



Dementia Toolkit – Keep a sense of purpose

Hobbies and Dementia Craftivism



Dementia Toolkit
Living your life with hope



Keep a sense of purpose

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A great way to keep a sense of purpose is through not just keeping up old hobbies, but taking up new ones. Art and crafts can enable people with dementia to create, achieve and feel empowered.

In this booklet you will:

- hear from Frances and George (who both have dementia) about their artwork and working with art
- learn about Dementia Craftivism
- be linked to further resources



**I've taken up new hobbies: I've designed and built bird boxes.
I'm trying to learn new skills to occupy myself.**

A person with dementia talking to our researchers



Frances and George discuss art

On our website you can watch a video in which Frances and George discuss the positive impact art has had on their lives. Frances teaches an art class for people with dementia over Zoom. George took up art over lockdown by going to Frances's art class.

This isn't just a conversation about painting or drawing. Frances and George reflect on:

- overcoming negative feelings about a dementia diagnosis
- how creativity opens up your life
- the many different types of art which people with dementia can do and take pleasure in



Frances, a person with dementia, says

"I've had such pleasure from it. And for me now, it is the great escape. I can't read anymore, so for me, dabbling around with a bit of colour, and putting my feelings onto paper, which is all I do nowadays, it takes me out of myself, and I can lose hours doing it, and I always feel better."



George, a person with dementia, says

"Get yourself, or get someone to get you, some fairly straightforward materials ... some paint, and a brush, and a jam jar, and some paper. And let's say, I don't know, take a picture from a book or something from a magazine and just paint it and do your best and just see what happens."



What is Dementia Craftivism?

‘Craftivism’ combines ‘craft’ with ‘activism’. It is about using creative means to make a point. Many people with dementia are using their creativity to showcase their abilities.

For instance, the IDEAL research team collaborated with poet Ian McMillan, photographer Ian Beesley, cartoonist Tony Husband and designer Martyn Hall on ‘The Unfurlings: Banners for hope and change created by people living with dementia’.

Groups of people with dementia decided on a topic which meant a lot to them (for instance, access to train travel, or help using an ATM machine) and created a trade union banner about that topic. These banners have been displayed in exhibitions around the country.

To visit The Unfurlings website go to: <https://theunfurlings.org.uk/>

There are many different creative activities you could get involved in. The Dementia Creatives website has galleries full of examples and ideas about how you could get involved.

To visit the website go to: <https://dementiacreatives.org.uk/>

Further resources

Arts 4 Dementia is a UK charity. They work with arts and heritage venues to make them dementia-friendly and to provide various arts programmes. Their website lists a range of different arts events and provides a series of resources. You can use the search function to find out what's happening near you.

Visit: <https://arts4dementia.org.uk/>

This resource is on the internet. Use the camera on your phone or tablet to scan the QR code below to visit the webpage.



Contact us

We would love to know what you think of the toolkit. We want to improve it based on your feedback.

Please get in touch with us by emailing
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If you prefer to write to us, then please address your letter to:

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