

# Creative & Sensory Activities

for people and families affected by dementia

## Booklet 1

Contributions by friends of The Arts and Dementia Doctoral Training Centre  
and The Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester



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## **Contributors**

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Curated by Ruby Swift, TAnDem Scholar and Research Associate

## **Acknowledgements**

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The activities contained in this booklet are practice-based suggestions from arts practitioners and are general advice only. They should be utilised in consideration of individual capabilities and needs, monitoring each person with dementia on an ongoing and individual basis to find the best response. If an activity causes distress, it is important to stop the activity and provide emotional support.

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# Using this Booklet

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The arts and sensory activities contained in this booklet are intended for people with dementia and their families and carers to share together at home. They are a starting point for shared time together; to explore and have fun. Feel free to make them your own and let your imagination guide you. Please consider whether the materials and activities are safe, appropriate and manageable for everyone taking part.

This booklet is the first of a two-part series. Booklet 2 contains further activities to share.

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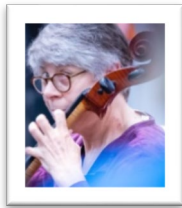
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# Contributors

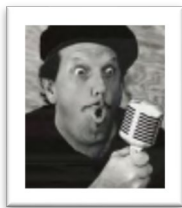
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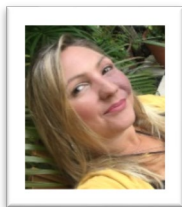
**Diane Amans** is a freelance dance artist, lecturer and consultant offering professional development, arts and health projects, evaluation and mentoring.



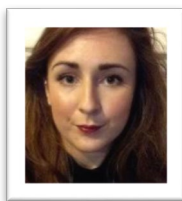
**Claire Garabedian** is a professional cellist, therapeutic musician, educator and researcher focusing on using music to foster connection - especially with people who are living with dementia.



**Gary Glazner** is a poet, author and the founder and Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Poetry Project, (APP).



**Mia Harris** is an artist, designer, maker, producer, project manager and facilitator working with Magic Me.



**Rhian Sutcliffe** is a Community Artist delivering creative arts workshops, collaborating with Paper Birch and Imperial Charity.



# Nature

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Visit a garden in your mind. Allow your imagination to have full control. What can you see? Smell? Feel? Where could you sit? Lie? Eat? Swim? How would the ground feel beneath your shoes? Beneath your toes?



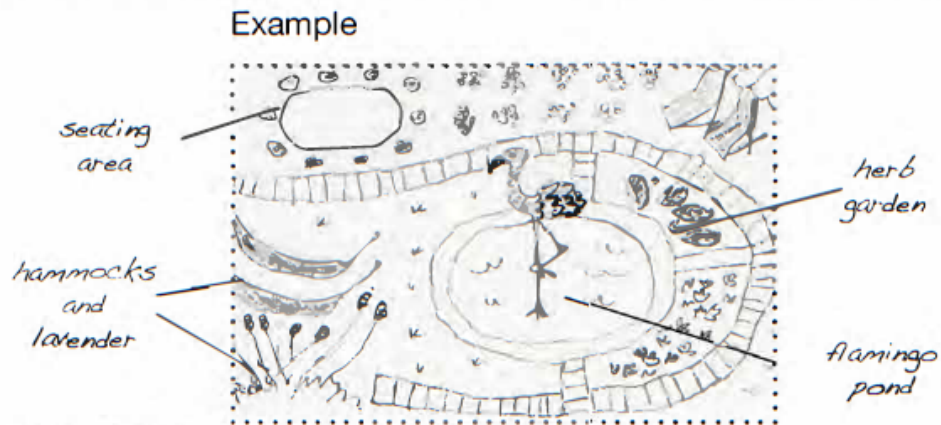
By Rhian Sutcliffe  
Paper Birch and Imperial Charity

# Design a Garden

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Perhaps you'd like to map out a bird's eye view of your garden, or sketch certain features? For example, a pond or a particular plant.

Or maybe you'd prefer to describe your garden? Does it have a name?



Your garden design

By Rhian Sutcliffe  
Paper Birch and Imperial Charity

# Suggestions for Ways of Creating Connection with Your Loved One

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My primary experience has been with using music, but really nearly ANYTHING might work at any given moment to create connection. Mostly, the process is about being open, flexible, resilient, and to leave any expectations or judgements at the door. It is about coming to your loved one with an attitude of loving curiosity and genuine interest – IN THE MOMENT. So...you could try music of course; this means playing music you know s/he has liked in the past – or brand-new genres of music that neither of you have ever listened to! Try exploring your own music collection and different radio stations. If you have internet access, there are so many amazing apps and websites now where we can access music – you will find a few examples at the back of this pack.

But besides music, there is really anything you can think of that catches his/her attention in the moment that you two can share:

- Reading and creating poetry
- Reading a book or magazine or newspaper aloud
- Dancing/simple movements
- Painting
- Clay
- Games
- Flower arranging
- Baking
- Various other crafting

Again, I feel that the most important aspect of this is the attitude you bring to this – paying careful and non-judgemental attention to the verbal AND nonverbal cues your loved one expresses, and remember – something that does/does not work today or in this hour, may well work/not work the next time – it is all about experimentation and curiosity – and the desire to connect...to create a safe space or 'haven' in which you both can flourish by connecting with one another – the length of each connection is not as important as that there IS a connection!

By Dr Claire Garabedian

[drclairegarabedian.com](http://drclairegarabedian.com)

[facebook.com/DrClaireGarabedian](https://www.facebook.com/DrClaireGarabedian)

# Seated Dance

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A couple of simple seated dance activities that family members can do together – most older people with dementia will be familiar with this first piece of music and may even sing along with it.

What you need:

Dusters – one each

Music “When I’m Cleaning Windows” – George Formby

Any piano music by Ludovico Einaudi

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The easiest way to start this dance activity is to give everyone a duster and just start playing the music. It’s likely that the person with dementia will begin to move the duster as though they’re cleaning. If this doesn’t happen you could pretend to clean an imaginary window, wring the cloth out, reach the corners etc.



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You might then go on to a mirroring dance with a different piece of music. Any Einaudi tune is ideal for this. Sit facing your partner; one person leads and the other follows. It also works with a small group – the person leading faces the others who all follow the leader’s moves. Again – if you can encourage the person with dementia to be the leader they may enjoy this opportunity to be in control. Try it with and without a duster. Paper plates are also good for a copying dance. Some people find it easier to move when they are using a prop of some kind.

By Diane Amans



# Perform a Poem



## Recipe

**Gary Glazner on how to**

### **Perform a Poem Using "Call and Response."**

**INGREDIENTS:** 1 poem, 2 people (or more)

**SERVES:** Everybody!

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Say, "I have a poem to share with you. I will say a line and then you say it after me. That way we can perform the poem together. Shall we try it?"
2. Say the line giving space and time for the person to echo the words.
3. *It's that easy!*

#### **SONNET 18**

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

#### **Tips for Performing Poems:**

- Break up the lines so they are not too long.
- Try saying the lines with different emotions and or voices. Use humor!
- Add movement, gestures, rhythm or clapping. Repeat lines you really like!
- Have discussions about the poem. For example with Sonnet 18, I might ask if the person likes summer days? What do you like to drink on a summer day?
- Like all good recipes- please make this your own! Add your special spice! Have fun!

#### **On-line Resources for Finding Poems:**

Poetry Foundation: Poetry Search Tool: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

**More info at:**

[www.alzpoetry.com](http://www.alzpoetry.com)

# Patterns

Patterns can be found all around us - in nature, fashion and art. Read the words above the boxes below and then fill the box with a suitable pattern.

Example

Circles



Crosses



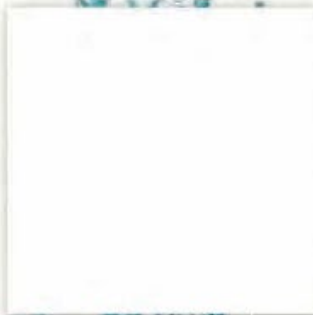
Loops



Raindrops



Leaves



Spirals



Stripes



Waves



Paw Prints



By Rhian Sutcliffe  
Paper Birch and Imperial Charity



# Colour Mood Scene



## Magic Me Artist Mia Harris invites you to create a... 'Colour Mood Scene' with items from around your house!

**Step 1** - Pick a colour to reflect your mood.

**Step 2** - Rummage around your house finding objects of that colour - curtains, cleaning products, kitchen utensils, tins of food, anything you like!

**Step 3** - Set up your 'scene' in an area of your home. Could be on a sofa / chair, kitchen table, wherever you like.  
*Top Tip:* Make sure the space is bright enough, either by a window or a light to show the colours off!

**Step 4** - Find a few items of clothing of your chosen colour to put on - maybe a shirt, trousers, hat, scarf?

**Step 5** - Find a comfortable place to sit or stand inside your scene.  
How do the colours make you feel? Take a closer look at a couple of your favourite items and how they all look altogether.

**If you have a phone / camera** why not make a short video of you inside your 'scene'?

Tell us how you're feeling and show us a few of your favourite items.

**If you have paper and colour pencils / pens** of shades of your chosen colour draw a picture of you inside your scene and include your thoughts and feelings on the page too!

**If you are online** you can email responses to [sarahwatson@magicme.co.uk](mailto:sarahwatson@magicme.co.uk), share on social media tagging [@MagicMeArts](https://www.instagram.com/MagicMeArts) with hashtag [#TheAfterParty](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/TheAfterParty)

Responses will be shared in our online gallery here: [www.magicme.co.uk/project-category/the-after-party](http://www.magicme.co.uk/project-category/the-after-party)

*The After Party* is part of Magic Me's *At Home Together* programme, helping people connect & interact through online, phone, post & specially commissioned arts projects designed by our skilled creative team. Magic Me is finding new ways to meet, create and party.



Magic Me is the UK's leading  
intergenerational arts organisation  
[www.magicme.co.uk](http://www.magicme.co.uk)



# Free Online Resources

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## **Alzheimer's Society**

Activity ideas for people affected by dementia [alzheimers.org.uk/coronavirus](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/coronavirus)

## **Armchair Gallery**

An app that brings world-class art & culture to you [armchairgallery.co.uk](https://www.armchairgallery.co.uk)

## **BBC Music Memories**

Use music to help people reconnect with their most powerful memories  
[musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk](https://www.musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk)

## **BBC Reminiscence Archive**

Content from the BBC Archives for reminiscence [remarc.bbcrewind.co.uk](https://www.remarc.bbcrewind.co.uk)

## **Blue Skies Singing Group**

Warm up your voices with this online video [youtu.be/BLojGAWLKdc](https://youtu.be/BLojGAWLKdc)

## **Creative Quarantine**

Sign up for a daily email of activities [wearenonsuch.com/creativequarantine](https://www.wearenonsuch.com/creativequarantine)

## **Deepness Dementia Radio**

Provides listeners with alternative and music [deepnessdementiaradio.com](https://www.deepnessdementiaradio.com)

## **Folk Cloud**

Listen to original folk and traditional music from around the world [folkcloud.com](https://www.folkcloud.com)

## **Gareth Malone's Great British Home Chorus**

Take part in an ambitious digital music project [decca.com/greatbritishhomechorus](https://www.decca.com/greatbritishhomechorus)

## **Google Arts and Culture**

Link to a wide range of arts and culture resources [artsandculture.google.com](https://www.artsandculture.google.com)

## **Keep Active & Creative at Home**

A range of activities you can try at home [redditchbc.gov.uk/things-to-do/keep-active-creative-at-home.aspx](https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/things-to-do/keep-active-creative-at-home.aspx)

## **Poetry Foundation**

Explore poetry, search for poems [poetryfoundation.org](https://www.poetryfoundation.org)

# About us

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The Association for Dementia Studies is an award winning, multi- professional group of practitioners, educationalists and researchers who are expert in the field of person-centred dementia care and support. With our research, education and consultancy we make a cutting-edge contribution to evidence-based, practical ways of working with people living with dementia, and their families that enables them to live well.

Through our TAnDem research into the arts and dementia, we have grown our community of expertise and practice, forging a network of connections with artists to inform our research. Collecting their contributions to create these booklets is just one of the ways we are seeking to help people with dementia to live well through the arts.

We would like to thank all the artists who contributed to these booklets, without whom they would not have been possible.

Please get in touch if you would like to find out more.

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[www.worcester.ac.uk/dementia](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/dementia)