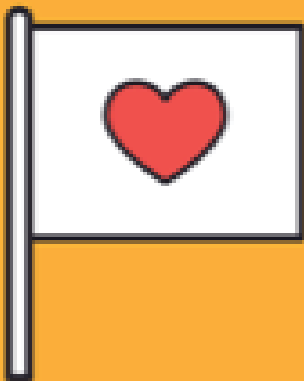


# PRINCIPALS TO WORK BY: TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CREATIVE EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR SENIORS (PART 1)

## ADAPTATION



Make small adjustments that honor the capacity of your seniors. If they are not able to repeat words of a song, then simply encourage them to hum with you. If they can't hold onto the paintbrush, suggest they use their hands or simply let them watch. Creative activities can be adapted for every cognitive and physical level. | For example, "Let's hum the song and you sing the words each time they come to you!" "I know that it is a bit of a stretch to raise your arms. What if we tap our fingers together to the music or pat our hands on your legs?"

## HONOUR YOUR SENIORS



Remember that we are each unique and accomplished adults. Though there may be cognitive decline, we address our seniors as an adult rather than as a child. We work to embrace the full humanity of our shared adulthood in both content and tone of voice. | Examples: "This really expresses your inner spirit." rather than "Oh, what a pretty little picture you drew."

Avoid talking to your seniors like you would a child or a baby. They notice and they don't like it!



## ANTICIPATION

Anticipate something wonderful! You will soon learn that every individual is capable of great beauty. | Examples: "Oh Sam, I can't wait to see what the grandkids think of your work!" "I wonder what color you are going to choose next?" "Wow I can't wait to see what you are going to do next, what a unique perspective!"



## ATTENTION

Ensure that you give your seniors 100% of your undivided attention. This can be achieved by ensuring all the tools or materials you require is ready to go ahead of time. This way you can sit and enjoy the company of your senior and give them your full support and companionship. Seniors can tell when you are distracted and this will make them think you don't actually want to spend time with them.



## AUTONOMY

Ensure your senior makes the choices. You provide the framework and they make the decisions. This returns a powerful degree of autonomy that is often lost in the progression of cognitive disorders or aging. | Examples: "What would you like to do now/next?" "What do you think this needs to look like?" "Where would you like to go from here?" "How can we make this activity better for next time?"

### SOURCE:

Adapted from the NCCA Creative Caregiving Guide:  
<http://creativecaregiving.creativeaging.org/the-basics/>

## ENCOURAGEMENT



Always encourage yourself and your seniors. You are doing something remarkable. Though it might seem a challenge at first, encourage yourself to embrace the process and celebrate small accomplishments. | Examples: "Let's stretch ourselves to learn something new just like great artists do it." "I know you can do it." "I am learning how to do this too. How do you think we did?" "Wow that is so unique, I would have never thought to do that" "How do you think Van Gogh came up with his paintings? Idea first or paint first?"

## BE PATIENT



As a caregiver we need to be calm, patient and gentle in our tone and body language. We are kind to ourselves as caregivers and kind to our family members. Don't have high expectations or goals set. Just enjoy the moment and let the activity turn into whatever it may be.

|Examples: "Are you getting a bit tired? Can we rest a moment? All of this creativity makes me a little tired too."

## HONOUR YOUR SENIOR



Honour the creative capacity of your seniors within their changing circumstances. The goal is to imagine what they CAN do without pressure. Give high regard to the innate capacity for creativity and beauty that make us beautifully human beings.

"You have such a wild imagination - is this drawn from personal experience?"



## INCLUSION

Celebrate and integrate the remarkable spectrum of social, cultural, ethnic, community, faith, gender, and generational diversity that is readily available. | Examples: "Let's look online at some museums in Mexico to find some art that reminds you of home." "I found this book of French paintings, which one do you like best?", "Check out this video of dancers from India"



## MASTERY

Recognize that both you and your senior are capable of mastering creative activities. It might be a slow start but your senior will surprise you with their capacity for creativity, humour, and beauty. | Examples: "How beautifully you applied that paint." "You have taken such great care with placing those leaves. It takes my breath away."



## NON-JUDGMENT

A wrong way does not exist! Learn to discover wonder and surprise in every act of intention, without judging the experience. It doesn't matter how much or how little your senior is participating as long as they are curious or engaged. | Examples: "What a wonderful choice you made!" "I never would have thought of that." "You are really making this interesting!" "I've never seen that before"

## HAVE FUN TOGETHER



Enjoying each other's company is way more important than the final outcome. Recognize that your senior has much to offer when both of you are open to spontaneity and change. | Examples: "I had forgotten what it was like to sing with gusto. I always hold back. Thank you for teaching me that lesson again." "I learn so much from you every time we work on a project together." "This is so innovative, I will have to share this with others!"



## REMINISCENCE

One of the gifts of these creative practices is that you will soon discover the wonderful long-term memories that remain beyond the fading of short term memory. Ask how things taste, smell, sound, look, and feel. | Examples: "This song reminds me of when I was younger." "Oh, so you are at your home in Virginia. What do you see? What does it smell like? Are there flowers? What color are they?"



## RESPECT

Respect guides every interaction with adults who have cognitive disorders. Treat them as equals worthy of our shared humanity for the lives they have lived and continue to live. | Examples: "I see how you work hard to create wonderful things." "Thank you for teaching me about life today." "You are so creative. You help me enjoy life by watching you create."

watching you create.



## SAVOUR THE MOMENT

Recognizing creativity in the way we conduct our everyday activities—cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, walks, and going to bed—will provide remarkable opportunities for storytelling. | Examples: “This is one of the most wonderful feelings, being here with you right now!” “I am having so much fun creating something together.

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