

## A TOUCH OF CREATIVE SPARKLE

**The Daily Sparkle explains how creativity is key for effective reminiscence and true person-centred care.**

Here at The Daily Sparkle, the wellbeing of older people and those living with dementia is at the heart of everything we do. We understand that wellbeing is enhanced through meaningful and person centred approaches to activity and care. Our resources enable activity professionals to achieve exactly that.

The Daily Sparkle, along with the Weekly Sparkle and monthly Sparkles Magazine, offer care home staff direct access to the world many older people live in: a world which others view as the past, but which is often residents' experience of reality. As we know, older memories are more firmly established than newer memories, so those living with dementia are likely to be able to recall detailed memories from their earlier life. The Daily Sparkle resources trigger these older memories – reminding the individual of the time in their life when they perhaps felt happier, fulfilled, healthier, and more productive. Recalling these emotions is an empowering experience; reminiscence is proven to have a measurable, positive impact on resident's behaviour and wellbeing.



The most effective way to ensure resident engagement and reminiscence is to work creatively. Incorporating the creative arts will capture attention, stimulate the senses, and achieve maximum results.

Our resources are suitable for use individually by residents, or in a group setting, or in a one-to-one session. Of course, they can be enjoyed simply in their original format – publications offering familiar, interesting topics for your residents to read and think about. However, to enhance usage, we support activity coordinators to think creatively about ways to engage their residents with the content on a deeper level. Props that relate to the article's theme should be gathered for residents to explore; seeing, touching, and using an object will trigger memories more powerfully. It could also prompt the sharing of further memories, or deeper discussion about the topic between the group members.

Memories are triggered by senses, such as hearing a certain piece of music, smelling a particular fragrance, or tasting specific flavours, so incorporating a sensory aspect to activity can be effective. A newspaper column referring to brands of soap used by housewives in the 1960s will resonate more if samples of Pears, Imperial Leather and Coal Tar soap accompany the session.

**Find out more [HERE](#)**

A feature about carpentry may trigger some memories, but the opportunity to actually use a sanding block against a piece of wood – the chance to feel the motion, hear the scraping and smell the wood reacting – could transport your resident back to the workshop. They may then share an anecdote about a particular job they worked on, or a colleague who was alongside them.

Many residents will recall a particular TV series when it is mentioned. Playing the theme tune, and encouraging them to sing along, could remind them of where they watched it, when they watched it and who they watched it with. Remembering those moments empowers the resident, boosts their self-esteem, and relieves feelings of disconnect or isolation. Sharing those moments with others around them provides opportunities for both staff and fellow residents to learn more and build a deeper understanding of life history.

Encouraging your residents to express their own experiences through creative arts is an important approach. For many residents, non-verbal methods are the most appropriate means to share their memories.

Providing a non-verbal route for communication, whether through painting, drawing, craft, sensory exploration, or movement – is crucial. Self-expression is vital, regardless of age and ability, as it enables the understanding of each person's unique story. This is particularly relevant when considering care homes settings, which strive to provide true person centred care.

Our resources are complimented by ready-to-use session plans that incorporate a variety of creative genres. These session plans, when used in conjunction with reminiscence material, offer an effective, rounded approach to activity.

Creativity celebrates the individual and their contribution to life. For residents living with care homes, who undoubtedly find themselves reliant on others and with lessened autonomy, the chance to be creative reintroduces freedom and choice to their daily lives.

The ability to think creatively – out of the box, so to speak – is invaluable. An individual that thinks and works creatively will deliver the most meaningful activity to their residents.



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The Activity Coordinator's Friend

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