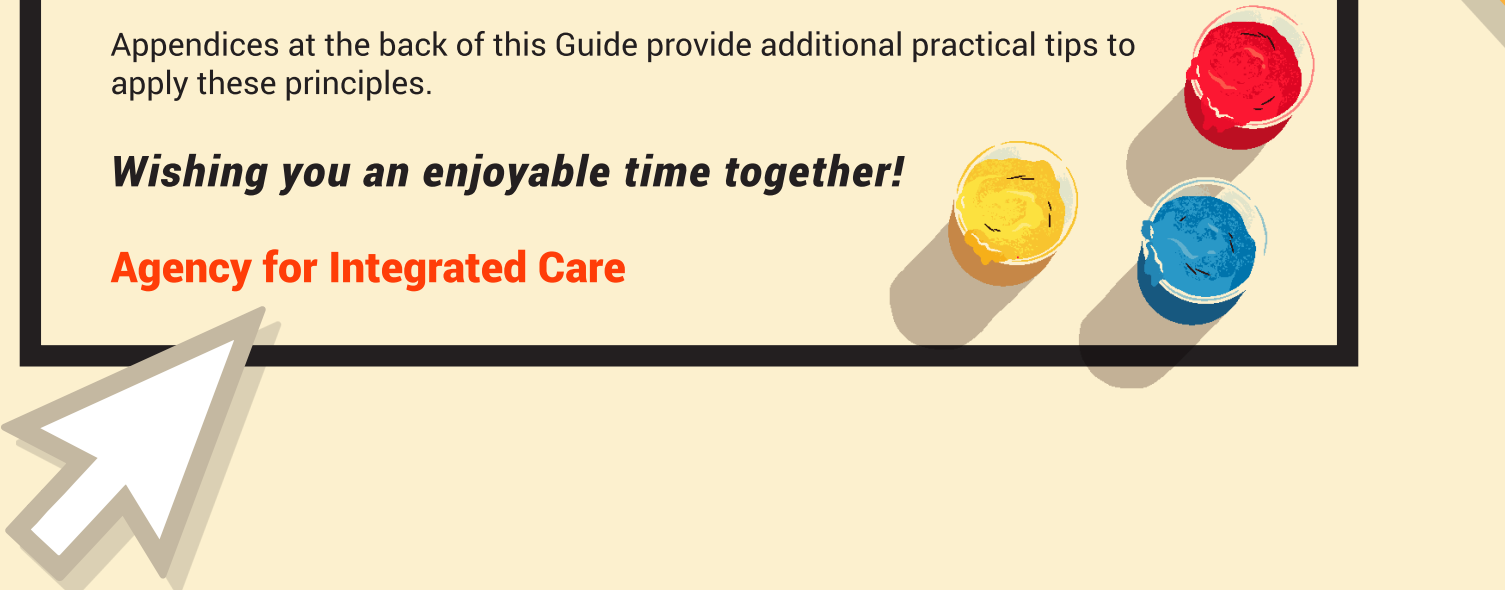
This Guide contains different sections, providing insights on the steps involved in planning group activities at every stage:

- **BEFORE** Conducting Group Activities
- **DURING** Group Activities
- **AFTER** Group Activities

Appendices at the back of this Guide provide additional practical tips to apply these principles.

Wishing you an enjoyable time together!

Agency for Integrated Care





BEFORE

Conducting Group Activities

Before conducting any group activity, it is crucial to spend time planning and preparing for it. This is the **FIRST** step. While it may require more effort, it is absolutely necessary to ensure a successful group session.



CONSIDER THESE STEPS:

1. *Develop aims and objectives*

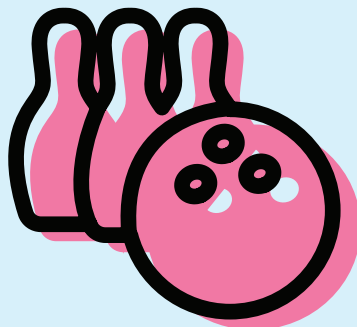
It is important to first think about the aims and objectives of the group activity. This ensures that the activity is purposeful and provides areas for evaluation of effectiveness at the end of the activity.

Some common aims and objectives can include:



Cultivating Social Skills

Listening, paying attention, sharing, problem solving and teamwork;



Developing Leisure Activities and Interests

Exploring interests and engaging in meaningful activities; and



Promoting Health and Wellness

Maintaining range of motion, strength, endurance and coordination.

*What comes first?
Selecting the activity
and then inviting the
clients? Or inviting
the clients and then
choosing the activity?*

Food for thought..

2. Select the activity

Consider the following **three** factors when selecting the group activity:

Firstly:

The selected activity must fulfil the aims and objectives that have been set.



Secondly:

The selected activity should be meaningful to clients.

Knowing their background and interests will help maintain their attention and optimise their engagement. Do ensure that the activities selected are age and culturally appropriate.



You may use **Appendix 4: Group Information Sheet on page 55** to better understand your clients' background (be mindful of personal data protection considerations!). You can also use an activity interest checklist to find out what clients are interested in. Sample versions can be found online - search the web for "activity interest checklist".

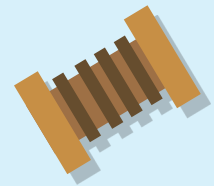
Thirdly:

The client's level of functioning will also influence activity selection. The activity should not be too simple (clients may feel bored/insulted). Neither should it be too challenging that clients feel demoralised.

Include activities with some level of challenge so clients can gain a sense of accomplishment upon completing the activity. Adapting the activity (grading) by increasing its level of challenge (grading up) or lowering its level of challenge (grading down) can help clients complete the activities.



Please refer to the section on ***"Adapting Activities"*** on page 20 for more information.



There are 3 main types of group activities: Physical, Cognitive and Social. Here are some examples for you to select:

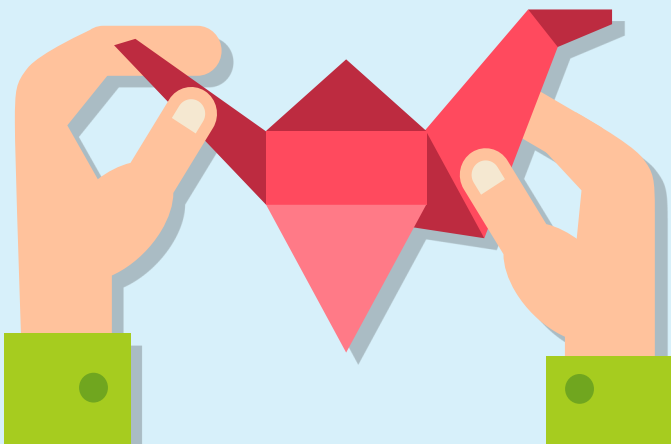
- Games and/or Exercise
- Reminiscence Activity
- Discussion Groups
- Music-related Activity
- Arts and Crafts
- Cooking
- Gardening



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ACCESS THE TOOLKITS.

<https://aic.buzz/aic-wellness>

***Select from a wide range
of activities from the AIC
Wellness Programme
Toolkits!***



3. Prepare the environment

Be mindful that clients may suffer from poor vision or hearing, have difficulties sitting or maintaining balance, experience decreased use of hand functions and other physical conditions. Thus, careful consideration of the environment must be made during the entire planning and implementation process.

Use the following **CHECKLIST** to think through these environmental considerations:

CHECKLIST

Environment	Consider...
 Location	• Indoors or outdoors? • Availability of large or small rooms? Space constraints? • Amount of distraction/Noise level? • Technical requirements (e.g., Projector or Wi-Fi)? • Fits requirements of the activity?
 Type and Positioning of Furniture	• Sufficient space to facilitate wheelchair access and use of mobility aids? • Availability and use of sturdy chairs, tables or lap tables for wheelchair users? • Who sits where? In rows or in a circle?
 Physical Safety	• Adequate lighting? • Temperature? • Space? • Ventilation? • Safe handling of materials, equipment and substances?
 Use of Appropriate Equipment/Materials	• Overall Safety (e.g., Sharp items, skin sensitivity or allergy, usage of gloves)? • Availability? • Cost? • Suitability for individual needs (e.g., Poor grasp, vision limitations)? • Need for adaptive equipment? • Suitable for group setting (e.g., Larger pictures)?

4. Other considerations



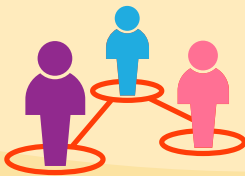
**Number of Facilitators/
Helpers Required**



Language
(e.g., Translation needed?)



Group Size



Roles



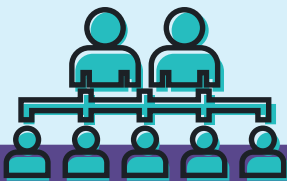
**Time of Day
and Frequency**



**Session
Duration**



**Facilitator/Helper's
Knowledge and Skills**



The ratio of facilitators/helpers to clients depends on the unique needs of the clients and the selected activity. These considerations will help to determine the group size conducive for the activity. For instance, a group activity may require a ratio of at least two facilitators/helpers to five clients for higher care needs. If the clients have more care needs, more assistance may be required.

Finding ways to empower clients is an important aspect of activity planning. Where possible, assign clients to roles in the group – (e.g., Timekeeper or scorekeeper). Such involvement can be part of the activity gradation, providing better ownership and engagement levels in the process.

For more information on how to support senior empowerment, refer to the “Empowering Seniors Resource Kit” by National Council of Social Service.



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<https://go.gov.sg/empoweringseniors>

Alternatively, you can access this e-learning module.



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ACCESS THE LINK.

<https://learningcloud.sg/pages/coursedescription.jsf?courseId=1110271&catalogId=1700&templateId=-1>

5. Organise the session

After thinking through Steps 1 to 4, it is now time to put everything together.

Below is an example of how you can structure your group activity.

Activity: Vegetable Printing

Aims/Goals/Objectives:

1. To create artistic designs using vegetables to make repeated prints
2. To improve gross grasp, fine motor skills and coordination
3. To describe and express verbally about the art pieces

Location: Activity Room (Level 3)

Logistics/Equipment/Materials needed:

Potatoes, Lady's fingers, Newspapers, Art papers, Water-colour paints, Paint brushes, Palettes, Paper towels

Manpower ratio: 2 staff : 5 clients

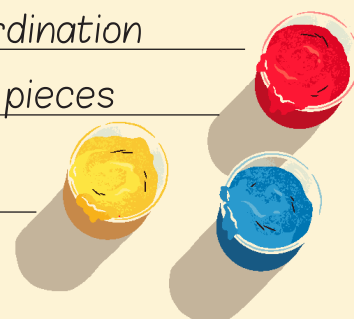
Preparation:

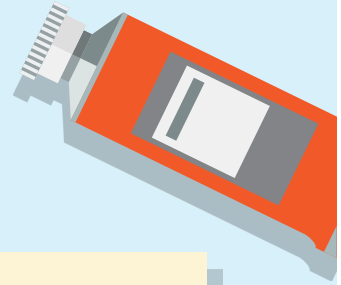
- Cover the work area with newspapers
- Pre-cut the vegetables
- Prepare the paints and test that the consistency will make a good print

Warm-up Activity:

- Invite clients to name the different types of vegetables
- Ask them to share which is their favourite vegetable(s) and why
- Introduce how the vegetables will be used for the activity
- Provide a sample of completed artwork to create interest in the activity and encourage clients to be creative in designing their own artwork

(Refer to **Appendix 5: Activity Plan Template** on page 56)





Main Activity:

- Encourage clients in using the vegetables and water-colour paints to produce printed designs on the art paper

Closing Activity:

- Invite clients to share about their artwork through a “Show and Tell” segment (e.g., What they liked about their work, what it reminds them of)
- Invite them to comment about what they like about one of the other clients’ artwork

Grading (UP) – Making the activity more challenging:

- Create and carve personal designs on potatoes
- Create a simple item using the completed printed artwork (e.g., Making an envelope, book wrap, etc.)

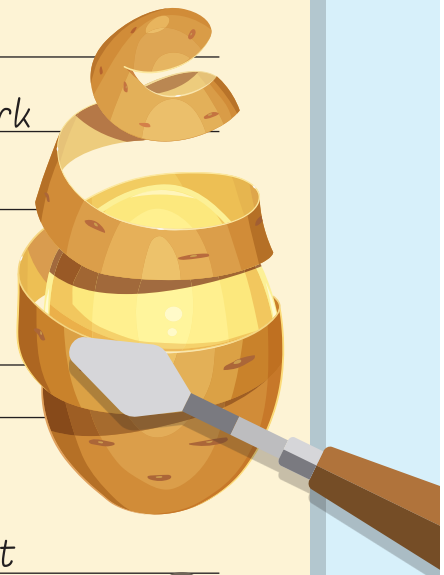
Grading (DOWN) – Making the activity simpler:

- Draw squares on the art paper for clients to print a design in each of the squares

Contingency Plan:

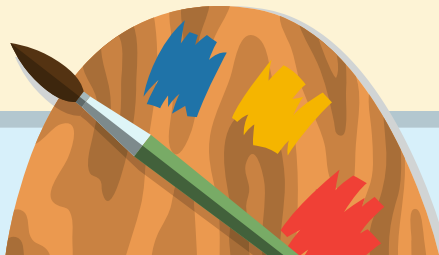
- Invite clients to paint anything they would like on the art paper using the water-colour, they can choose to finger paint or use brushes

(Refer to Appendix 5: Activity Plan Template on page 56)



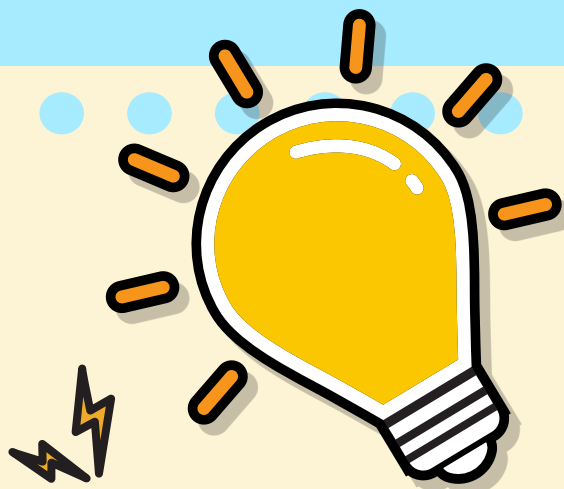
**Now it's your
turn to plan
an activity!**

Give it a try!



Some Helpful Tips:

1. Know your clients and their level of ability in completing the group activity. Drafting out a seating plan before the activity will allow you to allocate co-facilitators/helpers to clients who require more assistance. (Refer to **Appendix 4: Group Information Sheet Template on page 55** to collect information on the clients)
2. Have a trial run of the activity beforehand to familiarise yourself and the co-facilitators with it. This way, you can anticipate areas in which the clients may require more assistance, explore possible solutions and consult fellow colleagues for additional suggestions and inputs.
3. For new facilitators, preparing a script for the activity will help you be clearer and make it easier for clients to follow instructions.
4. Rehearse the instructions and any translations you might need with your colleagues to increase your confidence and gather feedback on how you might improve your presentation and delivery.
5. Always be flexible to support impromptu activities suggested by clients.
6. Do not scold or belittle clients. Focus on what is engaging and enjoyable for them.
7. Enable clients to complete the activity as independently as possible to encourage their sense of ownership in their completed masterpiece.
8. Provide positive encouragement and praise efforts shown by clients to boost their confidence.
9. Create a positive activity experience through verbal cues (e.g., "I like what you're doing" or "I like what you've done with...") and non-verbal cues (e.g., Nodding and smiling).
10. If sessions are held regularly, draft up a standard activity flow/structure so clients know what to expect during the sessions (e.g., Starting each session with a warm-up activity and ending with a round of applause).



Tips on Different Ways of Organising Group Activities



SINGLE SESSION

These are activities that can be completed in one session. They can be conducted on an ad-hoc basis, and may only be done once.

Example

Week 1 Drawing Flowers with Stencils

Week 2 Paper Mache Treasure Box

Week 3 Sewing a Doll

Week 4 Jewellery Making



THEMED SESSIONS

A series of activities focused on specific themes such as festive occasions, birthdays, etc.

Example

Theme: Chinese New Year

Week 1 Making Paper Lanterns

Week 2 Paper Cutting for Chinese New Year

Week 3 Calligraphy

Week 4 Hanging of Decorations



PROJECT

A series of activities to complete a specific objective. It is usually more complex, consisting of many steps/stages.

Example

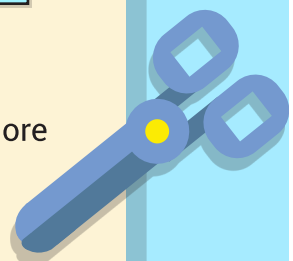
Project: Wall Mural / Quilt Making

Week 1 Outline of design/delegating design and material preparations

Week 2 Painting of light colours/tracing and cutting

Week 3 Painting of dark colours/sewing or gluing

Week 4 Touch-ups/sewing all the pieces together and finishing



DURING

Group Activities

Cole (2017) provides a useful systematic guide on how to conduct group activities. The steps below have been adapted from there.

Step 1: Introduction



<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
☐ Introduction activity to enable clients to get to know each other and decide on a group name	✓ Serves as a simple ice-breaker for clients to make friends and build a sense of belonging within the group
☐ Warm-up activity	✓ Relaxes and prepares clients for the session. It also acts as an introduction to the main activity
☐ Explain the purpose of the activity	✓ Enables clients to know what to expect during the session
☐ Provide a brief outline of the session	
☐ Discuss and agree on group expectations by co-developing group rules for clients to follow	✓ Provides a common understanding of the responsibilities and contributions by clients in the group ✓ Facilitates management of group behaviour



Here's an example of a warm-up activity – “Flower Centrepiece” (found on page 54 of the “Hand in Hand Activity Guide”)



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<https://aic.buzz/hand-in-hand-guide>

As a pre-activity, facilitators may invite clients to name their favourite flower before taking a walk in the garden to look, touch and smell the flowers/plants.

Step 2: Activity

For more information on the planning/preparation process, please refer to **BEFORE Conducting Group Activities** on page 6.

Here are other practical suggestions from Cole (2017) to apply when conducting group activities:



The main activity duration should not be longer than one-third of the total session.



Bear in mind clients' physical and mental abilities.



Present the activity in a systematic/structured way.



Provide simple, clear and direct instructions.



Use language that is appropriate to the level and background of the clients.



Seek regular feedback from clients to check on their understanding of the activity and energy levels.



Adapt the activity whenever necessary (Please refer to the next section on *"Adapting Activities"*).



Adapting Activities

Ways to adapt activities to suit your client's needs

Batch

Break down the activity into small steps and guide clients to carry out the steps in batches/stages, similar to an assembly line approach. This is more suitable for clients with limited abilities who can only do very simple or repetitive steps. Batching is frequently used in activity preparation to simplify certain steps for clients during the activity.

It is not advisable to use this method for the entire activity as clients will not be able to relate to the final object produced as their own.



Prepare

Allocate sufficient time for setting up the space and preparing the materials needed for the session.

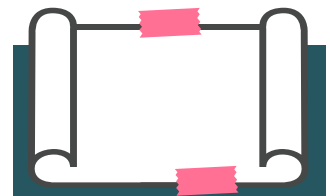
Assist

Guide clients through the process but do not work directly or takeover the whole task/activity. Facilitate the activity to enable and support clients to carry out most of the activity on their own as much as possible.



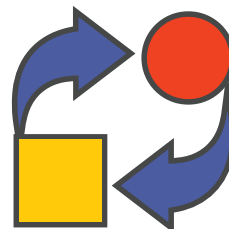
Set-up/Jig

Use a device/materials to set-up the task so that clients will be able to carry it out as independently as possible.



Replace/Substitute/Modify

Use different materials to make the activity more suitable for clients.



Time

Provide sufficient time for clients to complete the task.



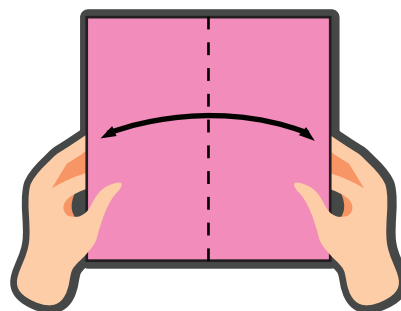
Grade Up/Down

Increase or decrease the level of challenge.



Instruct/Demonstrate/Repeat

Provide frequent cues, prompts or encouragement. Demonstrate as frequently as necessary without taking over the task/activity. Repeating a task is similar to batching as it enables clients with limited ability to concentrate on a small portion of the task and increase their sense of competency through repetition. Practise makes perfect!



Safety

Take note when there is a possibility of harm or injury to the client.

Be mindful that clients with cognitive limitations may fail to recognise objects appropriately and attempt to consume them. Similarly, alternating activities such as sucking up paint with a straw before blowing the paint on a sheet of paper may be confusing to clients who have coordination issues. For safety, edible materials should be used whenever possible, such as using coffee instead of paint. Alternatively, adopting a different approach to the activity should be considered, such as using a spray bottle instead of blowing paint through a straw.



Caution

Application Example (Art Activity):

Batch

- Set up an activity assembly line and invite clients who face the most challenges to work on the easier tasks
- Execute the tasks one at a time



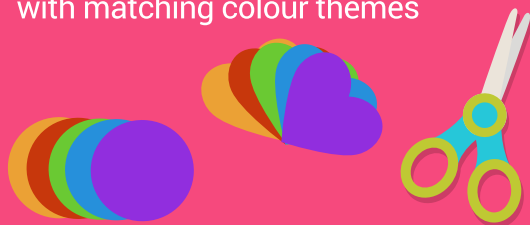
Assist

- Hold the material down while the client glues it
- Cut the material while the client holds it down
- Guide or steady the client's hand when necessary



Prepare

- Pre-cut items for clients to select from
- If required, provide materials in sets with matching colour themes



Replace/Substitute/Modify

- Tear instead of cutting the materials
- Squeeze glue into a bowl and use a thin brush to dip into the glue for application



Set-up/Jig

- Use masking tape/non-slip mat to stick down paper/pictures/fabric to prevent the project from moving
- Use clipboards/jigs to hold the project down
- Use blue tack at the end of a chopstick/pencil/toothpick to pick up small objects



Time

- In the event of time constraints, use other strategies to shorten the time required for clients to complete the project
- Allocate time for clients to complete the activity steps on their own



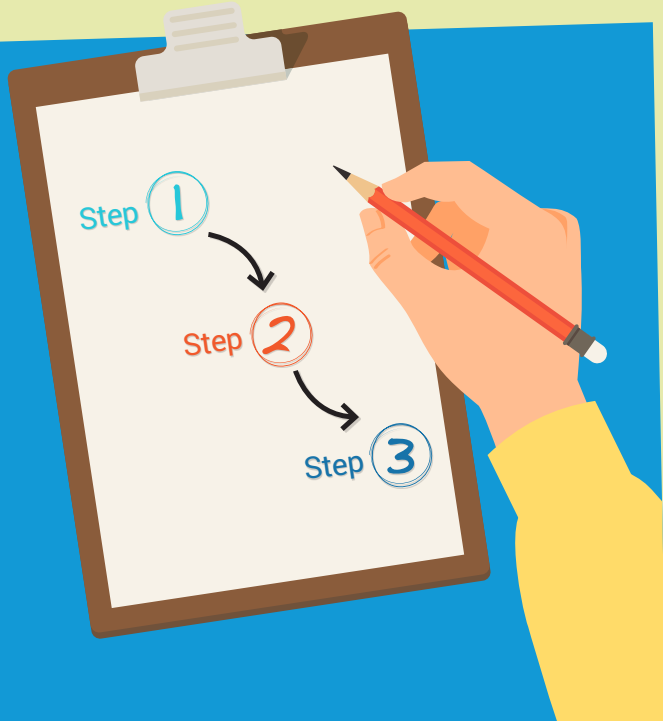
Grade Up/Down

- Use larger/smaller pictures or letters/templates to vary the level of difficulty of the activity, depending on your client's abilities
- Use larger/smaller or built-up tools (wrap ordinary items with sponge and glue or tie them in place to make them easier to hold/grip)



Instruct/Demonstrate/Repeat

- Provide instructions with written steps/in picture format to show the sequence of the tasks
- Give clear instructions before commencing each step
- Demonstrate the activity and invite clients to repeat it. Show one to two steps at a time
- Display a sample or different samples of the finished product as reference and motivation for clients
- Allow for repetitive actions within a step (e.g., Gluing buttons to fill up a pattern)



Step 3: Sharing

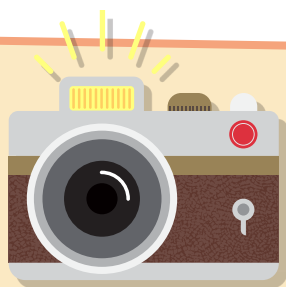


It is beneficial to include a sharing session after the activity as it enables clients to provide their thoughts and build social bonds within the group. There are various ways to facilitate the sharing sessions and it will vary depending on the activity conducted. Examples include a “Show and Tell” (sharing of the client’s experience/item from the activity) or a demonstration of some of the techniques used during the activity.

Although sharing is encouraged, facilitators should check in advance about their clients’ comfort level regarding this. Those that are unwilling to share could be given a different role during the sharing sessions (e.g., Timekeeper). If sharing is slow at the start, the facilitator can begin first or they can acknowledge the contributions/efforts of a specific client and invite them to respond.

***Remember to
acknowledge
every client’s
contribution!***

Show Appreciation



Here’s an example of what you can include in a sharing session after an activity – “Photographing the Every Day” (From page 49 of the “SPARKS! Art for Wellness Toolkit”)



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TOOLKIT.

<https://aic.buzz/sparks-toolkit>

Discuss:

- Invite clients to share about their experience and what they enjoyed about the activity.
- Encourage clients to share how they felt when they were taking photographs of objects and/or their fellow clients/facilitators.
- Ask clients to share the tips they had learnt on how to take a good photograph.

Some points to note to maximise sharing time:

- 1** If clients are easily distracted, invite them to clear the workspace of leftover materials before beginning the sharing/discussion segment.
- 2** It may be necessary for clients to temporarily stop the activity and move on to the sharing segment. If so, invite them to continue the activity on their own after the sharing or provide them time to complete the activity during the next session. Invite clients to label their unfinished artwork before keeping it for completion at the next session.



Step 4: Summary

Allocate about five minutes to conclude the group session.

The time can be spent providing a session recap - what was done, experiences of the activity, what was enjoyed etc. Thank all clients and encourage them to provide feedback before sharing more about the next session.

In the event that the sessions are coming to an end or will have a temporary break, be sure to inform clients a few sessions beforehand and remind them again during subsequent sessions.

Provide a session recap and thank the clients.

Always end the group session on time.



Group Facilitation

It should always be the facilitator's aim to enable clients to take part meaningfully in group activities. Motivate the group and guide clients to reach their maximum potential. The group facilitator plays a vital role in helping to achieve these goals.

Here are some general facilitation techniques that group facilitators can adopt to optimise purposeful engagement. For specific techniques to enable clients with specific physical and cognitive limitations, refer to **Appendix 1: Working with Clients with Physical Limitations** on page 37 / **Appendix 2: Working with Clients with Cognitive Limitations** on page 42.

Communicate to Encourage Enthusiasm

E.g.,

- Smile and speak in a lively tone
- Talk to clients individually
- Use rewards appropriately



Involve Clients in Different Roles

E.g.,

- Lead in certain portions of the activity
- Help another client in the group



Use fun and meaningful activities to engage clients!

Ensure Clients Feel Supported

E.g.,

- Meet clients' needs
- Enable communication and self-expression
- Create a support group



Create Settings for Interactions

E.g.,

- Use pair work
- Work in small circles or around a table



Encourage Communication and Involvement

E.g.,

- Ask open-ended questions
- Ask for contributions/feedback



Ensure Clients are Equipped to Perform and Achieve

E.g.,

- Provide clear instructions and guidance
- Supply adequate and appropriate equipment
- Provide feedback



Group Management

Having a range of clients in a group may require managing a range of responsive behaviours. For instance, clients may display low motivation, disinterest, passive participation, disruptive and attention-seeking behaviours. Conflicts may also occur in the group. All these can affect the success and effectiveness of group sessions.



APPROACHES TO MANAGE GROUP BEHAVIOUR

#1 ANALYSE THE CAUSE BEHIND THE BEHAVIOUR

There are different reasons why a client may display responsive behaviours. Some of them include:

- Medical conditions (e.g., Persons living with dementia may display symptoms of restlessness and have short attention spans)
- Unmet needs (e.g., Client feels frustrated as they are unable to perform the task)
- Lack of interest (e.g., Client is not keen to engage in the particular activity)
- Lack of interpersonal skills (e.g., Client has social interaction skills which need development)
- Personality style (e.g., Client does not like to be told what to do)

Understanding the underlying cause will enable facilitators to better address the client and make sound decisions to manage the behaviour. Revisiting the examples above, facilitators can consider the following potential strategies:



Client who has symptoms of restlessness and short attention span

May be more suited to one-to-one activities. Session length should be kept short.



Client who faces difficulties with the task/activity

Grade down the activity or provide appropriate assistance (hands-on assistance or adapted equipment).



Client who is disinterested

Engage them through placement in another group activity of their choice.

#2 ANALYSE THE GROUP INTERACTIONS

Group arrangements can affect clients' engagement level. Some factors include:

- Group size (e.g., Groups that are too large may result in some clients feeling left out)
- Personality types (e.g., Clients are quiet or introverted)
- Interaction level (e.g., Clients interact only with the facilitator and not with each other)
- Facilitators (e.g., Volunteers providing too much/too little guidance)

Revisiting the examples above, facilitators can consider the following strategies:



Group Size

Consider the appropriate group size for the activity. Group size will also be dependent on the manpower required to meaningfully carry out the activity. Planning will need to include assigning co-facilitators to clients who may require more assistance.



Personality Types and Interaction Level

Think about the clients' personalities as part of the planning and group selection to ensure better group dynamics.



Facilitators

Assign clients in a group activity of their choice and communicate with them to check on their comfort level and amount of assistance required or preferred.

SOME PRACTICAL TIPS TO HANDLE RESPONSIVE BEHAVIOURS DURING GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Remain calm and composed.
2. Seek to understand the reason behind clients' behaviours (e.g., Task may be too easy/difficult) and address the issue.
3. Assign a co-facilitator to engage disinterested/restless clients in a one-to-one activity or provide assistance to a client who needs more attention so that the main activity can continue uninterrupted.



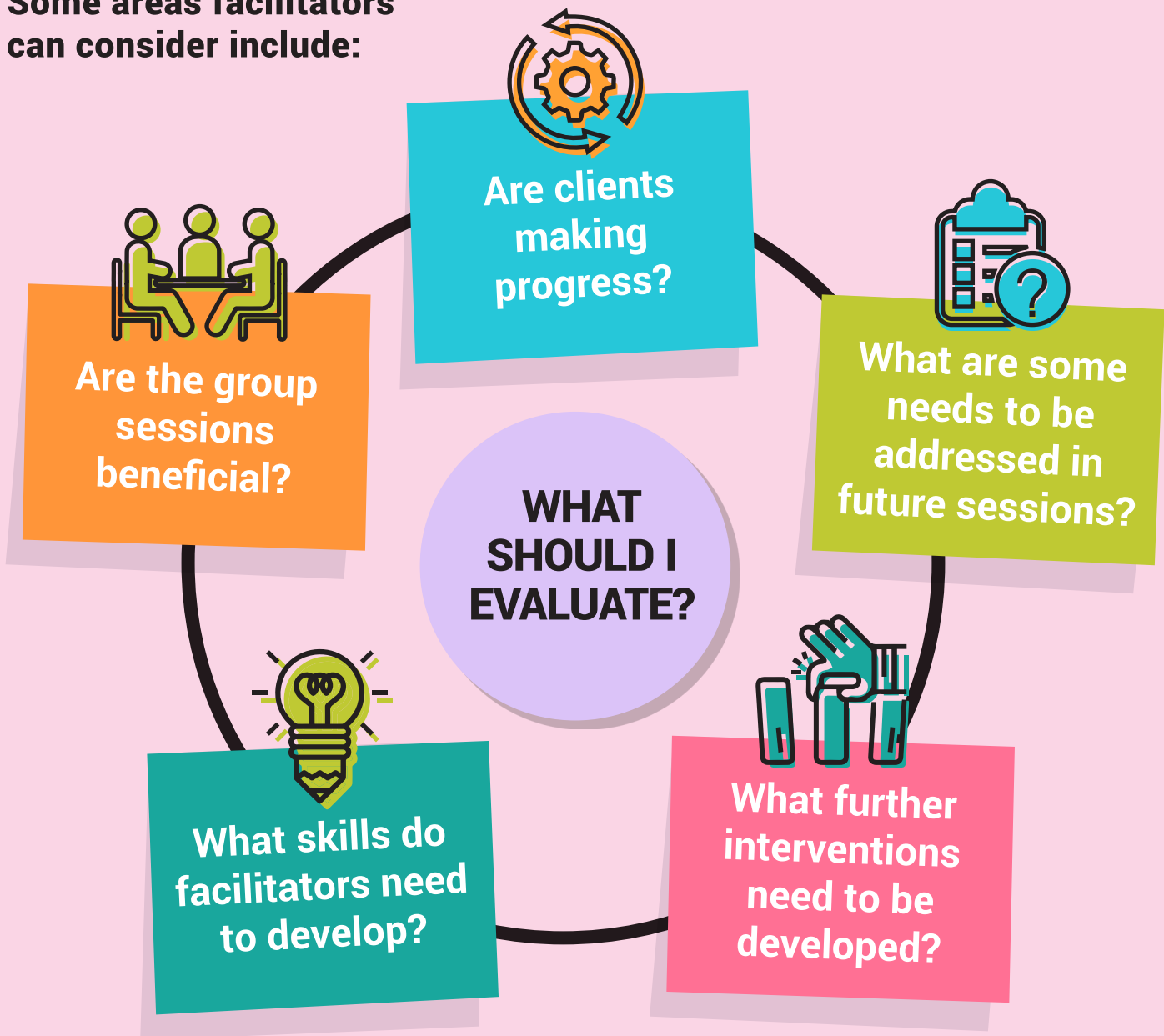
AFTER

Group Activities

Evaluation of Group Activities

Evaluations are essential as they provide important feedback to improve future activity sessions. Evaluations can be done in a group or individually.

Some areas facilitators can consider include:



Evaluations can be activity-specific or client-specific. Some guided questions that facilitators can consider include:

ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

- Does it meet the aim of the session?
- Is the activity suitable?
- Is the location conducive?
- Are the materials used appropriate?

CLIENT-SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

1. Interest/Engagement

- Was the client interested in the activity?
- Was the client focused throughout the activity or easily distracted?
- Did the client need frequent cues to stay focused on the activity?



2. Communication

- Did the client interact with the facilitator and other group members?
- Was the client quiet most of the time?
- Did the client respond when spoken to?

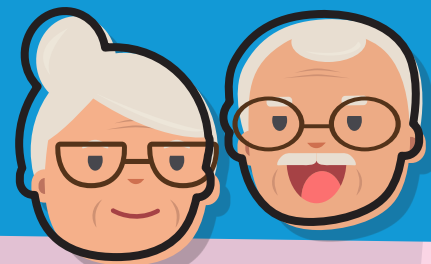


3. Enjoyment

- Did the client enjoy the session?
- Did the client enjoy doing the activity?
- Was the client satisfied with the group session?

4. Mood

- Was the client happy and relaxed?
- Was the client calm or anxious?
- Did the client look sad or withdrawn?



5. Activity-Specific

- How did the client find the activity? (e.g., Was it achievable? Was it challenging?)
- Which part of the activity was difficult for the client?
- Which part of the activity was easy for the client?
- Did you change anything in the activity? If yes, what did you change and did it help?
- What can be done better next time?



As you record your observations, think about the aspects that worked well and note them down. Think about the aspects that can be done better next time. Keep refining the activity until it runs smoothly for your clients!

How Should I Evaluate the Activity?



EVALUATIONS CAN BE:

OBJECTIVE

For example, measuring achievement/performance/skills against set objectives.

SUBJECTIVE

For example, a discussion of clients' feelings about their progress, making observations or collecting feedback through structured questionnaires.

STEP 1: BEGIN BY CHOOSING AN EVALUATION APPROACH

This can be through:

- Using standardised scales (e.g., Engagement)
- Group/individual observations (Refer to **Appendix 6: Individual Progress Report Template on page 57 / Appendix 7: Group Activity Record Template on page 58**)
- Group feedback
- Product/outcome evaluation

STEP 2: RECORD THE FINDINGS FROM STEP 1 IN THE FORMAT BELOW

Different methods of recording the findings can be used depending on whether it is a group or an individual activity.

For a Group Activity

Findings can be recorded on the scale/specifically designed form (Refer to **Appendix 6: Individual Progress Report Template on page 57 / Appendix 7: Group Activity Record Template on page 58**) or you can provide a general summary in areas such as:

- Group attendance
- Group session goals
- Activity
- Comments (both positive and negative)
- Areas done well
- Areas for further development

For an Individual Activity

Individual progress, on the other hand, should be based on set objectives/goals. This can be documented separately on the client's progress notes. You can find different ways of recording evaluations on the next few pages.



INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS REPORT (TEMPLATE ON PAGE 57)

SAMPLE

Activity: Gardening Activity

EVALUATION SHEET

1. Client indicated interest to engage in routine care of plants as leisure activity	2. Client was able to participate in the entire activity with/ without assistance	3. Client was able to participate in parts of the activity with/ without assistance.	Remarks
Client's name: Mr. ABC	✓	✓	Client required use of adaptive equipment to perform task.
Client's name: Mr. XYZ	✓	✓	Client was able to complete only the first half of the activity with hand guidance.

SAMPLE

Facilitator's Name: Teo Ah Li

Time: 3-4pm

Engagement: 1 = Not doing, 3 = Can do with help, 5 = Can do without help
Communication: 1 = Little or no communication, 3 = Some response, 5 = Communicates with others
Mood: 1 = Low mood, depressed or anxious, 3 = Some signs of good mood, 5 = Looks happy & relaxed

Comments: The members found step 1 difficult to follow. Improvement steps to consider for next time can be (1) give the client 3 instead of 5 choices, (2) prepare 2 sets of 3 colours each and ask them to choose one, and (3) prepare by tracing out on plastic bags first.



Appendices

APPENDIX 1: WORKING WITH CLIENTS WITH PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Physical limitations can impact clients' involvement in activities. Consider the underlying causes of the limitations and any associated concerns that need to be addressed. For instance, clients with Parkinson's Disease are likely to experience tremors and be slow in their movements.

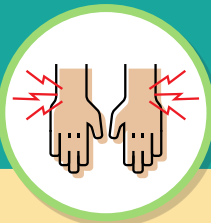
Conditions such as osteoarthritis, hip fractures, spinal deformities and amputations, can affect clients' mobility and ability to perform tasks.



Consider the following:



A person with decreased range of motion in his/her fingers due to arthritis may have difficulties holding slim paintbrushes or opening lids of paint bottles/containers.



A person with decreased hand strength may have difficulty holding materials and small items.



A person with poor sitting posture due to weak trunk muscles may have difficulties maintaining an upright sitting posture, which impacts his/her ability to reach for items placed on the table/workspace.

Gaining a better understanding of clients' functional conditions enables sound decision-making to match them to appropriate activities during the planning/preparation stages. Facilitators can assist clients more effectively during the activity session to achieve set objectives.



Specific Impairments

Visual Impairment

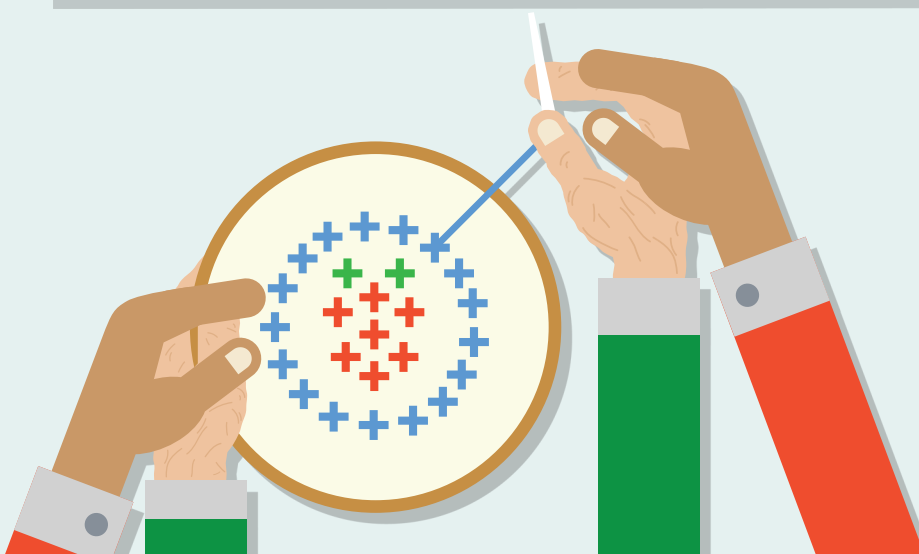
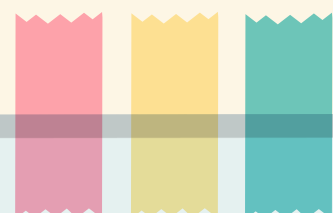
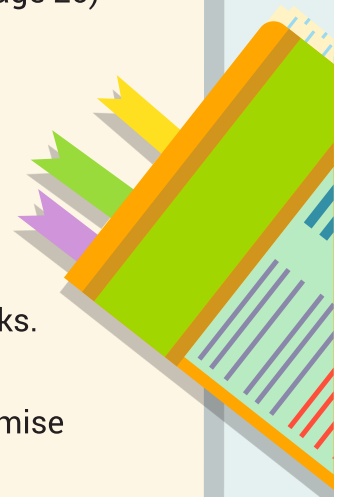
- Always approach the client from the front, not from the side
- Sit within the client's field of vision
- Remind the client to wear his/her spectacles, if applicable
- Place materials/objects near the client
- Ensure that the activity space is brightly lit, while avoiding the glare/reflection from floors/windows
- Use brightly coloured materials with contrasting backgrounds to help clients differentiate the materials
- Use large prints and items and provide a magnifying glass, if needed
- Darken/thicken outlines of patterns
- Give clear verbal instructions and avoid using hand gestures or facial expressions
- Provide hand-over-hand guidance to assist the client to perform tasks, if required

Hearing Impairment

- Sit close to the client and on the side where he/she can hear best
- Remind the client to wear his/her hearing aid, if applicable
- Face the client and maintain eye contact when talking
- Speak slowly and clearly in a lower-pitched voice, if possible
- Ask one question at a time
- Be patient in waiting for the client to reply
- Use body movement and hand gestures to supplement your speech
- Use visual aids, such as instructions in pictorial/written form
- Include the client in smaller group activities
- Minimise noise from the background and surrounding areas

Physical Impairment

- Use suitably adapted equipment, such as card holders, built-up spoons, adapted scissors and brushes with larger grips
- Simplify the activity or involve the client in performing parts of the task instead of the full activity (Batch approach – refer to the section on Adapting Activity on page 20)
- Assist a client to perform a task whenever necessary, such as providing hand-over-hand guidance
- Place supplies within reach
- Position the client in a stable upright sitting position
- Use pillows or footstools to enhance the clients' sitting comfort
- Ensure that table tops are at an appropriate height for clients to work on tasks. Height-adjustable tables may be helpful
- Attempt to be at eye-level when working with clients on wheelchairs, to minimise them having to keep looking up, which can be tiring



WORKING WITH CLIENTS WITH SPEECH/LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

In addition to physical impairments, stroke survivors may have language-related impairments, such as aphasia, which affect their understanding and production of speech, as well as their ability to read or write. Given that the impairment differs in severity, it is best to check with their doctor, speech therapist or main caregiver to understand how best you can communicate with them.

Here are some tips when working with people with speech and language difficulties:

- **Speak simply, clearly and slowly.** Pause to check their understanding. Take note of the client's facial expressions and body language during the session. Is the client able to follow the activity? Adjust the activity accordingly or change it to suit them better.
- Use **different ways** to communicate with the client, such as through writing, pictures or hand-over-hand guidance.
- Ascertain if they may benefit from **one-to-one sessions** over a group setting.
- **Be patient** and speak respectfully.

While it will be difficult for this Guide to address the wide range of limitations that may impact clients, one solution would be the careful selection and matching of clients to activities (For more information, refer to "BEFORE Conducting Group Activities on page 6). Do also consider the following three principles to aid your activity session:

#1

Group activities for clients with physical impairments can extend beyond physical goals to serve psychosocial or support purposes.

Case Study

Mr Lim is cognitively alert and enjoys helping people. However, he suffers from hand tremors that limit his ability to perform fine movements, which sometimes leaves him feeling demoralised and not of use to others.

Activity

Modified Taichi

Goals

1. Mr Lim will be able to maintain gross range of motion exercises with bilateral upper limb independently in sitting. (Physical goal)
2. Mr Lim can contribute as group co-lead by demonstrating movements for other clients to follow. (Psychosocial goal)



#2

Breakdown the activity into parts and consider what functions are required to accomplish each part. Adapt the activity or parts of the activity to accommodate clients' abilities.

*Case Study***Activity**

Designing and Painting Paper Cups

**Goals**

Mdm Nora needs to paint paper cups using oil-based/acrylic/spray/non-toxic paint. She has difficulties holding a paintbrush due to her hand tremors.

Grading down the activity for Mdm Nora would include options for her to do finger or sponge painting.



#3

Use of adaptive equipment may be required to assist clients with physical limitations to perform tasks. Considerations can also be made to modify equipment or materials to accommodate the clients' abilities.

*Examples:***Activity**

Bingo

Clients with vision limitations may need bingo cards with large numbering.

**Activity**

Painting

Roll and tie a hand towel over a paintbrush for clients with poorer hand grasp.

Activity

Ball Game

Using a balloon, instead of a ball, slows down the pace of the game, enabling more clients to participate.



APPENDIX 2:
WORKING WITH CLIENTS WITH COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Conditions such as stroke or dementia can affect a person’s mental function; impacting his/her understanding and information processing. Clients with cognitive challenges may have difficulties understanding complex instructions and take a longer time to respond.

Here are some tips and suggested activities you can consider when working with such clients:

Clients with...	Types of Activities	Level of Assistance Required
 Mild cognitive challenges	Wide array of activities involving the attainment of a specific goal (e.g., Sports, games, social activities and household tasks).	Clients are able to work towards the specific goal independently with minimal verbal, physical and visual cues. They may need occasional verbal prompts to guide them in the completion of their work.
 Moderate cognitive challenges	Activities with simplified steps (e.g., Watering plants, sweeping, mopping, throwing and catching of ball, matching/ sorting activities and reminiscence-based activities).	Clients are able to follow one to two step instructions with moderate physical, verbal and visual cues. Keep your instructions short and simple to facilitate their understanding. Offer step-by-step instructions with demonstrations. Repeat your instructions, if necessary. Be mindful of safety concerns, as clients are likely to have decreased safety awareness.
 Severe cognitive challenges	Sensory stimulating activities targeting the five senses - touch, taste, hearing, sight and smell (e.g., Hitting a balloon, listening to music and providing them with a hand massage).	Clients may need hand-over-hand assistance to participate. They may also be minimally communicative or non-communicative. Look out for positive signs of engagement such as eye contact, relaxed posture and expression through smiles/laughter.

✓ CLIENT SELECTION

Consider if the client will be well engaged in a group setting. Not all clients with cognitive limitations may be suitable for group activities.

Group activities may be
LESS
suitable if the client:



Is aggressive or violent

Is disruptive to the group

Feels threatened when
placed in a group setting

Has limited ability to
relate to others

Has little motivation to
engage in group work



Group activities may be
MORE
suitable if the client:



Feels isolated and needs
social support

Feels threatened and
confronted in a one-to-one
setting

Has the ability to interact
and share with others

Has difficulties related
to social interaction and
relationships



** When in doubt, discuss with your facility's occupational therapist.

✓ COMMUNICATION



Before you communicate:

- ✓ Ensure you have the client's attention before speaking to him/her
- ✓ Maintain eye contact
- ✓ Help keep your client focused by using non-verbal cues (e.g., Holding their hand)

When you communicate:

- ✓ Speak clearly
- ✓ Keep your sentences simple and short
- ✓ Use a friendly and caring tone
- ✓ Use a lower-pitched voice
- ✓ Use positive facial expressions, tone of voice and appropriate physical touch to convey your message



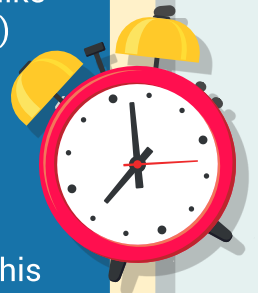


When you respond:

- ✓ Put the person at ease
- ✓ Give the client time to think and respond
- ✓ Provide plenty of reassurance and encouragement
- ✓ Listen to your client and observe his/her non-verbal cues and body language (what he/she is saying may not convey his/her true intentions or feelings)
- ✓ Always anticipate the client's needs (physical, social, emotional) – observe and attend to these needs (e.g., Distress, anxiety)
- ✓ Be open to the client's concerns - even if they are hard to understand
- ✓ Acknowledge the client's emotions and their 'reality' – what they perceive is real to them

When you engage:

- ✓ Ask simple close-ended questions (e.g., Would you like to take part in this activity?)
- ✓ Ask one question at a time
- ✓ Provide the client with two choices – "Would you like this or that?"
- ✓ Break activities down into sequential steps
- ✓ Give verbal cues and prompts or assist, when necessary
- ✓ Encourage the client to engage in an activity by asking them for help rather than just telling them to complete a task (e.g., "I need some help to do this. Would you like to help me?")
- ✓ Do not merely focus on the activity and forget the client. Remember that the client's experiences while doing the activity are more important



Consider it a success if the client can stay interested in the activity for 15 minutes!!



WORKING WITH CLIENTS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

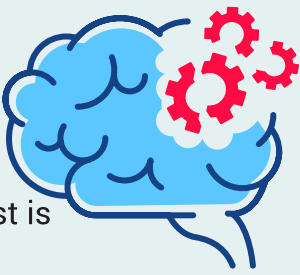
Here are some tips and suggested activities when engaging with clients living with dementia:

Person-centred care:

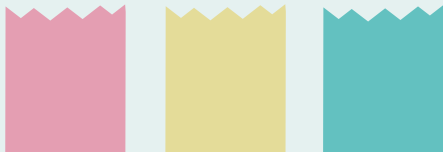
Providing care to and placing the needs of the person living with dementia first is known as person-centred care.

Treating the person with dignity and respect by seeking to understand their history, lifestyle, culture and preferences (likes and dislikes), enables you to see the world through their lens.

When it is not possible to get information directly from the client, seek to understand them by asking their family members/carers. Their knowledge and understanding of the person living with dementia will be extremely valuable as you develop and facilitate suitable activities for them.



Tips	Guiding Questions
Learn their life story	- What is their personality like? - What activities/hobbies did they enjoy in the past and currently? - What activities do they dislike? - What was their job in their younger days? - Are there places/objects that hold significant memories for them?
Understand their abilities, elicit/observe their responses	- Are there any physical or cognitive challenges that can hinder their participation? (e.g., Visual/hearing impairments, usage of a wheelchair or walking aid, poor memory and shortened attention span) - If it is not possible to elicit feedback directly, observe them. Were they enjoying social interaction (e.g., Smiling, appropriate eye contact with the facilitator and initiation to start the conversation) and helping out in the activity?



Activity-based approach:

- Focus on the enjoyment of the activity, instead of achievement or accuracy.
- Encourage involvement in daily life activities, hobbies and interests.
- Consider the set-up of the activity: Is it too difficult or too easy? It is important to set your activities at the “right” level of challenge. How can you grade the activity by making adaptations to the materials used to make it easier or more difficult for clients?



Clients living with dementia may be sensitive to the time of day in which activities takes place. Some may experience more confusion/agitation in the late afternoons. Clients tend to be rested and fresh in the mornings, which makes it a better time for activities.

Tip Sheet

Communicating with Clients Living with Dementia

- ✓ Be accepting of the client's responses. There is no right or wrong.
- ✓ Be aware of their body language and facial expressions to respond appropriately.
- ✓ Do not criticise or patronise the client.
- ✓ Encourage self-expression.
- ✓ Involve the person through conversation.



Tips for a Conducive Environment when Engaging with Clients Living with Dementia:

Please refer to “**BEFORE Conducting Group Activities**” on page 10 for a checklist of considerations for creating a conducive environment for the activity.

APPENDIX 3: FACILITATING ACTIVITIES VIRTUALLY

The same strategies for facilitating a group activity as covered in the earlier pages also apply here. Whether you have an invited external presenter or you are running the session as the lead facilitator, check out these additional tips to ensure a smooth online facilitation of the activity.

What to do BEFORE the virtual engagement?

- Ensure that the participants (staff/clients) have the required items for a virtual engagement. These include Wi-Fi/data connection, sufficient number of tablets/ computers and other technical equipment (e.g., Projector, speakers, if required) and knowledge on how to use the virtual platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Teams).

If necessary, set a time one or two days before the engagement to familiarise everyone with the functions or send step-by-step instructions to guide clients on the basic functions before the actual virtual engagement. Remember to test your tablet/ computer audio function.

- Be sure to include the following in your email to all clients:
 - Items required for the virtual engagement. This comprises both the technical setup (e.g., Wi-Fi/ data connection, laptop with camera, speakers, virtual platform such as Zoom) and materials required for the session (e.g., Art supplies).
 - Session plan which factors in time for breaks, a Question & Answer segment and clients' feedback.



- Virtual platform link details (e.g., Zoom meeting room and password).
- Your contact number for clients to get in touch with you, should they encounter any issues.
- A list of good virtual engagement practices for clients who are new to virtual engagements:
 - Remind them to mute themselves when the facilitator/presenter is speaking.
 - Turn on their tablet/computer camera for activity monitoring, safety concerns (such as during exercise sessions) and social interaction during the session. Remind clients to find a conducive space or use a virtual background, if preferred.
 - Use the chat function to 'raise' questions during the session or to seek assistance.
 - Test their audio function before discussion, Question and Answer and feedback segments.
- Set aside time, at least 15 minutes for a simple setup, to ensure that your technical equipment is ready for the session.
- Limit the number of clients in a group, depending on the nature of the activity, to ensure sufficient attention accorded and to facilitate smooth social interaction and participation.



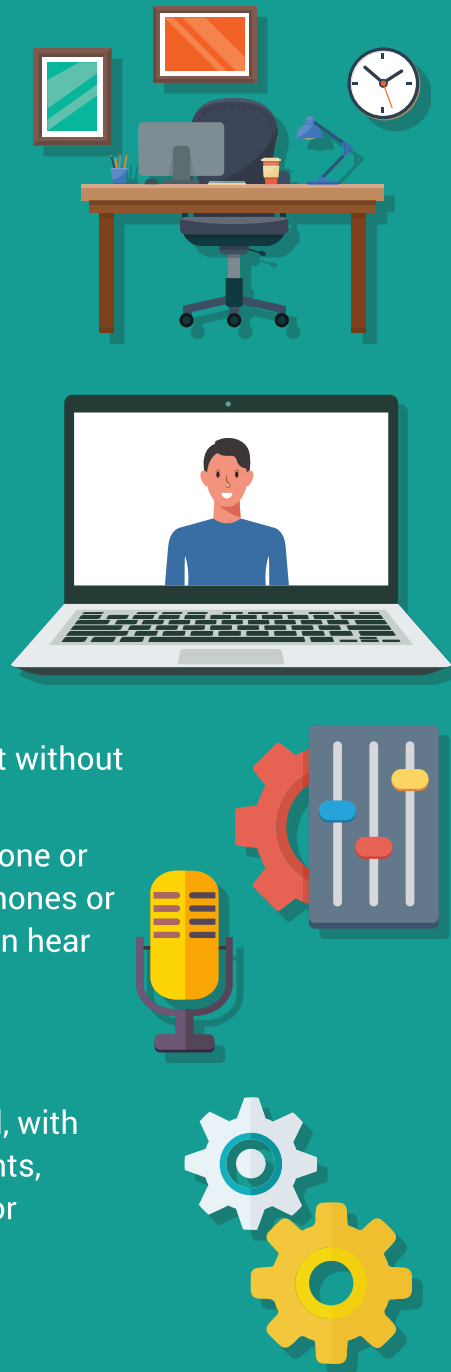
TIP:

As a general guide, the lesser interaction and assistance your clients need, the larger the group size you can have for the virtual engagement. It is best to have one tablet/computer for each client, but a large computer screen can accommodate up to three clients. Review the availability of equipment, while considering clients' preferences and needs.

Ideally, at least two facilitators should work together to attend to the needs of the clients during the session.

Technical Aspects

- Check your video settings
 - Lighting: Have a large light source either directly in front of you (e.g., Monitor) or no more than 45 degrees away. Where possible, use natural light.
 - Background: Have a background that is clear and uncluttered so clients can see you clearly without any distractions. If required, use a simple/plain virtual background.
 - Framing: Ensure that you are centred in the frame. Your tablet/computer should not be too low or too high, with the camera ideally at your eye level. Prop your tablet/computer higher with books, if required.
 - Preview: Many virtual platforms have preview options, allowing you to check and adjust your camera angle before the actual session.
- Check your audio settings:
 - Location: Find a quiet and conducive environment without background noise or distractions.
 - Microphone: You can use your computer microphone or buy external microphones including lapel microphones or those linked to headphones to ensure that you can hear and be heard clearly.
- Other technical matters:
 - Ensure that your technical items are fully charged, with contingency items like spare extension cords, lights, computers/tablets, microphones and data card for internet connection on standby.



What to do DURING the activity?

Here are two possible scenarios:

Scenario A: You are facilitating the session with an external presenter conducting the activity

1. Start the session 15-20 minutes earlier to admit clients into the virtual platform.

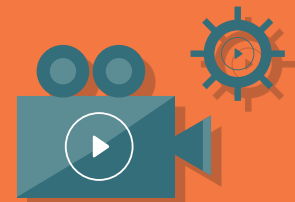


2. Check that all clients are able to see and hear you clearly and vice versa. It is helpful to have another team member assist you in managing technical issues, if you are required to facilitate the session. Invite clients to turn on their videos, test their audio and then mute themselves.

3. Start the session by providing a short introduction of the external presenter. Invite the presenter to introduce himself/ herself.



4. Encourage clients (with their videos on) to give a short self-introduction.



5. Provide a recap of the programme for the day, including showing an end-product (if appropriate), break times, basic rules and instructions on how the session will be conducted (e.g., How to ask questions through the 'raising hands' function, chat or via microphone, safety precautions that they may need to take note of).

- 6.** Be the timekeeper for the external presenter.



- 8.** Monitor the chat window for questions or requests for assistance by clients. Ensure that all clients have completed the necessary steps for the activity before proceeding to the next one.



TIP:

Some virtual platforms offer “breakout” rooms, which allow you to break the group into smaller sub-groups for closer interaction and monitoring. Explore the functions of the virtual platform you are using to see how best you can customise and bring the experience “closer” to the clients.

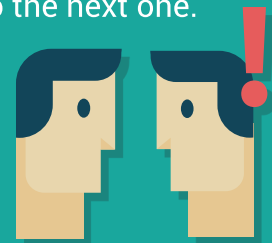


- 7.** If the external presenter speaks or goes through the steps too quickly, use the chat function to alert them to slow down.

Check regularly that all clients are clear and able to follow instructions smoothly. Create a safe space for clients to reach out if they need assistance.



- 9.** Look out for the needs of the clients, and make sure that all the clients are able to complete the necessary steps for the activity before proceeding to the next one.



Scenario B: You are conducting the activity

1. Start the session 15-20 minutes earlier to admit clients into the virtual platform.
2. Check that all clients are able to see and hear you clearly and vice versa. It is helpful to have another team member assist you in managing technical issues. Invite clients to turn on their videos, test their audio and then mute themselves.
3. Start the session with a short self-introduction.
4. Encourage clients (with their videos on) to give a short self-introduction.
5. Provide a recap of the programme for the day, including showing an end product (if appropriate), break times, basic rules and the overall structure of the session.
6. Speak in short and clear sentences.
7. Check regularly that all clients are clear and able to follow instructions smoothly.
8. Monitor the chat window for questions or requests for assistance by clients.
9. Be mindful of the time to ensure that you keep to the schedule.
10. Ensure that all clients have completed the necessary steps for the activity before proceeding to the next one.



TIP:

Be creative and include an ice-breaker/warm-up game related to the main activity to get clients ready for the session or find out more about them through the game.

Example: If the main activity is an exercise, start the session with an ice-breaker to ask clients about their favourite sport in their younger days, and use some of those actions in the activity.



What to do AFTER the activity?

- Provide time for clients to share and give feedback about the activity. Refer to “AFTER Group Activities” on page 30 for more information on conducting an after-event evaluation of the activity.



- Thank the external presenter (if the activity was conducted by an external presenter) and all the clients for their time.

- Seek feedback from clients on any difficulties faced using the virtual platform for the activity. Adjust and refine your next session accordingly.



APPENDIX 4 : GROUP INFORMATION SHEET TEMPLATE (Edit the fields as required)

No.	Client's Name	Gender	Age	Race	Language Spoken	Marital Status	No. of Children/	Family Status	Religion	Education	Favourite Childhood Memory	Any Groups, Societies or Clubs that they used to be a member of	Address/Area they grew up in	Previous Occupation	Specific Care Requirements (e.g., Sensory/cognitive)	Any Physical Limitation (e.g., Left neglect, visual impairment etc.)	Dietary Limitation (e.g., Blended diet or low sugar diet)	Group Dynamics (Any issues with other clients in the activity group)	Sensitive Topics to Avoid
1																			
2																			
3																			
4																			
5																			
6																			
7																			
8																			
9																			
10																			

(Reference: Taken from Hand in Hand Activity Guide, Page. 10, Agency for Integrated Care)

APPENDIX 5: ACTIVITY PLAN TEMPLATE (Edit the fields as required)

Activity: _____

Aims/Goals/Objectives:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Location: _____

Logistics/Equipment/Materials needed:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Manpower ratio:

Preparation:

Please refer to page 12 for reference.

Warm-up Activity:

Main Activity:

Closing Activity:

Grade (UP) – Making the activity more challenging:

Grade (DOWN) – Making the activity simpler:

Contingency Plan:

APPENDIX 6: INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS REPORT TEMPLATE (Edit the fields as required)

Date of Activity: _____ Group Session: _____ Time: _____ Facilitator's Name: _____

Activity:			
EVALUATION SHEET			
1. Evaluation Criteria 1/ Observation 1	2. Evaluation Criteria 2/ Observation 2	3. Evaluation Criteria 3/ Observation 3	Remarks
Client's Name:			
Client's Name:			

(Edit the fields as required)

Facilitator's Name: _____

[illegible]

Interest: 1 = No interest, 3 = Some interest, 5 = Very interested

Enjoyment: 1 = Does not enjoy, 3 = Enjoys some, 5 = Enjoys very much

Score 2 or 4 if client response falls in between 1 & 3 or 4 & 5.

Comments:

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The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) aims to create a vibrant care community for people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and supports efforts in integrating care to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We reach out to caregivers and seniors with information on staying active and ageing well, and connect people to services they need. We support stakeholders in their efforts to raise the quality of care, and also work with health and social care partners to provide services for the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need.