

HEART IN MIND

ACTIVATION THERAPY BOOKLET



Engaging activity ideas for people living with dementia



CENTRE FOR AGING
+ BRAIN HEALTH
INNOVATION
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<http://www.vha.ca/HeartInMind>

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VHA Home HealthCare’s Heart in Mind Activation Therapy Booklet was created in partnership with Baycrest’s Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation, with the collaboration of VHA employees and service providers to engage clients with dementia in meaningful activities in 2019.

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*“...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

- Maya Angelou

Feelings Based Activation Therapy

Dementia care has a lot to do with feelings.

As their identity and brain processing changes, the way someone with dementia responds to information changes.

One way to describe what is happening is with a traffic light. With dementia, the change in ability to slow down and think (yellow light) about how to react to a feeling can mean going straight from feeling (red light) to acting (green light).

For example, if they feel scared or uncomfortable because they see someone they don't recognize coming towards them, they may act in a defensive way as their ability to consider that this is someone who wants to provide care (such as personal care) is altered.

We can enhance quality of life by keeping their heart (feelings) in mind, getting to know their personal story and interests, communicating in their language, and engaging with meaningful activities.

How to Use this Booklet

Heart in Mind Activation Therapy is engaging the body and mind with music, art, exercise, games, and conversations that are meaningful. Benefits include better quality of life, enhanced memory, reduced depression, increased mobility, and prevention of social isolation.

Choosing activities based on feelings:

- What do you do when you feel *stressed*?
- What do you do when you feel *bored*?
- If you were unable to use your words to express *pain, cold, or hunger* what would you do?

These are real feelings experienced by a person living with dementia. Through the journey, they may lose their ability to voice their needs in a clear way.

<i>As a caregiver, ask yourself: What is the need that isn't being met?</i>
--

Here are some engaging ways to activate if you think these feelings are happening:

- **Stress:** Choose soothing or calming activities like reducing light, wrapping in a warm blanket, or listening to quiet music.
- **Boredom:** Choose exciting activities like dancing and exercise or being with children or animals
- **Pain:** Consult with a health care professional about possible causes of pain and appropriate treatment. Find comfort by doing things like adjusting room temperature, providing a snack, or applying cream to dry skin.

YOUR Heart in Mind

As a caregiver, you have feelings too.

Talk and clarify expectations and needs with family and care providers.

Be inspired to use your own personal gifts and interests as you engage!

This booklet contains the following information:

- Practical tips to keep “Heart in Mind” with feelings- based dementia care
- Practical questionnaire to choose activities that will be meaningful
- Practical conversation starters based on personal interests
- Practical activity ideas based on personal interests or area of the home
- Practical exercise programs based on physical ability
- Practical toolkit supply ideas to get started

What is in my Activation Toolkit?

Toolkit items ideas: beach ball, colouring pencils, tape measure, deck of cards, photos, different colored and textured fabrics, pictures (family or other things of interest), hand cream, scented oil/candle/spices, clay or Playdoh, musical instrument (whistle, homemade maraca), gum or other safe tasty treat (dissolvable yogurt drops, etc.), yarn for finger knitting.

Many items found around the house can be used to start engaging conversations or meaningful activities. In addition, affordable items can be purchased and added to the toolkit. One example could be an apron being used as a fun way to access small items to start an activity or conversation.

Use your imagination to find things that will activate all the senses! (taste, touch, smell, sound, sight)



Personal Interests Questionnaire

For VHA Home HealthCare's Heart in Mind Activation Therapy

CLIENT'S PREFERRED NAME: _____

CLIENT'S AGE: _____ CLIENT'S BIRTHDAY: _____

Family and friend name(s):

Personal Support Worker (PSW) name(s):

Date: _____

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...			
Mobility	<input type="checkbox"/> No aids	<input type="checkbox"/> Cane <input type="checkbox"/> Walker	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair <input type="checkbox"/> Bedbound <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Cognitive Impairment (Stage)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild (Early/mid)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced (Late)
Participation Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Passive (Watching) <input type="checkbox"/> Active (likes to join in)	<input type="checkbox"/> Social <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary	<i>Additional info? (ex. routine, best time of day to participate)</i>
Recreational Interest Previous work, hobbies, and accomplishments	Past		
	Present		
	Would like to try		
Interest Areas (match with appropriate handouts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles/Games <input type="checkbox"/> Music* <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Plants/Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Household/ Cooking <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing <input type="checkbox"/> Walking <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual		
	LOCATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Bedroom <input type="checkbox"/> Living Room <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen <input type="checkbox"/> Outside**		
	Likes (ex. celebrations, holidays)		Dislikes

Possible Barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> Endurance <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of falling <input type="checkbox"/> Pain <input type="checkbox"/> Mood <input type="checkbox"/> Vision <input type="checkbox"/> "Behaviors" <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Attention Span <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Motor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
New Referral Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Music Care* <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
*Refer to VHA Music Care program **talk with PSW employer for options	
PERSON with dementia and CAREGIVER "HEART IN MIND" GOALS	
<p><i>What activities would you like to do during PSW/caregiver/family/friend visit?</i></p> <p>I would like to....</p> <p>Family would like...</p> <p>Please add any additional details pertaining to the above that will help us provide the best care (eg. known strategies that help with barriers, etc.)</p> <p>May our Quality Assurance department contact you to see how your services have been? This information helps to keep this program running. YES / NO</p> <p>Verbal consent received: YES / NO</p>	

Adapted from VHA Body in Mind Intake Assessment 2016

Communication Tips

Language is a powerful way to express feelings.

The way we communicate can also impact how we feel.

- Ensure any necessary hearing aids are in and any needed glasses are on.
- Use client's name (find out how they prefer to be called), be at their level and look them in the eye.
- Smile!
- Be mindful of tone of voice when speaking to clients.
- Reduce choices. Too many choices can be frustrating to some clients.
- Ask YES or NO questions.
- Limit distractions (turn off background noise like TV or radio).
- Avoid conflict by not arguing with the client. Avoid comments like "I told you so" and "You're wrong" that may provoke arguments.
- Enter their world by validating their thoughts and feelings.
- Patience is a virtue! Try not to complete sentences for the client as it won't help them remember. Try asking questions to prompt them such as "Are you hungry?" or "Would you like to eat something?" to help them remember.
- Physical signs and gestures can help to communicate. They might use movement or actions to express a need.
- Read body language. Provide personal space, be kind, and make them feel safe if they look threatened or uncomfortable.



Managing Responsive Behaviours

Responsive behaviors are words, gestures or actions are expressing a personal need or concern. They are a way to communicate what one is feeling.

Physical Aggression / Anger

- Remain calm and try to divert client's attention to something else.
- Approach client slowly and with open body language, positive expression.
- Be at client's level when communicating.
- When possible, stay at least one leg length away.
- Wear long sleeves to avoid being scratched/pinched.
- Wear hair up to avoid hair pulling.
- Avoid wearing necklaces and dangling earrings.
- Walk out of the room if necessary.



Hallucinations and Paranoia

- Avoid telling the person that what they see/hear/feel is not there.
- Look for distractions like calm music or give them a soothing object to hold.
- Increase the lighting in the room.
- Do not raise your voice.
- Do not tell them to calm down or stop.

Wandering

- Ask the client what they might want or need such as "Do you need the washroom?" or "Do you need a snack?"
- Allow client to wander in a safe and secure area; they may just need to exercise, get up and move their body.
- Do not grab and pull the client away.
- Do not block the door.
- Show the client familiar items in their home like pictures and furniture to provide a sense of comfort.
- Consider doing some physical activities with the client such as walking, a seated ball toss, or moving gently to music. They may just need to exercise, get up and move their body.

Sundowning

- In the late afternoon, turn on lights and lamps to brighten rooms.
- Close drapes to lessen shadows.
- Consider doing some physical activity at that time like walking, seated ball toss, or any activities that can provide distraction.

Arts and Crafts

Conversation Starters

- Do you like art? If so what kind?
- Did you ever like to make things? What kinds of things?
- Would you like to look at some family pictures together?
- What makes you happy? Do you feel like drawing it?
- Where is a favourite place you have travelled to? Would you like to paint that place?

Listening to Music

- Create a playlist and add songs from the first 3 decades of their life.
- Encourage the client to sing to music if they are comfortable.
- Encourage the client to move to the music. They can do it sitting down or standing up, depending on their physical level.
- Plan a performance/concert (from grandchildren or friends).

Recommended Arts and Crafts Activities (see kit for materials)

- Collaging: Cut out pictures and words from a magazine and put them together.
- Colouring: Colour in the Activities book.
- Playing with clay: Build objects and structures.
- Theme box: Collect meaningful items to make a theme box.

Puzzles and Games

Conversation Starters

- What game(s) do you like? Do you have a favourite?

Physical Games

- Cards (see kit for deck of cards)
- Chess
- Checkers
- Dominos
- Scrabble
- Matching
- Hangman
- Wheel of Fortune
- Tic Tac Toe



Opposite Word Game

- Say a word (hot) and find the opposite word (cold).

Name 10 Game

- Find a topic and come up with short lists of items relating to that topic.
- For example, list 10 items found on a hamburger (cheese, lettuce, tomato, mayo...)
- Other examples could include items to bring on vacation, types of cars, things on a table setting, ingredients in spaghetti sauce, items in a toolbox, etc.

Animal Gestures and Sounds

- Encourage the client to think of an animal. Then make a sound or gesture that corresponds to that animal and ask each other to guess what that animal is.

Activity Book (see kit)

- Word searches
- Crosswords
- Sudoku

Spiritual Activities

Conversation Starters

- Are there religious customs or traditions you follow?
- Can you tell me something about your faith?
- How do you find faith or hope in your life?
- Do you go to a place of worship?
- What are some special family traditions?

Recommended Spiritual Activities

- Reading passages from a religious text.
- Attending a sermon together.
- Making a meal together: choose a culturally specific dish (as appropriate) to make together. Talk about the steps in preparing a meal and write it down. Make a list of ingredients and then ask client to find or search for the ingredients.



Socializing Activities

Conversation Starters

- What were your favourite holiday destinations?
- What is your favourite sport? Why?
- Do you have a favourite athlete?
- Did you ever have a family pet?
- Name a film star you like.
- What are some events that stand out in your life?
- What were your favourite subjects in school?
- What are some jobs you did?



Name 10 Game

- Find a topic and come up with short lists of items relating to that topic.
- Example: List 10 items found on a hamburger (cheese, lettuce, tomato, mayo...)
- Other examples could include items to bring on vacation, cars, on a table setting, items in spaghetti sauce, items in a toolbox.

Sharing Stories

- Share stories about pets, something about yourself, and how you feel like you made a difference in your life. Create a collage of what you've learned about their personal story.

Reading Magazines or Newspapers Together

- Grab a newspaper and read a local story together of your shared interests. Talk about the articles that you read

Calling Family/Friends

- Ask client if they would like to talk to a family member or friend on the phone.

Sensory Activities

Positive feelings can also be evoked by activating the senses of smell, sound, taste, touch, or sight. Sensory activities are a good option for those with moderate to severe dementia. Some useful phrases while completing sensory activities include “Follow me”, “Copy me”, or “Let’s do it together”. Encourage first and then provide help as needed.

Sensory Bags

- Fill a bag with objects and ask client to close eyes and pick one.
- Describe the object and its use. Ask questions like “How does it feel/smell/sound/taste/look?” Items that you can use include essential oil, cotton balls, bells, dissolvable food treat, necklace, spoon, family photo, stuffed animal, etc.

Brushing Hair

- Encourage client to brush their hair. Pay attention to how it feels.

Putting on Cream on Hands and Body

- Encourage client to put lotion on body, hands, arms, neck. Pay attention to how the cream smells and how it feels as it’s being rubbed on the skin.

Sniffing Scents

- Have the client sniff different smells (perfumes, candles, spices, freshly peeled fruit) and ask them to recall what the smell reminds them of.

Listening to Music

- Listen or sing, move, or sway their body if they can.

Relaxation Exercises

- Have the client close their eyes and imagine the most beautiful place that makes them feel calm and happy.

Other sensory activities

- Look through family photos
- Provide massage
- Arts and crafts (see kit)

Household and Cooking Activities

Conversation Starters

- What do you (did you) like to cook?
- Do you have favourite foods? What are they?
- Who taught you to cook?

Sniffing Herbs and Spices

- Go to kitchen, pick out some herbs and spices and ask the client to smell them and guess what they are.

Folding and Sorting Laundry

- Group clothes together and fold them.

Setting the Table

- Get the client to tell you the steps involved in setting the table.

Preparing a Meal Together

- Choose a meal to make together. Talk about the steps in preparing a meal and write it down. Make a list of ingredients. Ask client to find or search for the ingredients.

Washing Dishes

- Let's take it step by step. Have the client pay attention to how it feels to hold the dish, feel the water on their hands, smell of the soap, feel the circular action of scrubbing, rinsing, putting dish on drying rack, placing the dish in the cupboard.

Watering Plants or Dusting

Prepare a celebration!

- Birthday, spiritual, spa, or any other meaningful theme

Living Room Activities

Conversation Starters

- What are your favourite songs?
- What is a childhood memory or story you like to share?
- What TV shows do you like?
- What is the story of these family photos on the wall?

Recommended Living Room Activities

- Singing songs. Listening to music. Move to music.
- Looking through family photos: have the client recall precious memories and good moments.
- Sharing stories: share stories about pets, yourself, and how you feel you made a difference.
- Mirroring actions and gestures: sit opposite each other, put on music, make actions, and ask to copy them. Experiment with small versus big movements. Adapt based on physical abilities.
- Games: play cards, chess, checkers, dominos, Scrabble, matching, Hangman, Wheel of Fortune, Tic Tac Toe, etc.
- “Handyman” work: organizing a toolbox, replacing batteries, using measuring tape (see kit for measuring tape), painting
- Watering plants and dusting
- Exercises! (see Physical Activities)
- Screen Activities: watch videos about personal or cultural interests (like animals, babies, history, language) play computer games, explore internet (ex. Google Earth)

Bedroom and Bedside Activities

Recommended Bedroom Activities

- Putting cream on hands or body: encourage client to put lotion on body, hands, arms, neck. Pay attention to how the cream smells and how it feels as it's being rubbed on the skin.
- Sniffing different smells (perfumes, candles, spices): ask the client to recall what the smell reminds them of.
- Listening to music: sit and listen, move or sway their body if they can.
- Looking through family photos: recall precious memories and good moments.
- Relaxation exercises: breathing in through nose for 5 counts, exhale through mouth for 5 counts. Encourage client to close their eyes and imagine the most beautiful place they can think of which makes them feel calm and happy.
- Folding and sorting laundry: group clothes together and fold them.
- Hanging up clothes and putting clothes in drawers.
- Stretching on the bed (see Physical Activities).
- Making the bed together.
- Brushing hair.

Physical Activities for Older Adults

Physical activity has many benefits for those over the age of 65. Have you noticed changes in your attention or memory? Have you or a loved one been diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's disease?

By being physically active you can:

- Improve memory and attention.
- Increase independence and performance of daily living activities (toileting, dressing, etc.)
- Reduce the chances of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Slow the progression of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Help manage responsive behaviours.
- Reduce depression.
- Reduce caregiver burden.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any task that you can do to help maintain your health and improve your brain activity. Physical activity can include low-intensity activities (vacuuming, laundry, setting the table, etc.) or moderate-intensity activities (brisk walking, light home repairs, etc.) depending on your health and fitness levels.

How much physical activity?

Healthy older adults (age 65+) should aim to achieve 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week. Physical activity should be performed in sessions of 10 minutes or more.

Remember to only participate in activities your doctor or therapist has indicated. Follow their instructions and use proper equipment, as recommended.

Additional resources, guidelines, and activities

- World Health Organization: http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_olderadults/en/
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults: http://www.csep.ca/cMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_older-adults_en.pdf
- Alzheimer's Society Canada: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/>
- ParticipACTION: <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/>

Information for Care Providers and Caregivers

Tips for giving exercise instructions:

- Use short sentences.
- Demonstrate the activity when necessary.
- Make eye contact before talking.
- Rephrase to help them understand.
- Use visual aids if available (handout, pictures, etc.).

Tips for setting up the environment:

- Limit distractions (e.g. turn off TV, put away phones, close blinds, find a quiet place, remove objects, etc.).
- Make sure to have good lighting indoors.
- Keep walkways clear of clutter.
- Do not perform activities late in the day as it could impact participants' sleep.

Tips for leading the activity

- Try to make the activity meaningful and enjoyable. Consider the client's past skills and interests.
- Match tasks to the client's visual, perceptual, and hearing abilities. Make sure they wear a hearing aid or use mobility equipment if needed.
- Match activity to their energy levels and endurance.
- Choose activities that are moderate intensity (not too easy), which are the most beneficial.
- Build physical exercise into their daily routine. Use a calendar to keep track of activities.

Note: If you have any questions or concerns about doing any of these activities, please consult your doctor. If you experience any sudden shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain/pressure, numbness/tingling in arms or legs, or nausea/vomiting while doing these activities, please consult your doctor.

General Instructions

- ✓ Choose an activity according to your client's interests and assist as needed with the tips provided.
- ✓ Aim to do at least 10 minutes of exercises, if possible.
- ✓ Aim for 8-10 repetitions of each exercise, if possible.
- ✓ Focus on enjoyment, not achievement.
- ✓ Ensure proper posture (see below).
- ✓ To ensure proper posture for SEATED EXERCISES, encourage clients to do exercises in a supportive chair while sitting up tall, looking forward, shoulders back.
- ✓ To ensure proper posture for STANDING EXERCISES, encourage clients to do exercises while holding on to a firm surface (such as a kitchen counter/sink, heavy chair or railing) while standing up tall, looking forward, shoulders back, feet apart.

STOP these activities if the client is experiencing symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, excessive sweating, change in skin colour, or rapid heart rate. If these symptoms persist, consult a doctor.

Ideas for low intensity household activities:

- Walking! Can be done inside or outside.
- Marching on the spot.
- Watering plants.
- Doing laundry.
- Sweeping.
- Washing and putting away dishes.
- Dusting.
- Setting the table.

Bed Exercises



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Flex and point your feet.

If you keep your knees straight during the exercise you can stretch your calf muscles.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Bend your leg and bring your knee towards your chest.

Repeat with the other leg.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Lie on your back with your knees bent.

Squeeze your buttocks together and lift your bottom off the bed. Count out loud to 5.

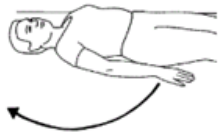
Return to starting position.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Lie on your back with your arms at your side and your elbows straight.

Use one arm to lift the other arm up, keeping it as close to your ear as possible.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Lie on your back with your arm resting on the bed, palm up and close to your body.

Slide your arm along the bed as high as possible. Slowly slide arm back to starting position.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Lie on your back with your hands behind your neck.

Have your elbows pointing out to side as much as is comfortable.

Relax.

Seated Exercises



©PhysioTools Ltd

Do a heel raise and toe raise.

Bend and straighten your ankles.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Pull your toes up, tighten your thigh muscle and straighten your knee.

Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat with the other leg.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Lift your leg off of the seat while keeping your knee bent.

Relax.

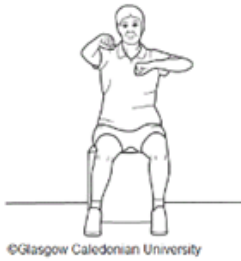
Repeat with the other leg.



©PhysioTools Ltd

Place the ball between your knees.

Squeeze the ball.



Make a fist with your hands.

Punch alternate arms forward.



Roll your shoulders back.

To do so, move your shoulders up then back.



Clap using different rhythms and different arm positions.

Keep your shoulders relaxed.

Add music if you'd like!



Do a seated ball toss.

Move your arms and use your body to toss a ball at a target or with a partner.



Do some seated soccer.

Maintain a good sitting posture and kick a ball at a target or with a partner.

Standing Exercises



Do a standing ball toss.

Stand in front of a sturdy chair or couch. When you feel steady, toss a ball at a target or with a partner.



Push up with your toes.

Try to hold for 5 seconds.



Lift your leg sideways and bring it back, keeping your trunk straight throughout the exercise.



Lift one of your knees and relax.

Repeat with your other leg.



Hold onto a solid object.

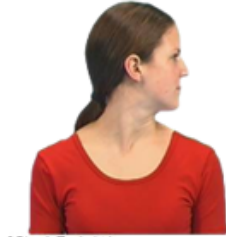
Shift your weight from side to side.



Do a sit to stand.

Stand up and then sit down slowly on a chair. Use the arm rests as needed for support and safety.

Stretch and Hold Exercises



Turn your head to one side until you feel a stretch.

Hold for a count of 3.

Repeat to your other side.



Tilt your head towards one shoulder until you feel the stretch on the opposite side.

Hold for a count of 3.

Repeat to your other side.



Stretch one arm over to the opposite shoulder by pushing it at your elbow with your other arm.

Hold for a count of 15.

Repeat to your other side.



Bend to the side with your arm reaching over your head.

Breathe in, then breathe out and return to the starting position.

Repeat for your other side.



Stand in a walking position with one leg stretched out straight behind you and the other leg bent in front of you.

Take support from a sturdy surface.

Lean your body forwards and down until you feel the stretching in the calf of the straight leg.

Hold for a count of 15.

Repeat for your other leg.



Sit down on a sturdy chair.

Lift your foot onto your opposite thigh.

Gently lean forward. Feel the stretch in your buttock.

Repeat for your other leg.

Care Diary Log

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF DAY
Monday, October 20, 2014	Today, Mrs. A. smiled and told stories while working with the sensory bag and playing with the ball. - Signed, PSW