

The Importance of Arts for People Living with Dementia

Evidence & Impact

Impact of arts activities for people living with dementia:

ARTS IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE & WELLBEING

A multi-site study demonstrated that people living with dementia attending a 12-week visual art programme showed significantly more interest, attention, pleasure, self-esteem, and positive mood than participants in the control group, as well as reporting a better quality of life and wellbeing.

(Windle et al, 2018)

ARTS PROVIDE COGNITIVE STIMULATION & ENABLE NEW LEARNING

An eight-week art-gallery-based intervention offered to people with mild-to-moderate dementia was found to stimulate cognitive processes of attention and concentration, while participants demonstrated ability to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge.

(Camic et al, 2014)

ARTS REDUCE STRESS & PREVENT HEART FAILURE

Compared to the control group, people living with dementia and cardiovascular disease, who were enrolled in weekly music therapy, showed an improvement in parasympathetic tone (i.e. reduced bodily stress response) and had significantly fewer congestive heart failure events.

(Okada et al, 2008)

ARTS GIVE A SENSE OF SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION & OF BEING VALUED

After a six-week programme for people with dementia to discuss artworks at the National Gallery of Australia (facilitated by professional gallery educators), participants reported that they were treated with dignity, felt a sense of achievement, felt valued, and highly valued the activities.

(MacPherson et al, 2010)

ARTS STRENGTHEN EXISTING & DEVELOP NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Attending a 'Singing for the Brain' group strengthened relationships between people living with dementia and their informal carers, by adding a new, fun dimension to their relationship. A large number of friends and social contacts were also made during the group-based programme.

(Osman et al, 2016)

ARTS REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION

'Let's Have Tea at the Museum' participatory visual art programme designed for people living with dementia promoted inclusiveness and combated isolation by providing participants with continued access to meaningful activities and opportunities for togetherness.

(Tan, 2018)

Arts activities designed for people with dementia also benefit:

FAMILIES

ARTS PROVIDE NEW & POSITIVE WAYS OF COMMUNICATING

Family members taking part in programmes at art galleries along with people living with dementia reported a sense of respite at the gallery and being able to have a relationship with their loved one that was different to the caring role, focusing instead on joy and togetherness.

(Camic et al, 2016)

CARE PROVIDERS

ARTS ENABLE PROVIDERS TO FOCUS ON STRENGTHS & CAPABILITIES

A reminiscence-based poetry intervention in England enabled care staff to better-communicate and humanise residents with dementia, and restored the "personhood" of residents in the eyes of those who care for them. A positive impact on family members was also observed.

(Gregory, 2011)

WIDER SOCIETY

ARTS IMPROVE SOCIETAL ATTITUDES ON DEMENTIA

Participating in an intergenerational learning programme 'Opening Mind through Arts', where college students were paired with older people living with dementia, revealed a significant improvement in students' overall attitudes, comfort level, and attitudes toward people living with dementia.

(Lokon et al, 2017)

Impact of Bright Shadow dementia activities (Based on independent evaluation by Dr Rasa Mikelyte.)

9 in 10 Zest Communities participants feel 'good' or 'great' after the sessions

95% of the time participants living with dementia are able to join in with Zest activities

Participants living with dementia and their supporters rate Zest sessions as 'excellent'

During 7 weekly Care Home sessions, participants' ability to join in increased by 19%

100% of care home staff found Bright Shadow creative activities training useful

...and arts activities are enjoyable in the 'here and now'!