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Ageing Well

WP3/ A1- Activity 2

Module E: How to Encourage the Elderly to Make Positive
Changes and Stay Active

E-Seniors

Lesson Plan 4 : Creating Engaging Activities





Overview of the module

This module is based on the concepts of experiential learning and participatory design, inspired by the works of David Kolb, a pioneer in experiential learning theory. According to Kolb, learning is most effective when individuals actively engage in creating, reflecting, and collaborating. By applying these principles, this module aims to equip seniors with tools to design and participate in meaningful and engaging activities that promote social interaction, cognitive stimulation, and enjoyment. Through interactive exercises, participants will develop creativity, collaboration skills, and a sense of purpose.

Objective:

- Develop skills to design and participate in engaging group activities.
- Explore ways to tailor activities to individual and group preferences.
- Enhance creativity and collaboration through interactive exercises.
- Encourage seniors to identify their personal strengths and integrate them into group activities.
- Build confidence in leading or facilitating small group tasks.
- Promote awareness of the social and emotional benefits of engaging activities.

Duration: 60 minutes in total (including all activities)

Activities:

- Introduction and theory (10 minutes)
- Brainstorming session: “What makes activities engaging” (20 minutes)
- Group Activity : Designing an Activity (30 minutes)



Materials needed:

Activity 1 :

- o Whiteboard or flipchart (Non mandatory)
- o Markers or pens
- o Comfortable seating arranged in a semi-circle or around tables for discussion
- o A video projector and slide show (non mandatory)

Activity 2 :

- o Seating disposed in pairs and enough space in the room
- o White papers and pen if needed
- o A3 sheets of paper and markers
- o Sticky notes

Activity 3 :

- o Template or guides for activity planning on a paper or written on the white board
- o Seating disposed in pairs and enough space in the room
- o Pens and papers



Learning outcomes:

- o To teach participants the basic fundamental principles of Non-violent communication.
- o To encourage participants to identify and express their emotions and needs clearly and respectfully.
- o to Help them to formulate non-violent and constructive requests.
- o To suggest practical tools for integrating these techniques into daily life.

List of sources and references related to the activity (APA style):

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

https://www.ted.com/talks/ash_perrin_the_power_of_play

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.

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Lesson Plan 4 : Creating Engaging Activities

Activity 1: Introduction and Theory



Activity 1: Introduction and Theory

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity:

Creating engaging activities, particularly for older adults, involves considering their cognitive, emotional, and social needs. Drawing from the works of John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky, we understand that engaging activities stimulate both learning and social interaction. Additionally, David Kolb's theory of experiential learning further enriches this perspective. Indeed, learning occurs in a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. For older adults, activities that follow this cycle offer cognitive stimulation and create opportunities for social connection and personal growth. Engaging activities, therefore, not only foster mental well-being but also promote emotional balance and social integration, which are essential in later life.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- o Welcome participants in a friendly manner
- o Introduce those involved, the purpose of the day's activity and the work plan
- o Introduce the concepts of engaging and creative activities, and the theoretical framework

Materials Needed:

- o Whiteboard or flipchart



- o Markers or pens
- o Comfortable seating arranged in a semi-circle or around tables for discussion
- o A video projector and slide show (non mandatory)

Duration of the activity: 10 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

Step 1: Welcome participants and have them settle in, introduce themselves (surname, first name) and introduce themselves in turn.

Step 2: announce to the participants the agenda of this activity, giving an overview of what they will be doing and what they will learn.

Step 3: Present really quickly the concept arises with the subject creating engaging activities (with a slideshow or by writing on a whiteboard the key concepts).

Experiential learning: A learning process in which individuals acquire knowledge through direct experience, followed by reflection, conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb).

Social interaction: Learning and development take place in social contexts, according to Vygotsky, who stresses the importance of exchange in the construction of knowledge.

John Dewey: Defines learning as an active process, where experience links theory and practice, encouraging engaged participation.

Lev Vygotsky: Emphasises the role of social interaction in learning, with particular



attention to the zone of proximal development.

Some supports such as videos :

- https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0f6_XXKpWZI
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nASvlgSOCxw> this video apply for student but can be useful also during a training

Step 4: If there is still time, ask the seniors if they have any cases, day-to-day events or anecdotes on this subject?

Variations of the activity, if any:

You can change the videos or make the activity last longer by starting with an ice breaker such as asking “If you have unlimited resources, which kind of activity/game will you create?” and record the concepts on the whiteboard.

Tips and recommendations:

- o Create a comfortable environment, by setting a positive tone to foster openness and dialogue
- o Favour quality content over quantity. There's no need to use too many theoretical concepts to confuse the reader.
- o Use simple definitions, and illustrate the concepts with relatable examples.



List of sources and references related to the activity (APA style):

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.



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Lesson Plan 4 : Creating Engaging Activities

Activity 2 : What makes activities engaging

Brainstorming session



Activity 2: Brainstorming session “What makes activities engaging”

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity::

In this brainstorming exercise, participants will explore what makes an activity engaging by reflecting on the key elements that contribute to enjoyment and active involvement.

Engaging activities are not only enjoyable but also foster social interaction and collaboration. According to researchers like John Dewey and David Kolb, activities that involve hands-on experiences, reflection, and group participation create a deeper connection and stimulate learning.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- o Encourage participants to reflect on the elements that make activities enjoyable and engaging.
- o Foster collaboration and exchange of ideas
- o Engaging social interactions among the group

Materials Needed:

- o Seating disposed in pairs and enough space in the room
- o White papers and pen if needed
- o A3 sheets of paper and markers
- o Sticky notes



Duration of the activity: 20 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

Step 1: Divide participants into small groups (3-4 people max in each group). Each group will be placed far enough apart in the room to ensure that it is not too noisy and that all participants can hear each other clearly. Give each person 3-4 sticky notes, a pen and 1 sheet for the group

Step 2: Ask each participant to comment on what they think makes activities engaging or not. You can ask them first “*Think about activities you’ve enjoyed - what made them fun and interesting?*”

You can insist on factors that can make an activity engaging such as **creativity** (*Does the activity allow for imagination and originality? Do participants have the freedom to explore and express themselves in different ways?*), **teamwork** (*Does the activity encourage collaboration ? Do people have to work together towards a common goal, share ideas, or support each other?*), **simplicity** (*Is the activity easy to understand and follow? Can everyone participate without needing too many instructions or complex skills?*), **inclusivity** (*Can everyone take part, regardless of their background, abilities, or experience? Does the activity make people feel welcome and valued?*).

Give them 5 minutes.

Step 3: Each participant sticks the sticky notes on the paper and explains their thoughts. If two sticky notes are similar, place one on top of the other.

Step 4: The group will designate a spokesperson in each group who will have to relay what was said during the brainstorming session.



Variations of the activity, if any:

If you can, you can also stick the A3 sheets around the room so that the participants can read the various sticky notes.

Tips and recommendations:

- o You need to ensure a safe place among participants. The more they feel comfortable, the more they will share their thoughts genuinely. You can start the presentation by thanking the participants for their presence, introducing yourself by being personal (career, age, place of living) and reminding them that this is a place where they can feel safe, supported and valued. You can also add that the aim is for them to feel listened to, share moments together and create a positive environment.
- o Do not hesitate to give examples before the beginning of the exercise

List of sources and references related to the activity (APA style):

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Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall



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Lesson Plan 4 : Creating Engaging Activities

Activity 3: Designing an Activity

Group Activity



Activity 3 : Group Activity- Designing an Activity

Short description of the theoretical context of the activity::

In this collaborative exercise, participants will work together in groups to design a small, inclusive activity that can be completed in less than an hour. The goal is to create an engaging and accessible experience, whether it's a trivia game, escape room, treasure hunt, or social gathering. Drawing on theories of active participation, such as those of John Dewey, who highlights the importance of experiential learning, and Lev Vygotsky, who emphasizes social interaction in learning, this exercise encourages creativity, teamwork, and practical problem-solving. Participants will also have the chance to share their ideas and receive feedback from the group, fostering collaboration and community building.

Aims and objectives of the activity:

- o To apply the previous exercise (brainstorming) results to design a simple activity
- o To practice planning and organizing in a supportive environment
- o To foster creative ideas
- o To enhance social gathering and connection

Materials Needed:

- o Template or guides for activity planning on a paper or written on the white



board

- o Seating disposed in pairs and enough space in the room
- o Pens and papers

Duration of the activity: 30 minutes

Description of the process of the activity:

Step 1: Keep the groups that have been created for this exercise in the same place where they were, write the instructions on the board or on a sheet of paper. The template is the following

- Activity name
- Objectives
- Materials needed
- Step-by-step instructions
- Special needs of the elderly (if any) (for example visual impairments, mobility constraints etc) /Define the elderly's group potential for active involvement

Step 2: All together, the participants have to create a small activity (which requires a maximum of 1 hour of the fictional participants' time) (trivia game, escape game, treasure hunt in a particular town, social gathering) that can be carried out by everyone in the group. The activity must be simple and inclusive.

Step 3: Designate a spokesperson in each group who will have to present the small activity, and answer questions if any.



Variations of the activity, if any:

If you want to work on a special aspect of the activities, you can add constraints to the creation of this activity (a specific location, a budget to respect, a particular subject).

Tips and recommendations:

- o Encourage participants to draw from personal experiences
- o Adapt activities to the preferences and abilities of the group
- o Maintain a friendly and supportive environment to promote openness and pleasant activities

List of sources and references related to the activity (APA style):

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.