

ASSISTED
LIVING
PROVIDER
RESOURCE

DEMENTIA RESOURCES

FOR PROVIDERS & STAFF

DEEP MIRROR ACTIVITY





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Engagement Program Facilitator Guide

Space Requirements: Room with tables (any size/shape) and chairs that cover the size of the group of staff being trained.

Approximate Time: 5-7 minutes for mirror activity and 5 minutes of reflection, conversation, and messages about communication skills

Group Size: 4-50 (dependent upon size of room and number of mirrors available)

Equipment/Resource Requirements: Mirrors (can be compact, foldable mirrors, or dollar store handheld mirrors), scratch paper (half sheets of paper/large scratch paper pieces work fine, and pens). If you want to pre-draw out what the “final” drawing should look like and display it, you can do so on large post-it notes, posterboard, or even use an A/V display.

Participant Special Needs Considerations: Participants with language barriers may need translation of directions, participants with hearing impairments may need to sit closer to the instructor and/or the instructor could provide written cues, one step at a time at the timed intervals. Participants with vision impairments may need guidance on placing the pen on paper or larger paper, utensil, or mirror.

Program Goals:

1. To create an understanding of what it feels like to experience cognitive delay.
2. To understand how difficult it can be to focus on a task with multiple disruptions and background noise.
3. To learn the importance of slowing down, speaking clearly, doing tasks in order, and providing time for the person living with dementia to process and respond to task instructions.
4. To help set “process-related goals” for communication that can be coached by leaders in the community (examples: get at or below eye level, speak slowly, use less words, wait for response from the person before speaking again, etc.)

Program Description:

Preparation: Ensure adequate set-up of the classroom space. Gather all materials in advance of the class and distribute them to each table. Greet students upon arrival and generate enthusiasm and positivity for the classroom setting.

Introduction: "Welcome to today's DEEP training experience. Today we are going to all participate in an activity. We are going to complete the activity first and then we will break into small group discussion at our tables before sharing some key take-aways, ideas, and action items."

Activity Description:

Facilitators will lead the activity and then prompt conversations at each table before helping to wrap up and summarize conversation.

"For this activity, you will all need to pay very close attention to each direction I give you, because starting at this moment I will not repeat any direction I give."

"In front of you, each of you has a mirror, a piece of paper, and a pen. Please pick up your mirror. You will need to hold the mirror up and angle it so that way you can see the piece of paper in front of you in the mirror. You are not allowed at any point in this activity to look directly at the piece of paper in front of you - only through your mirror. Ok - now that you have that angle, pick up the pen in front of you with your other hand. Now, only looking through your mirror at the paper, start drawing a house."

PAUSE for 10 seconds.

Give various directions that rotate the person in different directions, top, bottom, left, right.

While you are counting your 10 seconds between each direction, look for a couple of students that you can distract with conversation, compliments, or a question. Then go right back in to your next direction once you finish counting the 10 seconds.

You will want to give at least ten different directions before finishing out your drawing, to make sure your students are a little flustered, before you finish.

If any student asks aloud for you to repeat a direction, reply with, "I already told you, don't you remember?"

Examples of drawing details:

Tree on the left
Shutters on the windows
Doghouse on the bottom right
Sun on the top right
Sidewalk in the front follows a curve to the left.
Three bushes on the left of the sidewalk, two bushes on the right
Add seven apples to the tree.
Add five roses to the bushes on the right and three roses to the bushes on the left.
Draw birds to the top of the house on the opposite side of the tree.
Draw a chimney on the right with smoke coming out that goes out to the right and down.
Draw birds below the sun, at least three birds.

*Added difficulty level - can speak quickly, can mumble a little, or play a little background music, etc.
After completing all tasks, pause the group and say, "Ok. We are finished. Please look at your drawings."

There will likely be laughter and conversation. Give that a minute and then re-gather the group for the first five conversation questions. Wait on question six.

After you go through the questions explain, "This activity mimics what it is like for a person living with brain changes related to Alzheimer's and other causes of dementia when they have to do ANY task that requires more than one step."

"The frustration and emotions you felt in this short time are meant to help us all to be mindful of slowing down, being intentional about our words, tone, and facial expressions, and to be more patient when we are working with these individuals."

Conversation Prompting Questions:

1. Was this activity easy or difficult? Why? What made it difficult?
2. What did you notice about how you responded to the added challenge of having everything seem backwards? Did you feel frustrated, give up, etc.?
3. How were the directions I gave? Were they clear? Given too quickly?
4. Did I distract anyone? How was it to try to remember where you were on the steps?
5. If you asked me to repeat myself, how did it feel when I asked you why you did not remember what I already said? How did that come across to you? Did it seem rude or condescending?
6. What are some key takeaways to this activity?

Leadership Considerations:

1. Consider the staff you have and their personalities and needs.
2. Consider main points you want to emphasize.
3. Follow up with some demonstration of how to use proper communication techniques.