



DARE TO IMAGINE

a care
home's
guide to
creativity





Magic Me

Magic Me exists to combat ageism: our vision is a world where everyone can enjoy their unique creativity and full potential. Magic Me is a pioneer in intergenerational arts practice, sparking dialogue between generations and across cultures. For more than 30 years Magic Me has partnered with care homes and schools in east London to create powerful artworks and performances, which challenge how society thinks about ageing.

Today Magic Me prioritises widening access to the arts, community building and improving the quality of life for individuals in care homes, in London, Essex and beyond.

www.magicme.co.uk

[@MagicMeArts](https://www.instagram.com/MagicMeArts)

Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

Between 2019 - 2023, Magic Me delivered **Artists' Residencies in Care Homes**, a project bringing together professional Arts Companies and Excelcare care homes in Essex to raise expectations of what the arts can be and do in Care Settings.

Artists, including dancers, performers and filmmakers, worked alongside each care home community (including staff, residents, family and friends) to make artworks that showcase the exciting possibilities of creativity in care. Read more about the project on [page 28](#).

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Introduction

We understand that not every home will have a long-term partnership with an arts company although we hope in the future this will change!



With this in mind, we thought about how care homes can build creativity into their everyday.

This resource will help you bring the magic of 'Artists' Residencies in Care Homes' to what you already do. It has been written with input from Care Team members to ensure it takes into account the unique needs of care homes.

Inside you will find:

- Ideas, prompts and guidance to bring **'everyday creativity'** to your home
- Activities to try whether you have 5 minutes or an afternoon
- Real-life examples from Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

We have broken down 'everyday creativity' into three ingredients

1. **Creative Moments**
2. **Creative Environments**
3. **Creative Togetherness**

"But I'm not creative!"

We will guide you through each ingredient but we also invite you to go further and make 'everyday creativity' your own.

If you're looking to dive right in, head to [page 7](#) which will list the most useful sections based on your role.



“By just beginning the process something magical will happen, you might not know the ending but that’s okay, you will find it along the way”

Artist, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

PROMPT:
What does
creativity
mean to
you?

Magic Me often hears people say “The arts aren’t for me” or “I’m not very creative.” Early experiences of the arts can shape people’s feelings about them for a very long time and put them off trying something new. At Magic Me we recognise that we all need different conditions to thrive and be creative.

We asked Care Staff and Artists who took part in Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes what creativity meant to them.

**Playfulness • curiosity • imagination • fun • expression • in the moment
thinking outside the box • growth • changing the ordinary • taking risks
enjoying the unexpected • seeing things differently • decorating moments
process and experience • in the moment • different for everybody • being free
a recipe of ingredients • an invitation • an opportunity • trial & error
something that can’t be forced • resilience • being bold • empowering
believing in yourself • always worth a try • what makes us human**

Why bring creativity to your Care Home?

“I passionately believe that just because someone lives in a care home they don’t stop being entitled to high-quality arts and culture...that is more than just something to pass the time.”

Susan Langford, Magic Me Founder & Director

Since 1989 Magic Me has pioneered intergenerational arts practice*, learning what it takes to deliver great arts in Care Settings and seeing the impact of the arts for older people and staff alike. We recognise that everyone has the right to extraordinary creative experiences no matter who they are and where they live.

Below we have listed a few reasons why people choose to take part in Magic Me’s projects and why you might want to bring ‘everyday creativity’ to your care Home.

A sense of Connection

The arts combine thinking, feeling and doing and a variety of ways to be with other people - allowing us to have shared experiences and see things from others’ point of view.

A sense of Identity

The arts offer ways to express who we are today, reflect on who we were yesterday and explore who we might be in the future - celebrating our individual and shared identities.

A sense of Achievement

The arts offer challenge and stretch, taking us beyond our comfort zones to surprise ourselves and others - increasing our confidence in the moment and giving achievements to look back on with pride.

A sense of Occasion

The arts offer ways and times that make us feel special and moments that are ‘out of the ordinary’ - allowing us to be part of something that feels important.

*bringing different age groups together through creative projects, activities and events.

I am a..find pages based on your role

We have outlined a few key pages depending on who you are within a care home community.

I am a **Care Home Manager** – see pages **8 14 17**

I am an **Activities Coordinator** – see pages **14 20 22**

I am a **Care Assistant** – see pages **12 14 22**

I am a **Housekeeper** – see pages **14 22**

I am a **Receptionist** – see pages **14 22**

I am a **Gardener** or **Maintenance Person** – see page **14**

I am a **Chef** or **Kitchen Assistant** – see page **14**

I am **Family** or a **Friend** – see pages **12 14 22**

I am a **Volunteer** – see pages **12 14 22**



Creative Managers

“When the managers are on board it cascades down to what you’re doing and all the other staff.”

Lifestyle Coordinator, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

PROMPT: what would your version of a Creative Manager look like?

The success of Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes relied on Managers embracing and supporting the benefits of creativity in their homes.

Being a Creative Manager involves giving your team (and yourself!) permission to take risks and experiment without judgement if things don’t go to plan. You don’t need to give permission explicitly; you can model the behaviour you want to see in your team. Actions speak louder than words!

“...the advocacy of [Care Home Manager] and [Deputy Manager] saying, “That’s very important,” and the [Lifestyle Coordinator] saying, “Oh, they’re all amazing in the project,” was valuable in bringing in some of the other staff members.”

Artist, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

Embracing ‘everyday creativity’ can be as simple as wearing vibrant colours, making time to join a communal activity or dancing through a room.



Discovering creativity in your home

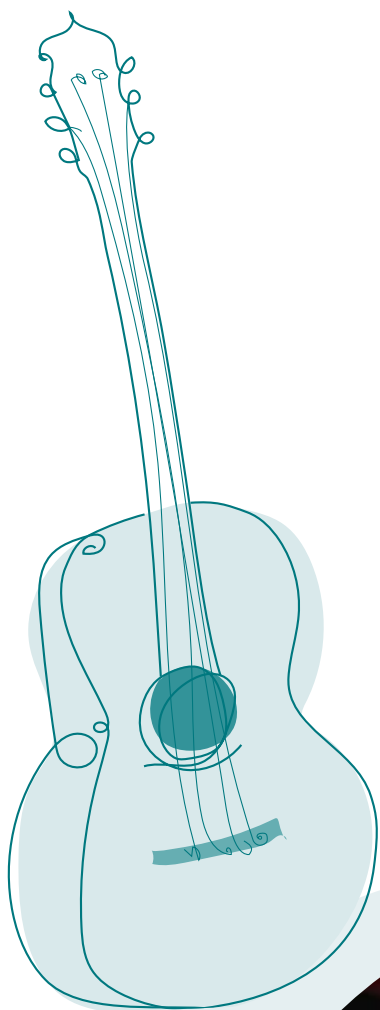
You may be surprised to find out how much creativity is already in your care home!

We found keen photographers, fashionistas, music lovers, Indian Classical Dancers, and many more types of gifted people in staff teams and wider care home communities.

Creativity is as much about your attitude and outlook as it is about specific skills (take a look at how care staff and Artists described creativity on [page 5](#))

If someone is willing to bring their creative flair to the home, stress that they don't have to be an 'expert' – you just need to be passionate about your interests and willing to share and explore them with others!

You might need to provide protected time, swap shifts around, or offer practical resources to make things happen but if you can invest in the existing talents in your community, you will ultimately be rewarded long-term.



PROMPT: What tasks do you do that could benefit from you being more 'present'?

Beginnings & Warm-Ups

Care homes are busy with activity, with call bells ringing, trolleys clattering and staff often hurrying from one responsibility to the next. Embracing the present moment can sometimes feel like a difficult task.

Spending five minutes tuning into your surroundings can build stronger connections with the people you care for, moving away from 'doing for' to 'being with'.

ACTIVITY 1

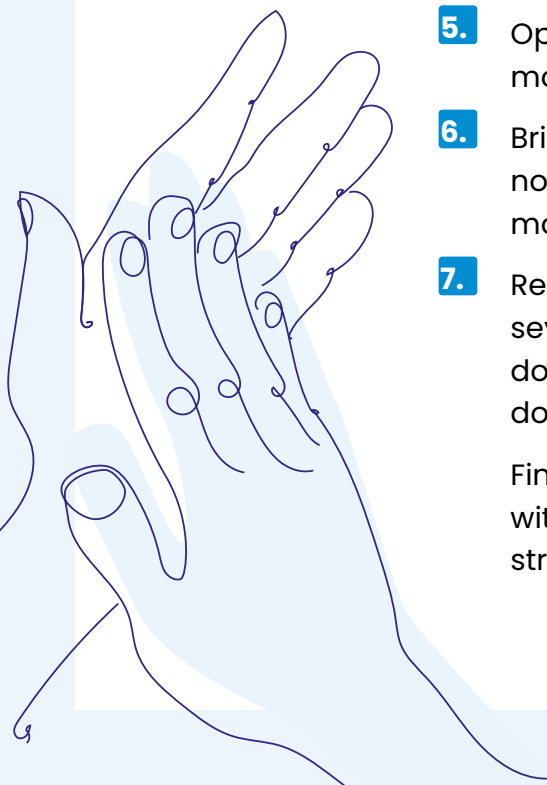
Below is an exercise to encourage calm and focus with mindful breathing.



Feel free to do this on your own, before starting your day or as a way to spend quality time with residents.

1. Get comfortable – sit in a chair, stand or lie down with your legs and arms relaxed.
2. Allow your body to feel heavier, focus on connecting with the floor through your chair, your feet or your bed.
3. Rub your hands together. Generate some warmth, then transfer the warmth to your arms, chest, shoulders, and cheeks.
4. Give yourself a gentle squeeze all over.
5. Open your mouth wide and have a big yawn, wriggle your mouth as if you are chewing a big toffee.
6. Bring your attention to your breath. Breathe in through your nose, really fill up your lungs and breathe out through your mouth into a long (imaginary) straw.
7. Repeat three times, breathing in for four counts and out for seven. As you breathe in, scoop your hands up and press them down as you breathe out, think about your energy going down, down into the ground.

Finish by looking around the room, (connecting with others with a smile and a wave if in a group) and give yourself a strong hug.





Creative Moments

"...we're not a hospital, we're a care home, and it's where people are cared for, in a home environment. And I think Artists' Residencies in Care Homes has helped that... It's okay to dance around and have fun...you're not here just to do clinical work, this is a home."

Care Home Manager, Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

Changing the energy in a care home can happen through small or large actions. It can be a spontaneous moment or a well-planned event.

A simple creative action with one person can lead to something bigger.

Things to consider:

- **Invitations** - finding the right invitation based on your knowledge of individuals e.g. leading with an invitation to socialise with music and drinks rather than directly saying there will be dancing.
- **Trial-and-error** - seeing an unexpected response as an opportunity for learning and a chance to try again in a different way e.g. if bringing out a football was unsettling, try a smaller ball that's softer and one colour.

ACTIVITY 2

Below are two ways you can creatively change a moment.



1. Keep a prop box handy to rummage in

Put on an accessory and see how it looks. How does the accessory make you feel? Where might you wear it? Residents and staff could pick an accessory to wear to lunch or dinner.



New Adventures (dance company) used the following props in movement sessions at St Fillans Care Home:

- Feathers – larger ostrich ones work well
- Balls – soft football, small sponge balls, beach ball, pom-poms
- Scarves and feather boas – different patterns & colours
- Balloons – a variety of shapes sizes and colours
- Percussion instruments e.g. tambourines, maracas
- Natural materials – autumn leaves, flowers
- A large parachute

Other props you could use:

- Ribbon Sticks
- Hats – as many different shapes, colours and styles as you can find
- Gloves
- Costume jewellery
- Waistcoats
- Ties
- Sunglasses
- Hand mirrors

“...sometimes there’s just these lulls in the day... and they said if, on each floor...they had a box of props...balloons or some scarves.....they can find little moments...”

Artist, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

2. Bring props and music together

Take a prop, and play a piece of music – how does that music make you move with your prop? Make different shapes. If it’s a soft prop like a feather, how does it feel on your face, on your arms. Follow each other’s movements like you are looking in a mirror.

Music & Sound



Music can be a simple way to change a moment and bring a sense of calm or liven things up!

Introducing new types of music during Artists' Residencies in Care Homes supported staff and residents to explore new worlds focusing on creating 'moods' rather than specific eras.

Music and sound can support all three of the creative ingredients in this resource. They can shift a moment, change an environment and bring people together.

Audiobooks **Types of audiobooks:** poetry, plays, biographies, true stories, imaginary stories, self-help, essays, guided meditations...

Genres: adventure, crime, fairy tales, fables, folk tales, fantasy, historical, horror, humour, mystery, romance, science fiction, short stories, thrillers, the natural world...

Sound Birdsong, waves, rainfall, children singing and playing, leaves rustling, fairgrounds, harbours, insects, nightlife, sports events...

Music **Types of music:** classical, experimental, blues, country, electronic, folk, hip-hop, jazz, pop, R&B, bhangra, rock, reggae, afrobeat, religious, film soundtracks...

Instruments: guitar, maracas, bagpipes, marimba, pan flute, cello, tabla...

Lively and upbeat tracks

Grupo Cimarrón - *Ilanero si soy Ilanero*

Rubén González - *Cumbanchero*

Paulo Nutini - *Pencil Full of Lead*

Threepenny Bit - *Arthur Muse's*

Pérez Prado - *Mambo No 5*

Calm and gentle tracks

Max Richter - *On the Nature of Daylight*

Nils Frahm - *Over There, It's Raining*

Ladysmith Black Mambazo - *Thula Mtwana*

Jocelyn Pook - *Ave Maria*

Raghu Dixit - *Ambar*

Mitski - *My Love Mine All Mine*

Dramatic and moving tracks

Elgar - *Cello Concerto in E Minor*

Holst - *The Planets*

Rachel Portman - *We Had Today*

Planet Earth II - *Something Worth Protecting*

Care staff and artists found the following helpful during their residencies:

- Using Spotify, iTunes or YouTube to create playlists of different genres
- A Tablet, Mobile Phone or iPad to play music from
- A good quality portable Bluetooth speaker
- Access to WiFi

PROMPT: What tasks do you do that could benefit from you being more 'present'?



Giving tasks a creative makeover

"It's not just about 'doing an activity' - any moment can be creative."

Lifestyle Coordinator, Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

There are many ways to bring 'everyday creativity' into the regular rhythms of the day. To do this, you might need to think a little differently about how to turn a routine task into an experience.

It takes two

For example, housekeepers in care homes often use feather dusters. If the housekeeper has TWO feather dusters, this becomes an invitation to dust together, have a 'sword' fight, or dance whilst the radio plays.

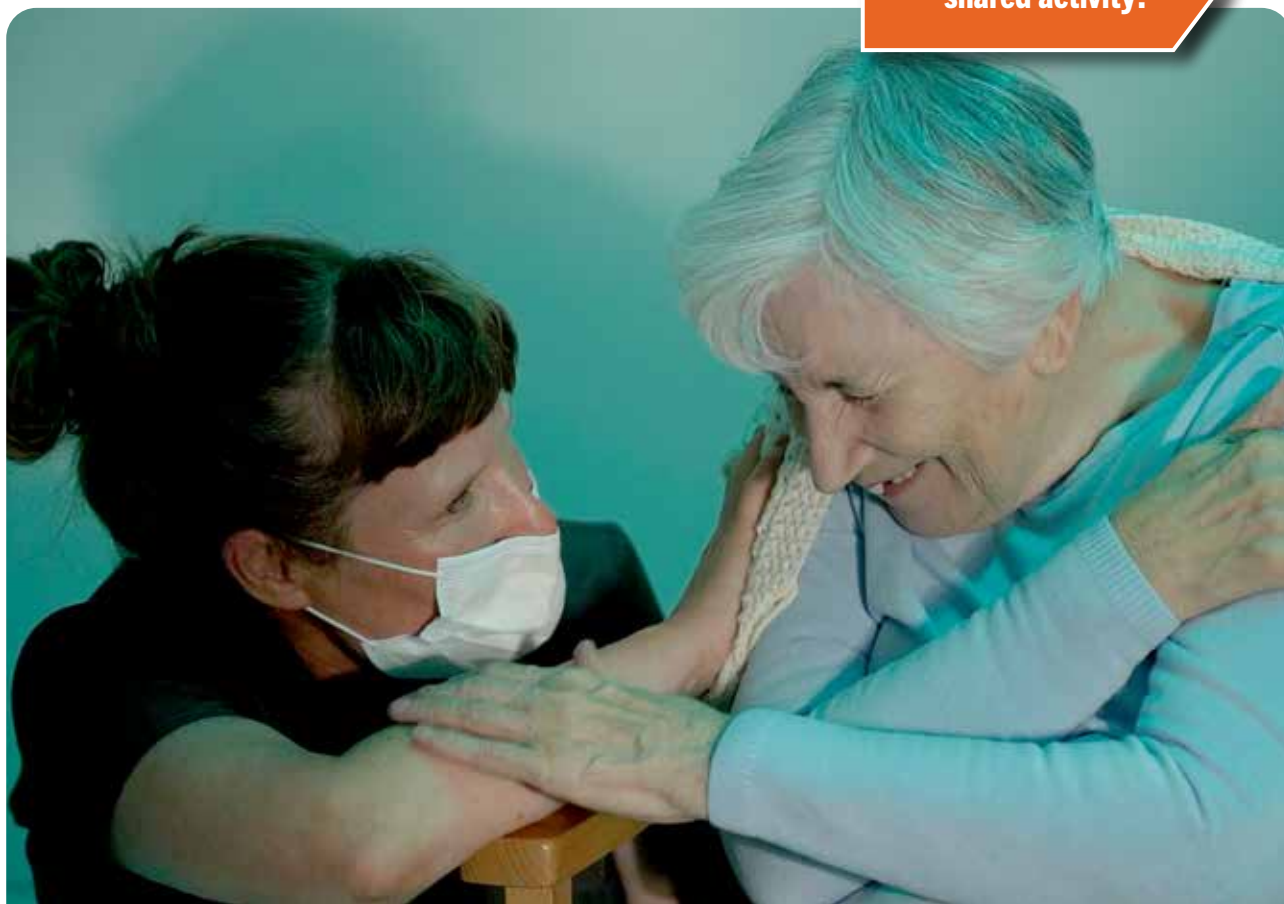
The same could be applied to a hairbrush when supporting someone to get ready for the day. If you both have a hairbrush, you can move and stretch together. It becomes a shared activity rather than something you do 'to' or 'for' someone.

Head to [page 27](#) to write down your own creative makeovers.

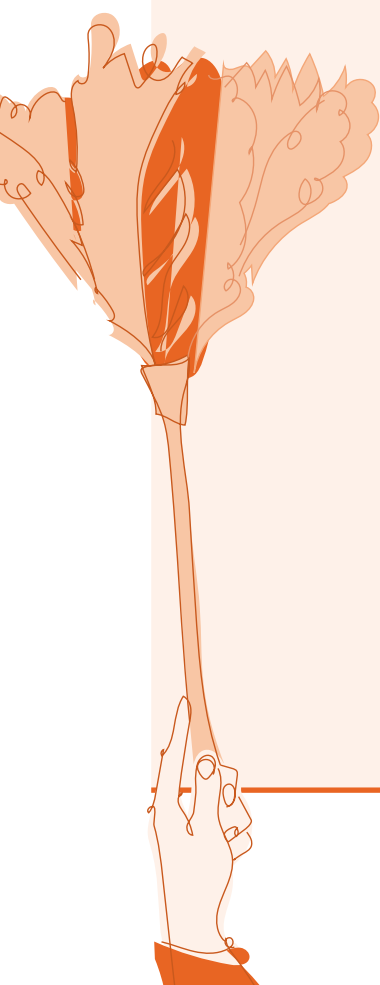
Tasks	Creative Makeover
Supporting Personal Care Bathing and showering Brushing teeth Getting dressed and undressed Choosing what to wear Brushing hair Putting on shoes Putting on jewellery, hats, accessories Putting on makeup, perfume, aftershave Manicures or pedicures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open the curtains together and take time to notice your view – the sky, the weather, the sounds... ● Put on music whilst supporting personal care – you could play a favourite song or have a playlist of songs about washing e.g. I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair ● Swirl, splash, and pour water – talk about how it feels, the temperature – put music on and make the water move to the music. Add a scented oil or a foaming bath soak. ● Whilst getting dressed – talk about colours – is it a green sort of day, a blue day? – look for clothing with that colour in. ● Encourage movement - stretch or dance as you help someone to get dressed.

Tasks	Creative Makeover
<p>Supporting Mealtimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing menus Preparing food Organising the delivery of food Laying tables Choosing food and drinks Serving meals Supporting people to eat Clearing tables Washing up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask residents to help out at mealtimes, acting as ‘hosts’, folding napkins, laying them in different patterns. ● Create a themed meal including decorations and outfits. ● Print out song sheets related to food and drink to put on tables. ● Print out adult colouring sheets and leave pens and pencils at the table to inspire creative moments before and after a meal. ● Sing or dance whilst you clear and wash up.
<p>Housekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sorting and doing laundry Checking items are named and returned to the right people Dusting Sweeping Vacuuming Emptying rubbish Cleaning tables Cleaning windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have different colour buckets for different types of laundry – sorting things together. ● Clean to music and dance together. ● Act ‘the clown’ by doing a task in a playful, exaggerated way, e.g. pretending to dust someone’s legs.

PROMPT: Think about the objects you use day-to-day. If you had two of them, are there opportunities for shared activity?



Tasks	Creative Makeover
<p>Gardening</p> <p>Sweeping leaves Weeding flowerbeds Pruning flowers Planting new flowers Mowing lawns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect leaves – gather them, look at them, feel them and discuss shape, texture, which tree they're from. Do the same with flowers and weeds. ● Print out pictures of leaves, flowers, and plants. Match up the ones from the garden to the ones on your sheets – you could turn this into a quiz or bingo. ● Plant indoors in pots, getting everyone to help.
<p>Moving around the home</p> <p>Helping people to move from one place to another, going for walks around the home or outside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe and discuss your surroundings – notice the colour palettes, the patterns in the wallpaper or the pictures on the wall. Invite opinions on style and preferences. ● Go a different way - what can you discover on your new journey? ● Find different ways to to move through a room or down a hallway depending on the music e.g. waltz, marching music.
<p>Organised Activities</p> <p>Exercise Quizzes Bingo Events/Entertainers</p>	<p>Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring in dance and props to exercise and fitness – do the Can Can instead of leg lifts. Imagine you are reaching high to dust a cobweb rather than just stretching the arm up. Use your feather duster! <p>Quizzes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Print out a series of famous paintings or show them on a screen – Can residents and staff guess the title? Can they guess the Artist? Can they re-order them from the oldest to the most recent? <p>Bingo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A treasure hunt of interesting objects – hidden around the home – create a bingo card with photos of the objects, when you find one cross it off. <p>Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make invitations to give a sense of occasion, better still ask residents to make their own. ● Make decorations, create playlists, plan menus, get cooking. ● Dress up! Provide a dressing up box, or portable clothes rail with options to try on. ● Take photos, asking residents to be photographers. Create a photo album together afterwards or a display.



Creative Environments

“...we started talking about what these particular residents’ lives must be like when they’re in their rooms most of the time. The potential of that space, which is white walls and a white ceiling...all the white walls around are great portals into other worlds and that felt like something for [less mobile] residents we could try...and experiment with...”

Artist, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

The environment we live and work in can have a significant impact on our wellbeing.

An environment is more than how something ‘looks’. It is the sounds, smells, lighting, colours and textures of a room or space.

Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes enabled homes to think about their environments in different ways with some building new spaces and others transforming ones that already existed.

ACTIVITY 3



Below is an activity to tune into your environments, see what’s already there and how it might be making people feel (including staff!).

Pick a room or area of your home - Find one thing that catches your eye, one sound you can hear and one thing you can touch. What do you like about it? How does it make you feel? Did anything surprise you? How can you use this information to make changes?

Creative Sensory Spaces

“This is an invitation

...to notice...

for a moment where you are

Not a moment for doing. But perhaps a moment for undoing

Or just doing less”

Fevered Sleep, Gestures Pamphlet

PROMPT: Do the environments in your care home support people to have different sensory experiences?

The benefits of sensory-rich spaces are widely recognised by care homes. They can create moments of tranquillity or times of excitement depending on an individual’s needs throughout the day.

We've put together a table with guiding questions to help you think about different sensory experiences in your home. Photocopy these pages or write directly in the resource.

Spaces	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there a space in your home that could be made to feel a little different from how it does now? Either temporarily or permanently. ● It doesn't have to be a room, it could be a corner, part of a corridor, or a waiting area - think about those 'in-between spaces'. ● Who is the space for? Can the whole care home community use it? ● How do you want to feel in this space? Soothed, calmed, peaceful, delighted, energised, playful, safe, warm, reflective. ● Where will you find 'sensory-rich' objects or materials? From around the home, the garden, donated, bought, or made together? ● Who is responsible for coordinating the space and looking after it? ● Does it have different uses during the day and in the evening? 	<p style="color: #008080; font-style: italic;"><i>Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...</i></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>

Lighting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the quality of the light? Softly lit, lots of daylight. ● What types of lights could you include? Torches, standing lights, string lights, LED candles. ● Are there ways to have control over the lighting e.g. clear on and off switches, dimming lights? 	<p style="color: #008080; font-style: italic;"><i>Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...</i></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>

Sound	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What sounds might you hear? Bird song, audiobooks, instrumental music, songs and audio in different languages. ● How will you play sounds? Bluetooth speakers, iPad, an Alexa, CD player, MP3 player with headphones. 	<p style="color: #008080; font-style: italic;"><i>Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...</i></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted #ccc;"/>

Smell

- What smells might you include? They could be familiar smells or new ones. Essential oils, lavender bags, cinnamon sticks, fresh rosemary, coffee beans, and aftershaves.
- How might you introduce smell to the space? In bowls, vases, jars, fabric bags, diffusers, bread makers.
- We recommend finding out if there are smells that people really don't like.

Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...

Touch

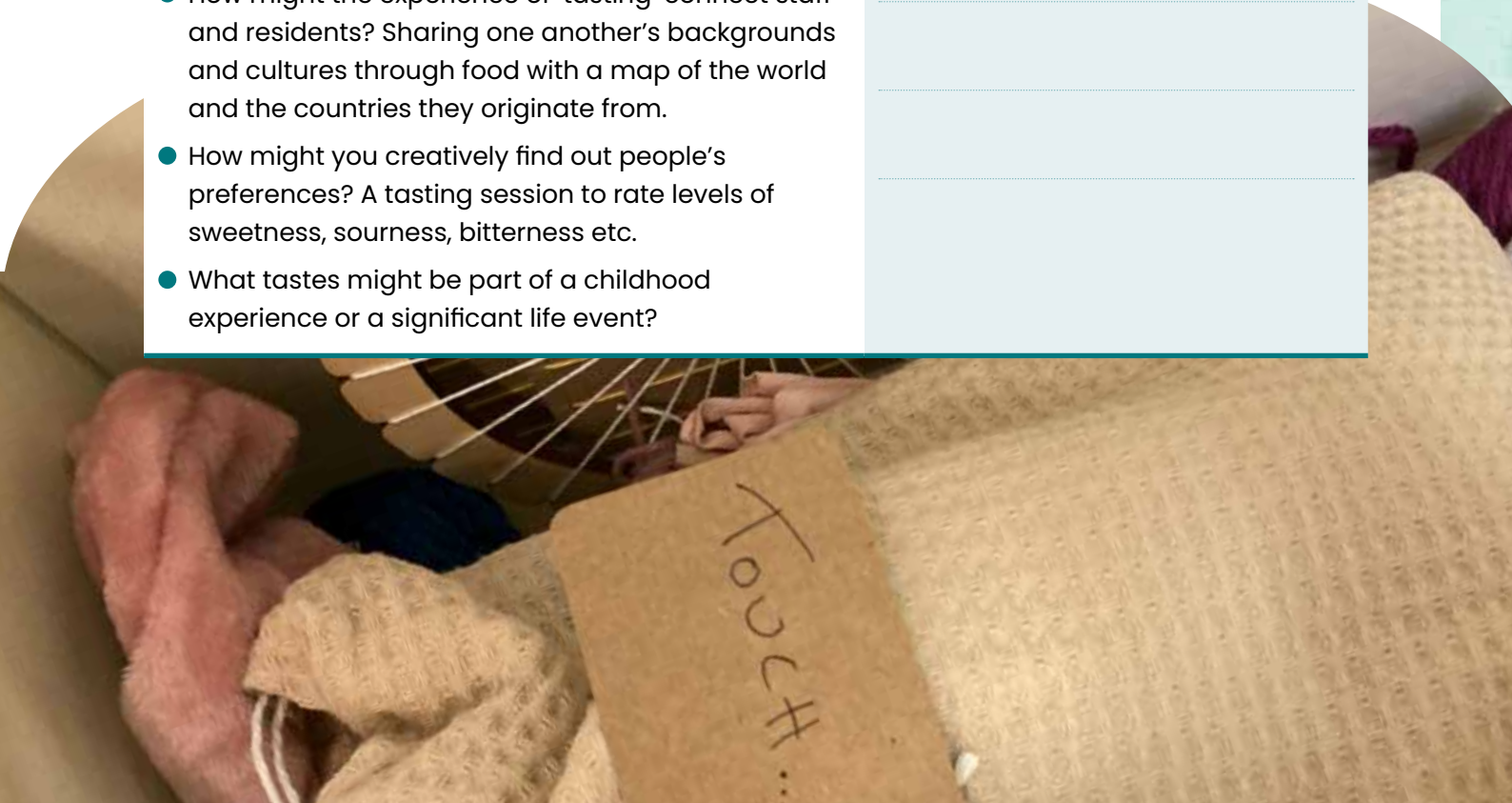
- What do the materials that are in the space feel like? Soft or hard, light weight or heavy, smooth or textured.
- Can they be moved around, picked up, or held? Do they create invitations to do something? A zipper to be opened and closed, something to be folded.
- How do they represent the interests, backgrounds and cultures of your whole care home community?

Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...

Taste

- Outside of meal times, how could 'taste' be explored? Can you explore touch and smell as well as taste.
- How might the experience of 'tasting' connect staff and residents? Sharing one another's backgrounds and cultures through food with a map of the world and the countries they originate from.
- How might you creatively find out people's preferences? A tasting session to rate levels of sweetness, sourness, bitterness etc.
- What tastes might be part of a childhood experience or a significant life event?

Add your comments, thoughts and ideas...



Creative Resources

Some people living in a care home are unable to leave their room or bed very easily or at all. Resources that can be transported around the home offer everyone the opportunity to connect and have new experiences.

Putting together a box, trolley, or basket of resources can be an activity in itself and a way to include preferences from across the home.

Things to consider:

- **Responsibility** - deciding as a team who is responsible for maintaining and looking after resources
- **Storage** - finding a place that can safely store resources without restricting use e.g. somewhere that isn't too high or low
- **Training** - figuring out who will show staff (permanent and temporary) how to use the resources
- A **variety of materials** people feel connected to
- An **eye-catching 'container'** that entices people in
- Materials that are **age-appropriate**
- A mix of the **familiar** and **unfamiliar**

PROMPT:
How might an everyday object be creatively updated to offer something new and surprising?

Re-Imagine an Everyday Object

Trolleys in care homes are often very functional, used to deliver tea, coffee, and meals or administer medicine. During their residency, arts partner **Gecko** made a creative alternative – a gold trolley with a variety of enticing objects including lipstick, fabrics, drumsticks, cakes, flowers, musical instruments and more.

Each person was invited to choose something that intrigued them and artists and care staff used the object they chose as a starting point for a creative exploration e.g. transforming an environment, making a piece of music.






What's in the bag?

ACTIVITY 4

Below is an activity that invites stimulation through the sense of touch by feeling a variety of textures and shapes inside a bag.

Fill a bag with different items and ask residents and staff to guess the object only using touch. You could include:

- Tennis ball
- Sponge
- Shower cap
- Conker
- Ball of yarn
- Large buttons
- Paint brush



Time needed:
5 - 10 mins
(10 - 15 mins to prepare your bag)

Creative Togetherness

“...there are so many ways to communicate with people. Even as carers, we kind of know that but we never really push the boundaries. We kind of keep in this bracket of how you can communicate with people. There are so many ways and we’ve learnt so much from our artists...”

Care Home Manager, Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes

Artists’ Residencies in Care Homes, provided new ways for staff and residents to communicate and spend time together.

Gecko (arts partner) and Lime Court Care Home worked together to make **a film** exploring the lives of residents through movement. Gecko used ‘non-verbal’ methods to connect with people living with a Dementia who no longer communicate through words or language.

ACTIVITY 5

Below is a one-to-one activity exploring touch, communication (verbal and non-verbal) and creative conversation.

You will need:

- A flat surface
- Large pieces of paper
- Easy-to-hold felt tip pens in different colours

Version 1: Verbal

In pairs, invite your partner to place their hand flat on the paper and ask permission to draw around their hand.

Invite them to draw around yours, supporting their pen if needed.

Ask your partner, what have these hands held?

Get creative with your follow-up questions e.g. Who have they held? **What have they made? Where have they travelled to? What have they pointed at?**

You will start to build a picture of people, places and interests. Share your experiences as well. This will help foster those feelings of doing something together.

Time needed:
5 – 10 mins
(or you can extend over a couple of days)

“Voice is not the only tool we have to communicate. There is so much we can say and express through a look, an outstretched hand, a squeeze...inviting residents to participate in their own way, allowing, accepting and celebrating their own version of engagement...”

Gecko

Version 2: Non-Verbal

Using different coloured pens, draw around one another's hands. Explore layering your hands on top of each other, spacing them out across the paper or linking them together.

Invite others to join and add their hands (staff and residents).

If you use a roll of lining paper you can keep adding and adding! To extend the activity for another day, you could add words, patterns, stickers, pom poms or photos!

Unity Through Movement

At St Fillans Care Home, artists, care staff and residents created a simple movement sequence that began and ended each session. It was a chance to get the blood flowing and helped the group bond.

Creating a group 'dance' for your home can bring a sense of community, familiarity and unity.

ACTIVITY 6

Below is a guide to making a basic movement structure. You could come up with a structure yourself and teach it to a group, or create it from scratch. You may need to adjust movements depending on mobility.

1. Find a song that is popular in your home.
2. Sit in a circle and listen to the words and feel the rhythm of your song - see if any movements occur naturally within the group.
3. Your song might include words that you can add movement to e.g. adding flying movements to the word 'birds' using your hands.
4. Some moments in the song will be more abstract - maybe you could step your feet in time to a rhythm or twirl your hands, move your arms like a swaying palm tree, kick your leg out as if kicking a football.
5. Maybe there are moments to reach across and shake hands with the person next to you.
6. Pick at least 5 movements and repeat throughout the song - the more the group does the dance together the more familiar it becomes.

"The song we chose was 'Catch a Falling Star'. The sequence included reaching up and catching an imaginary star, putting it in our pocket and pushing our arms forward in a breast stroke movement for the words 'fade away'. For the words 'rainy day' we made our fingers move like raindrops and for 'love comes to tap you on the shoulder' we tapped our shoulders then threw imaginary starlight from our pockets at the end."

New Adventures

Weaving Connections

Fevered Sleep (arts partner) made 'Tactile Resource Boxes' to help Sherrell House Care Home continue the work started during their residency. Part of the box included a 'loom' for weaving.

Weaving brings different materials together by weaving them in and out of threads held by a 'loom' or frame, eventually making a piece of textile or fabric.

"...feedback from the home has been really positive... weaving as an activity feels like a collective endeavour... it is hands-on but doesn't require the dexterity needed for sewing, making it more inclusive."

Artist, Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

Time needed:
10, 20 or 30 mins
(give yourself 20 minutes to set up your loom)

ACTIVITY 7

Below are instructions for weaving, an activity that invites the whole care home community to work together to make something meaningful.

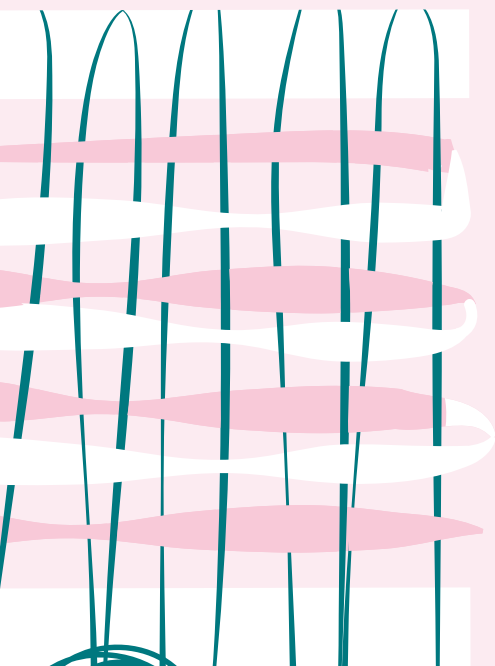
Materials needed:

- A basic loom - you can buy these online or make your own using an old picture frame without the glass. Having a variety of sizes means you can work with the needs of individuals e.g. a larger frame with thicker threads for someone with a visual impairment
- String
- Scissors
- Tape
- Materials to weave with - fabrics from different cultures or countries, a mix of interesting patterns, textures and colours, old clothing, strips of coloured paper, magazines or newspaper, thick yarn, branches, twigs, leaves

Setting up your 'loom':

Wrap the string around the frame vertically. Make sure the string is tied tightly. The wider the spaces are between the threads the easier it is to weave through different materials.

Make sure there are no sharp parts still attached if you are using an old picture frame as your loom.





A Weave of Us

A weave that everyone and anyone in the home contributes to over days, weeks or longer. A large shared frame that can be taken to different people and places in the home.

A weaving 'guestbook' for visitors

A basket of materials and frames for family and friends to add to each time they visit. Some people may appreciate an activity that they can do with the person they have come to visit.

A weave for different areas of the home

Different weaving projects across different floors or households. How can each floor make their weave unique to them?

Individual 'mini looms'

Smaller frames for residents to complete independently or with support from staff.

Seasonal Weaving

A weave that captures the seasons. What materials are available typically for this time of the year? How can they be inserted into a weave?

Endings & 'Cool Downs'

“For the sessions at St Fillans we would always have a cool down. Sitting back in our circle brought everyone together again, it was a calming, focused moment and signalled that we had come to the end.”

New Adventures

In a busy environment, it can be difficult to know when an activity has ended and another has started. Having a set of actions to bring things to a close can be important for both staff and residents.

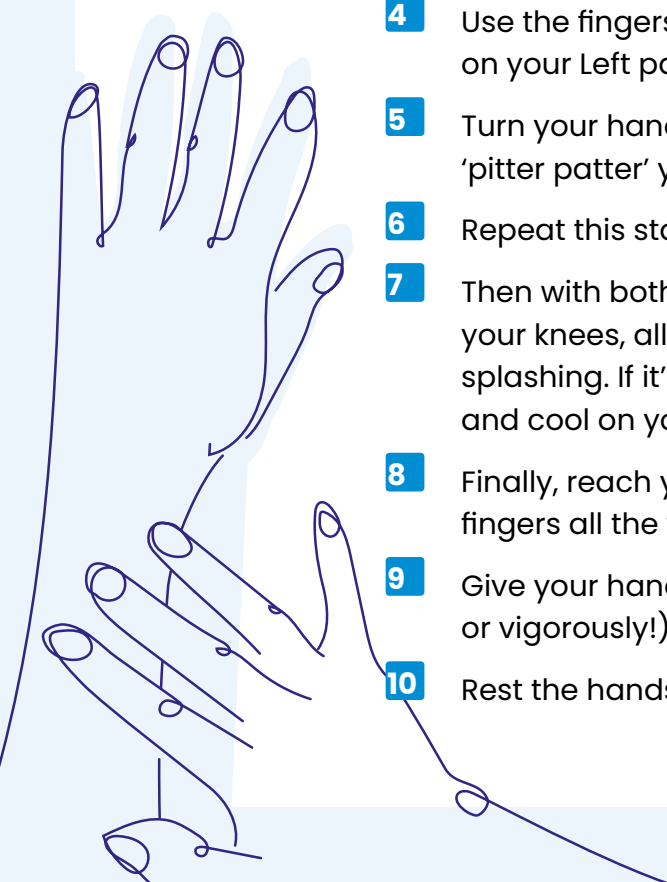


ACTIVITY 8

Below is an example of a 'cool down' that can help bring a moment, task or activity to a restful end.

There are no strict rules, find what works for you and the people taking part. You can do a couple of steps, add things and change the order!

- 1 Get yourself comfortable - seated or standing.
- 2 Put on some gentle music - head to [page 13](#) for examples.
- 3 Open your Left hand with the palm facing up.
- 4 Use the fingers on your Right hand to make a 'pitter patter' action on your Left palm - like raindrops falling from the sky.
- 5 Turn your hand over and do the same on the back of the hand. 'pitter patter' your fingers up your arm and back down.
- 6 Repeat this starting with your Right palm up.
- 7 Then with both hands 'pitter patter' up and down your thighs to your knees, all over your face, and head - imagining raindrops splashing. If it's a hot day, talk about the raindrops being lovely and cool on your skin, or if it's cold, nice warm rain.
- 8 Finally, reach your arms up high and 'pitter patter' with your fingers all the way down to your lap like rain falling from the sky.
- 9 Give your hands a shake as if you're shaking the water off (gently or vigorously!)
- 10 Rest the hands on your legs to finish.



Artists' Residencies in Care Homes



Led by Magic Me, high-profile arts companies Gecko, curious directive, New Adventures, and Fevered Sleep, teamed up with Excelcare care homes across Essex: Lime Court, Longfield, St Fillans, and Sherrell House.

Between 2019 - 2023, arts partners and care homes developed innovative creative experiences for residents and staff. Professional Artists delivered workshops, performances, and staff training sessions, inside the homes, in outside spaces and via Zoom, interactive films and activity pamphlets. The artists used different mediums including dance, film, photography, science experiments and textiles, to create artistic outcomes with their home.



Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University tracked and evaluated the work, creating the **Dare to Imagine report** which supported the development of this resource.

In the final phase of the project, partners ensured the legacy of their residencies, with further mentoring for care staff and the creation of digital and physical resources to enable care homes to continue the work going forward.



For full project information please visit the Magic Me website www.magicme.co.uk

Project Partners

Anglia Ruskin University

The Anglia Ruskin University research team was led by Professor Hilary Bungay and co-led by Professor Carol Munn-Giddings (prior to her retirement in 2021) with Dr Ceri Wilson and Anna Dadswell as co-researchers throughout. Building on their previous work on the Arts Council England-funded Creative Journeys project, the ARU team conducted research alongside the programme and produced key findings, learning, and recommendations

curious directive

curious directive is an internationally touring theatre company, based in Norwich. Since 2008, curious directive has explored theatre through the lens of science.

www.curiousdirective.com

Excelcare

Excelcare is a leading, family-run company with 31 warm and welcoming care homes and a compassionate homecare service. Since 1989, we have supported people to lead a high quality of life, delivering person-centred care that is as individual as the individuals we care for with empathy, kindness and respect.

www.excelcareholdings.com

Fevered Sleep

Fevered Sleep was established in 1996 by artistic directors Sam Butler and David Harradine. All our work is made in collaboration with people outside the company, and participation is at the heart of everything we do. We see our creative process as a kind of research: a way to investigate and reimagine the complex and challenging world in which we live.

www.feveredsleep.co.uk

Gecko

Gecko is an award-winning physical theatre company, led by Amit Lahav. Gecko's mission is to deepen human connection through physical, visual, visceral and ambitious performance and participation.

www.geckotheatre.com

www.gecko-still.co.uk

[@geckotheatre](https://www.instagram.com/geckotheatre)

New Adventures

New Adventures is an iconic, ground-breaking British dance-theatre company, famous for telling stories with a unique theatrical twist. Since 1987 New Adventures has changed the popularity of dance in Britain, creating works that have altered the perception of what is possible when it comes to telling stories without words.

www.new-adventures.net

Twitter: [@New_Adventures](https://twitter.com/New_Adventures)

Facebook: [MBNewAdventure](https://www.facebook.com/MBNewAdventure)

Instagram: [mbnewadventures](https://www.instagram.com/mbnewadventures)

Resource Contributors



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Sleep



NEW/ADVENTURES

Anglia Ruskin University

Quotes throughout this guide are taken from work by Anglia Ruskin University, who tracked Artists' Residencies in Care Homes.

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