

Memory Café Resource

Suggestions for Activities, Information and Equipment



Memory Café programme

Entertaining client groups

Many Memory Cafés use simple games that are enjoyable and stimulate the mind. For example

- Anagrams. Equipment such as a whiteboard, marker pen, eraser will be needed if this suggestion is adopted.
- Simple quizzes are also popular, particularly pictorial. Usually these are presented in the form of an A4 sheet.
- Simple, large piece, jigsaw puzzles are popular.

These are ideas and suggestions for a Memory Café programme

- Have a possible 2/3 month programme planned
- Do not be too rigid with the programmes, be flexible and go with the flow. The aim is that it is enjoyable for people living with dementia, carers and volunteers alike
- Distribute the programme to all the volunteers so that they know what is planned. If the coordinator is unable to attend, the volunteers can carry on with the programme as normal.

Mix and match from the following suggestions

Suggested programme

- Memory Café open for 2 hours.
- 1st session meet and greet, tea/coffee/cake/biscuits. Chat with the guests who will also want plenty of time to chat with each other.
Any problems refer the person to any information available, named Dementia Advisor or simply have a chat with them. Not all people arrive at the start.
- 2nd session Singing, word games, musical session, speakers (benefits, solicitors etc.)
Have an area away from the activities where carers who do not want to join in can just sit and have a chat
- Set up a table(s) with games, books, colouring books, memory box, large wooden piece jigsaws (60 pieces max) etc. laid out.

Activities at the Memory Cafe

Ask guests what they would like to do at their café.

- Mind stimulating games, such as quizzes, anagram games (like Countdown).
- Word games on white board.
- Board games etc, set up on 1or 2 tables, can continue for the full 2 hours.
- Memory tray

- Jigsaw puzzles, letter quizzes
- Guest speakers
- Music therapy – music is always popular and a co-ordinated singalong will get most people joining in. Musical session can use tambourines, triangles, castanets, bongos, drums.
- Bingo is enjoyed and usually you will find that the client group bring little prizes with them. Ensure that volunteers are available to help those who may not be able to keep up with play
- Seated exercise (Take prior professional advice)
- Reflexology.
- Relaxation.
- Gentle exercise
- Animal therapy
- Bowling
- Neck and hand massage monthly - very popular.
- Nostalgia/memory boxes.
- Craft activities
- Photographs / Postcards
- Occasional lunches.
- Excursions. (Garden Centres etc)

Some of the benefits of playing games

Using quizzes, puzzles and activity-based games to stimulate the memory and stay active is important because –

- It allows you as the carer to gain a better understanding of how well the person can remember things. This then allows you to adapt games and puzzles accordingly.
- It stimulates the person’s cognitive memory, giving them feelings of satisfaction, achievement and enjoyment.

Catalogues for all sorts of activities for Memory Cafes can be obtained online from various supplies including: [Winslow Resources](#), [Relish Life](#), [Golden Carers](#).

Suggested activities - Themed parties

Valentine’s Day.
Easter.
Halloween

Christmas
Red Nose Day

Information that can be available at the Memory Cafe

Leaflets table
Posters and flyers.
Invite speakers in to talk on specific subjects e.g. benefits, safety, financial and legal implications
Provide Memory Café questionnaires to gather information to improve the Memory Café service provided.

Suggested Equipment for Memory Cafés

- First aid box
- Music centre - take account of your group regarding the choice of music
- White board and markers
- Large piece wooden jigsaw puzzles (maximum 60 pieces)
- Memory box containing items from the past
- Memory cards of nostalgic scenes to provoke discussion
- Games, activities, reminiscence aids
- Old photographs
- Large wooden dominoes
- Tablecloths and flower vases
- Tea towels, rubber gloves, detergent, sanitiser etc.