



**DEMENTIA
ALLIANCE**
of North Carolina
A STATE OF CARING

***I have I have a memory
impairment. Please be
aware of this during
our interaction.
Thank you!***

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www.dementianc.org



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ACTIVITY BOXES

General Information: Activity Boxes can be used by visitors, volunteers and staff. They should contain all materials needed, be readily available, and include instructions. They should be stored away when not in use.

Examples of Instructions:

1. Gather your box and make sure everything is ready... THEN
2. Use a positive approach to engage the person

For people who are interacting with you:

- ask for their help or to try
- ask them to do the first step
- show them what to do
- gesture to the objects/task
- work alongside them

For people who are looking at your hand or other object: (non responsive)

- call their name again and wait for a response
- offer them an item, if they take it, offer another
- gesture to an object
- touch or tap an object

- show the person what to do, then hand them an object
- offer one object at a time, unless they take over

3. Give positive feedback - positive regard - thanks!

4. If the person is actively engaged with the box activity - AND is interacting with you:

- stay with them and engage them until they are done
- OR excuse yourself and find out if they need you there to continue - if so come back

AND is not interacting with you:

- move away from the person and monitor for completion
- check on progress quietly

5. When finished -

- put the box away for next time

Examples of Boxes



FLOWER ARRANGING

Materials -

- artificial flowers cut into single stems (leaves and flowers) - different colors
- plastic glasses or vases

Possible Activities

1. sort by color into groups
2. make up arrangements
3. put arrangements on tables for decorations
4. put flowers back into the box



PIPE CONSTRUCTION

Materials -

- Lots of 1 1/2" or 2" PVC pipe lengths (available at Home Depot or Lowes)
- Lots of connectors - 2-way, 3-way, 4-way
- pictures of completed patterns (for higher level folks)

Possible Activities

1. put pieces together
2. put pieces together following a pattern
3. take pieces apart
4. use as rhythm sticks while singing
5. sort into different types and sizes



SANDING BLOCKS

Materials -

- Several square 2x4" blocks with one side covered with a sheet of sandpaper that is secured with duct tape
- Pieces of wood that can be sanded
- Shapes that can be sanded

Possible Activities

1. sand pieces of wood
2. roll sanding paper against one another
3. handle the sand paper



APPLYING LOTION

Materials - (check for skin allergies first)

- Different lotions
- Scented lotions
- Unscented lotions

Possible Activities

1. have person apply lotion to self
2. apply lotion for the person on arms and hands
3. give a 'massage' or 'rub'



LAUNDRY KIT

Materials -

- clothes line
- clothes pins (clip and push on)
- washcloths
- pillow cases
- plastic bottle to put water in - used to wet items so that they need to be hung out
- small laundry basket
- clothespin bag

Possible Activities

1. have someone help you set up clothesline outside
2. put clothespins out on the line
3. take clothespins off the line
4. you wet the items - hang out the wash
5. sort clothespins - by color, by type
6. take in dry laundry
7. fold laundry
8. put laundry away in a drawer
9. put pillow cases on pillows
10. take down clothesline
11. hand you the clothespins
12. hand you the items to hang up
13. take items and put them in a basket as you take them off
14. handle the cloths

(continued)



OFFICE WORK

(this can be divided into several smaller kits)

Materials

- papers that have fold lines on them (you fold them unfold and stack)
- envelopes
- colored paper - mixed or sorted
- box of paper clips
- stapler with staples
- calculator (hand operated and a electric one, if you can find one)
- pencils
- pencil sharpener
- worksheets
- blunt paper scissors
- tape with dispenser
- small pieces of colored paper, pictures, articles
- file folders
- hanging file holder
- index cards with an index card holder
- rubber bands
- junk mail
- business cards

Possible Activities

1. fold papers
2. stuff envelopes
3. take papers out of envelopes and open them up
4. sort papers by color
5. collate papers
6. paper clip papers together
7. staple papers together
8. file papers into file folders (maybe matching colors, letters, numbers or words)
9. put file folders into file folder holder (alphabetically or by words for some)

10. use calculator (use sheet of numbers to enter, give simple problems...)
11. sharpen pencils
12. tape pieces of paper of pictures onto page
13. cut up paper, cut out pictures, cut out ads
14. sort index cards by color
15. put index cards into a box - one at a time
16. take index cards out of the box
17. rubber band index cards
18. tape recipes/ads on index cards
19. open junk mail
20. rubber band business cards



YARN

Materials

- skeins of yarn
- small styrofoam balls to start wrapping yarn around
- knitting already started on large needles
- crocheted work already started - large crochet hook

Possible Activities

1. Wind yarn on ball
2. Pull yarn off ball, while you wind it
3. Pull yarn off skein while you wind it
4. Crochet - single or double
5. Pull out crocheted work
6. Knit
7. Pull out knitted work

(continued)



Utensils

Materials

- Sorting tray
- Plastic ware - different colors
- Metal ware
- Drying cloth - dish cloth
- silverware, silver paste, cleaning rags

Possible Activities

1. put utensils in tray - give sample
2. sort utensils by types (knives, forks, spoons)
3. sort utensils by color
4. place utensils out on tables for meals
5. pick up place settings not used and put them away
6. wash silverware and dry, then put away
7. polish the silver



DUSTING

Materials

- dust cloth
- lemon spray
- (dusty surfaces are needed for folks with higher skills)
- feather dusters (2 at least)

Possible Activities

1. Clear surface to be dusted
2. Put spray on rag
3. Dust surface
4. Wipe surfaces
5. Put items back in place
6. Dust off surfaces with feather duster
7. Run feather duster along walls and blinds



NUTS AND BOLTS

Materials

- Nuts (vary sizes)
- Washers (vary sizes)
- Bolts (vary sizes)
- Short metal plates with several holes through them
- Pieces of wood with holes drilled through them
- small containers with lids (margarine containers work well)
- crescent wrenches

Possible Activities

1. sort each item by size
2. sort by type (washers versus nuts, etc.)
3. put together/take apart nuts and bolts
4. put together/ take apart nuts, washers, bolts
5. put bolts through plates/wood and put on washers and put on nuts
6. use wrenches to tighten/loosen bolts and nuts

(continued)



COUPON CLIPPING

Materials

- blunt scissors
- magazines
- food stores flyers
- newspapers
- mailers
- folder
- small boxes
- small accordion file

Possible Activities

1. find coupons
2. cut out coupons
3. sort coupons
4. file coupons
5. talk about coupons
6. talk about food
7. talk about sales



FOLDING & HANGING CLOTHING

Materials

- variety of clothing items (Goodwill) - many of same things
- small laundry basket
- plastic hangers
- 'hanging' rack

Possible Activities

1. fold items - put in basket or drawer
2. put items on hangers
3. hang items
4. button buttons



WINDOW WASHING

Materials

- spray bottle of vinegar
- paper towels
- newspaper
- bag for trash

Possible Activities

1. spray windows
2. wipe windows with paper towels
3. wipe windows with newspaper
4. put used paper in trash bag



SWEEPING UP

Materials

- broom
- dust pan
- vacuum cleaner

Possible Activities

1. sweep floor
2. hold dust pan
3. run vacuum

(continued)



CAR CARE

Materials

- cleaning rags
- soap
- buckets
- squeegee
- polishing cloths
- wax
- window cleaner
- brushes
- hose
- nozzle

Possible Activities

1. wash cars
2. supervising washing cars
3. wash windows of cars
4. talk about cars
5. wax cars
6. dry cars
7. clean wheels



SNACK MAKING

Materials

- butter knife
- pitcher
- cup measure

- stirring spoon
- tray
- napkins
- paper cups
- paper plates
- supplies for preferred drinks and snacks

Possible Activities

1. make drink
2. make snack
3. serve drink
4. serve snack
5. clean-up after snack
6. deliver snacks



Stuffed Animals

Materials

- small stuffed animals of various types
- brushes
- ribbons
- collars

Possible Activities

1. holding and petting
2. brushing
3. stroking
4. setting them out
5. putting ribbons on them
6. putting collars on them
7. talking about animals
8. sharing them with someone else

(continued)



Hot Socks

Materials

- long sports socks
- large bag of uncooked rice
- large bag of dry beans
- large mouth funnel
- plastic measuring cup
- dried herbs (lavender, rosemary, lemon thyme...)
- (use of a microwave)
- basket to carry heated socks

Possible Activities

1. Make up socks
 - help pour rice/beans into socks
 - hold socks
 - hold funnel
 - measure rice/beans
 - select herbs to use
 - crush dried herbs
 - put herbs in sock
 - tie knot in sock OR tie with a ribbon
2. help microwave sock - 1-2 minutes on high
3. share socks with others
4. hold onto sock
5. put sock on shoulders, lap, arms, neck
6. get a massage with the sock
7. give you a massage with a sock
8. empty out socks for another day



BUTTON OR RIBBON SORT

Materials

- large assortment of buttons or ribbons
- lots of small containers
- small baggies

Possible Activities

1. sort buttons/ribbons into piles or containers
2. simplify sorting to match the person's abilities
3. have person put all buttons/ribbons back into one container
4. handle and count or move buttons from one container to another



COIN SORT

Materials

- large number of coins
- coin rolls
- containers
- plastic coin holders (they have preset levels for what goes in a roll)
- 'piggy bank' or other container with slit in the top of it

Possible Activities

1. Sort coins
2. Count out coins
3. Put coins in rolls
4. Handle the money
5. Put coins in a piggy bank
6. Give you coins to put in the rolls



SHOE CLEANING

Materials

- Dull/dirty shoes or boots (Goodwill or Thrift Stores)
- polish
- cleaning rags
- polishing brush

Possible Activities

1. clean shoes
2. polish shoes
3. brush off shoes
4. shine shoes
5. pair up shoes



MUSIC TIME

Materials

- CDs from the 20's, 30's, 40's
- Song sheets (mostly for you)

Possible Activities

1. singing
2. dancing
3. talking about memories
4. relaxing
5. encouraging folks to come to a given location
6. encouraging folks to stay in a given location



SOCKS SORT

Materials

- lots of socks of the same type
- lots of socks of different colors or types
- small basket

Possible Activities

1. sort socks by color
2. sort socks by type
3. pair up socks
4. fold/roll pairs
5. put socks in a drawer
6. put paired socks in the basket



PILLOW STUFFING

Materials

- small sewn pillows with one end open
- long tube socks
- bags of polyester stuffing material
- safety pins, diaper pins or clothespins
- pieces of ribbon or cord

Possible Activities

1. stuff pillows
2. pin pillows shut
3. stuff socks
4. tie socks shut at various points along the length making a 'caterpillar' type creature



NAIL CARE KITS

Materials

- Washcloths (some for wet and some for dry)
- basin to put warm wet washcloths in
- bag for used washcloths
- polish
- polish remover
- cotton balls and pads
- orange sticks
- emery boards
- nail clippers
- soaking dishes
- water pitcher
- lotion
- sealable bags to put used polish remover pads in (smell)

Possible Activities

1. do hand warm soaks with warm wet washcloth wraps
2. dry hands
3. clean around and under nails
4. apply lotion to nail areas and hands
5. remove old polish from nails
6. help with nail care, or have nail care done
7. select preferred color
8. help apply polish or have it applied
9. admire one another's nails
10. have the person do your nails
11. do toe nails (unless medical condition prohibits it)



FOOT CARE KITS

(make sure there are not conditions prohibiting foot care)

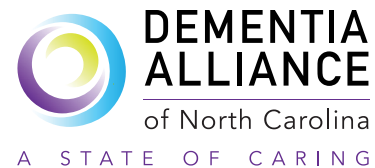
Materials

- basin
- towels
- baby oil
- lotion
- washcloths
- foot massage machine (available at drug stores and 'Walmart'- type stores) – must be cleaned between people and uses

Possible Activities

1. soak feet (might put some oil in the water)
2. rub feet
3. dry feet
4. put lotion on feet

PROVIDED BY



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*Source: Teepa Snow, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA,
Dementia Care and Training Specialist
Positive Approach, LLC*

Activities To Do With a Person Who Has Dementia

1. Vacuum
2. Iron
3. Bake cookies
4. Read paper
5. Invite children to visit
6. Read out loud
7. Listen to music
8. Toss a ball
9. Color or Draw
10. Make lemonade
11. Wipe off table
12. Weed the garden
13. Make Pigs-in-a-Blanket
14. Spelling bee
15. Readers Digest
16. Fold clothes
17. Pet visit
18. Cut pictures out of old cards
19. Wash dishes
20. Bake bread
21. Sort objects by shape or color
22. Plant seeds
23. Look at family photos
24. Put silverware away
25. Make a Valentine's collage
26. Sing songs
27. Take a ride
28. Make a pie
29. Read a poem
30. Dye Easter eggs
31. Sort/match socks
32. Take a walk
33. String cheerios to hang for birds
34. String cranberries
35. Use your senses (smell & taste)
36. Name things that start with the letter "A"
37. Reminisce about favorite memories
38. Clip coupons
39. Sort poker chips
40. Count things
41. Fold towels
42. Afternoon Tea
43. Reminisce - Inventions
44. Play a game
45. Paint
46. Make a collage from magazine pictures
47. Identify states and capitols
48. Make a family tree
49. Color American Flag
50. Cook hot dogs
51. Finish the cliché
52. Water house plants
53. Reminisce - first kiss
54. Play horseshoes
55. Dance
56. Sing a hymn
57. Make ice cream
58. Plant bulbs
59. Make greeting cards
60. Sort cards by suite
61. Write a letter
62. Dress in team colors
63. Pop popcorn
64. Name the U.S. Presidents
65. Give a manicure
66. Dance
67. Plant a tree
68. Make a May basket
70. Finish a famous saying
71. Feed the ducks
72. Mold dough or clay
73. Picture books
74. Put a simple puzzle together
75. Sand wood
76. Rub on hand lotion
77. Decorate place mats
78. Arrange fresh flowers
79. Remember famous people
80. Rake leaves
81. Make a fruit salad
82. Sweep
83. Talk about famous events
84. Nursery Rhymes. You start
85. Make sandwiches
86. Dust furniture
87. Cut up paper/ Tear paper
88. Take care of bird cage or fish tank.
89. Trace/cut leaves
90. Simple trivia questions
91. Finish Bible quotes
92. Paint with string
93. Cut out pictures from magazines
94. Read/listen to a short story
95. Put coins in a jar
96. Sew simple stitches
97. Put seed in bird feeder
98. Play checkers
99. Wipe off patio furniture
100. Clean out pumpkin
101. Roll yarn
102. Reminisce about summer
103. Wash the car
104. Sort the recycling
105. Make a cake



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