

# GAMES FROM CHILDHOOD

*Creativity applied to anxiety (Activity 12/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

A common approach to managing anxiety in the elderly is through reminiscence therapy. This can involve activities like looking at old photographs, reminiscing about past experiences, or sharing memories with friends and family members. Reminiscence therapy can help to reduce feelings of anxiety by connecting the individual with their past and promoting a sense of security and comfort.

Remembering and talking about our childhood games is an example of reminiscence therapy. In addition to the benefits already listed, playing these games with others can also alleviate feelings of loneliness or sadness and develop community among those playing and reminiscing.

This activity guides people to first reminisce on the games of their childhood and then invites them to play them.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Alleviate anxiety through reminiscing on games of the past and positive childhood memories.
2. Develop community through playing games together.
3. Support mobility, dexterity and memory recall through playing games.

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

1. Depending on the implementation followed the resources needed could range from none to specific items such as playing cards, marbles or chalk to simply a pen and some paper.

## IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

1. Do an online search in your country for typical childhood games from the 1940s, 50s and 60s. In the UK and Ireland, for example, these games could include any of the following:

### No resources necessary:

- “I spy” – people look for an object within sight and others have to guess what it is. A variation could be colour-based, e.g. “I spy something the colour ....”
- “I’m going to a party...”. This game is good for memory training. The first person starts by saying something beginning with the letter “A” in a sentence like this: “I’m going to a party, and I’m going to bring .... and Apple.” The next person then builds on that sentence with an item beginning with the next letter of the alphabet, e.g. “I’m going to a party and I’m going to bring an apple, and a Book.” The process then continues until someone can’t remember the list of items already being brought.
- Paper, scissors, stone.

### Only pen and paper needed:

- Hangman
- Noughts and crosses

### Some specific resources needed:

- Jigsaws
  - Marbles
  - Card games (snap or Old Maid)
  - Build a fort (e.g. a covered space under blankets within which people can play games, have a snack, watch a film, and so on.
  - Have a Teddy Bear’s picnic.
2. Ask the person or people you’re with to think about games from their childhood. Which ones can they remember? Which ones were their favourite? Why did they like them? When was the last time they played it? What do they need to play it?
  3. If the ideas they have don’t involve any resources or involve resources that you have or can easily prepare (such as those in step 1 above), then play the games then and there. If not, you could

collect a resource list and play them soon.

4. After reminiscing and playing, ask the elderly to think about how the activity made them feel? What did they like most, and what would they like to think about or play next time? Consider making a regular event (e.g. weekly) out of playing their old childhood games.

## POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

Depending on the mobility of the people reminiscing on and playing the games, you could also play some outdoor games.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

Anxiety in the short-term should be reduced through the current focus on the discussion (and playing games) as well as the reminiscence focus on positive memories from the past.

Also, if other people are involved, people will have fun together, also building community and reducing anxiety, loneliness or other emotions that may be negatively affecting their wellbeing.