

Card Games

Creativity applied to loneliness (Activity 5/12)

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, there is the opportunity to alleviate some of the feelings of loneliness by using a deck of cards and choosing a game that the person enjoys, or used to enjoy. Or to learn a new one if this is possible. For many in the past, a game of cards was a way to connect and 'play' with others. Some might like to try and play a game from their past and could be helped to remember the rules by looking them up, for some easier games like 'snap' might be an enjoyable way to spend some time (descriptions of games and suggestions will be in the resources section below). A simple deck of cards has many possibilities and having a deck of cards in one's pocket or beside their bed, offers many opportunities for social connection. Some cards can have a lovely feel to them, the better quality ones. This can create a nice tactile experience and is worth taking into account when first buying cards. There are also many choices of pictures too and a deck of cards can also be made into a very personal thing.

OBJECTIVES

This activity aims to use the art of distraction and absorption in the game to alleviate feelings of loneliness. A game of cards can be played on your own (solitaire or memory), in pairs, or in groups. Having their own deck of cards gives people personal independence and autonomy on how to spend their free time. It can be nice when visitors come in, especially children or teenagers, to bond over a game of cards. It can be a lovely way to spend time with a friend. Especially at times when people feel like some company, but might not feel like talking. It has the potential to create an enjoyable social experience where conversation can be enjoyed, but is not necessary if someone doesn't feel like talking. Or the conversation is all about the game at hand, helping to keep everyone in the present moment. The wonderful thing about card games is that they can be adjusted to cognitive ability while helping to improve cognitive ability and memory. They also provide the opportunity to learn something new or revisit old games they used to enjoy.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

A deck of cards.

List of possible games. Each generation and country may have games unique to their era and area. This can be a nice conversation to have. In group chats it could be nice to find out what games people used to play, would like to play, or games that people have forgotten but like to be reminded how to play. Printing off a list of games, with instructions on how to play, for everyone could be very useful and would enable visitors to get involved and could serve as a nice conversation point or bonding experience.

IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

Some suggestions are:

- **Snap:** Deck of cards are divided up between all players, 2 or more, and in a clockwise rotation everyone lays down their card, one at a time, on top of the other person's card, and if the 2 cards match numbers, the first person to notice, say snap (or your country's word for this) and put their hand on top of the pile, wins the pile, and adds it to their own card pile, underneath their other cards. Whoever wins all the cards is the winner.
- **Memory:** Lay out all the cards face down and spread them out (or choose a number of pairs...5 for example and only use these) (This is where you take into account cognitive ability and adjust accordingly). This game can be played on one's own, in pairs or as a group. You turn over one card and then a 2nd, if they match you keep the match, if they don't, you turn them back over, but try to remember what they were and where they were, so at your next turn you can hopefully match them up, winning the matching pair. Whoever has the most pairs at the end of the game wins.

Open up the conversations as a group activity or individually. Find out what games people would be interested in. Talk about people's favorite games or games that they would like to learn or revisit. Source the decks or cards (Here there is the option of personalizing the cards and choosing a really nice to-feel pack of cards, creating a nice sensory experience and allowing one's sense of individuality to be expressed in their chosen personalized deck of cards)

POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

As suggested above, personalizing the cards can be a wonderful way to enhance the experience.

Another wonderful addition to playing a game of cards can be to play with a weighted blanket over one's knees or shoulders (if possible). The benefits of a weighted blanket are many, especially the comfort and reassurance that it offers.

Below is some information taken from a site that promotes and provides Weighted blankets and all of their benefits. www.mindcaresore.com. They have many useful and inspirational tools and resources to help people with Alzheimer's and dementia and also for elderly people in general.

Weighted Wraps for Alzheimer's, dementia, and brain-related conditions

Most common in people over 65 years old, dementia can cause mood swings, confusion, and stress. Caregivers can use weight therapy to help their loved one feel comfortable and secure while sleeping, sitting, or in periods of confusion or stress.

Giving someone with Alzheimer's a weighted wrap provides comfort through the naturally pleasant feeling of being held or touched. Many have described the added weight of our wraps as the feeling of a hug. Being able to give your loved one a "hug," even if you aren't there physically, will help relax and calm during housing transitions, medical checkups, or before sleep.

Below is some more information taken from their site that promotes and provides Weighted blankets and all of their benefits:

- Elderly with dementia - our lighter weight wraps help calm those with Alzheimer's or Parkinson's Disease
- Sensory Disorders & Sleep Disorders - weighted therapy can help increase Serotonin and Melatonin levels overnight
- Insomnia - pressure increases Serotonin which then converts to Melatonin - a hormone that induces sleep
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) - weighted wraps can help with sleep, nightmares, and panic anxiety
- ADD/ADHD Spectrum Disorder - those with ADHD use weighted wraps to calm down during therapy sessions or to relax and fall asleep.
- Asperger's and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - weighted wraps help calm after events, during therapy sessions, or to relax and fall asleep

- Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) - fidgeting legs due to RLS, chemotherapy treatments, or Menopause
- Anxious Feelings + Panic symptoms - Stress, tension, cancer, Dental Anxiety, Perimenopause, and Menopause symptoms
- Sensory Integration Disorders/Sensory Processing Disorders
- Use GRAVITY to help calm!
- Weighted Blankets & Wraps are an effective and drug-free aid in helping to calm the mind and relax those living with Alzheimer's, Anxiety Disorders (ADD / ADHD / PTSD), Autism (ASD), Tourette's syndrome (GTS), Restless Leg Syndrome, Menopause and for those who benefit from compression or weighted therapy. By covering the body for sleep, wrapping shoulders while sitting or folding the wraps across laps or legs, weighted therapy products apply comforting pressure where it's most beneficial. The supersoft, 100% cotton-fabric weighted wraps are a unique product that can provide relief, and comfort and can help supplement sensory disorder therapy treatments.

EXPECTED RESULTS

We expect to see the symptoms and signs of loneliness ease and lessen, especially during the time of the activity. We also expect that having their own deck of cards will allow people to reach for their deck of cards and to see it as their own tool to help combat feelings of loneliness.