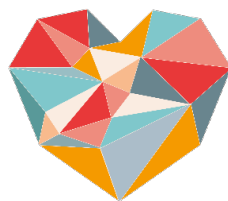


# HET LEZERS COLLECTIEF

## Shared Reading

*Het Lezerscollectief*

*Project Partner*

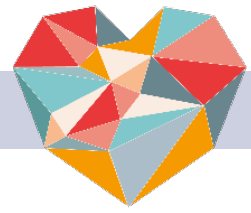


Dementia  
in Cultural Mediation



With the support of the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# The activity



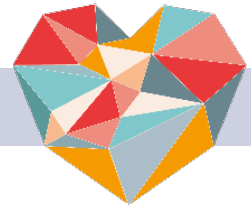
## Name of the activity

Shared Reading.

## Summary

Shared Reading is a methodology in which we organize reading sessions for a group of up to 12 people, which allows a lot of interaction, never forced or mandatory. We read a short story and a poem. The experience is the most important aspect, not the analysis. The sessions are supervised by a trained reading companion who is especially practiced in asking open questions, allowing silences, inviting people. This allows for a lot of interaction. In this way people explore different perspectives, their brains are triggered and they enjoy the reactions that others give to a text.

# Content



## Target group

Participants can each have different stages of dementia. When you read for people with advanced dementia, it is better only to read a poem. In the future, Het Lezerscollectief wants to make further efforts to involve carers and to open up the reading groups for family members.

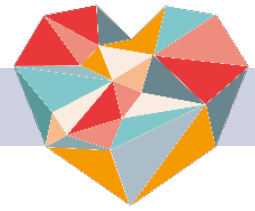
## Objective

Through Shared Reading we teach the participants to connect with a text and to connect with the other participants. This leads to introspection and personal reactions to the texts.

## Partners

At the supralocal level, Het Lezerscollectief works together with the Flanders Centre of Expertise on Dementia. At the local level, they work together with partner organizations such as a nursing home or service center.

# Practical



## Venue

The activity takes place in a cozy and quiet space. Preferably no passage of staff, no crowds from outside. In the middle of the room there is a cosy set table with cups for coffee or tea and a saucer of biscuits. The group has a maximum of 12 participants.

## Day, time & duration

Choose a quiet moment. The activity lasts 90 minutes.

## Group size

Maximum 12 persons.

## Supervisors and hosts

Each session is supervised by a reading companion. If the group consists of people with a physical disability, help may be needed to bring the participants to the meeting room at the same time. To do this, ask help from informal carers, volunteers or professional caregivers of the organisation. The reading companions follow a three-day training course at the Readers' Collective. On day one, the focus is on being read to. What is reading together? What does that do to me? On day two, they zoom in on the methodology and technique. On the third day, people go into the experience of guidance themselves, albeit in the safety of their own training group. Afterwards there is still the possibility of intervision and further training.

## Materials & facilities

### Reading material:

Each text is a strong, multi-layered literary text. So we do not opt for simplified or childlike texts. Het Lezerscollectief publishes books from which the reading companion can read aloud. However, the reading companions can also choose their own texts.

Co-founder and psychiatrist Jan Raes wrote a book for the healthcare sector in which he explains the methodology: Shared Reading, the ultimate therapy (Lannoo Campus, 2021). You can use the same texts for people with dementia as for people without dementia. If you have advanced dementia, it is best to choose only poetry.

### Design:

Choose a quiet, non-stimulating space for your activity. Avoid disturbing noises or other strong stimuli.

Provide a cozy coffee table with coffee, tea, a biscuit, beautiful crockery, etc. In short: an environment that invites you to socialize.

### Which senses are stimulated?

The tactile aspect of a book is important: the feeling of holding the book. If too many people lose themselves in the book or are distracted, they often choose to read the text aloud, without the participants having the text in front of them.

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## Costs

The activity is free for participants. The connection fee of the reading companion (training, platform, database texts, learning network...) is paid by the institution, the local government or from subsidies from government or patronage.

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## Name tags

No name tags

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## IVIEMENTO

You can give the participants the read texts, so that they can read them again quietly and in this way they can reminisce about the activity.

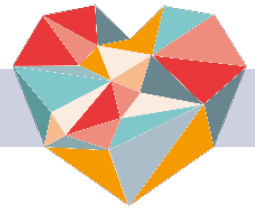
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## Afterwards

A cup of coffee or tea and some cookies or cake support the geniality and conviviality of this activity.

*Photos can give a real image of what is happening to the caregivers*

# Communication & Registration



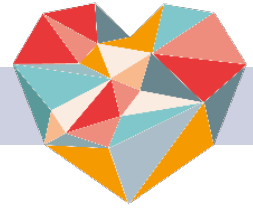
## Communication

In the nursing home, participants are addressed by caregivers that know them well.

## Registration

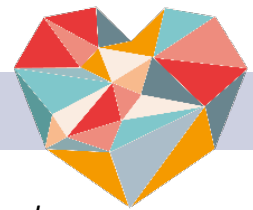
*Participants are approached and selected by the staff. As an organisation, we encourage that this does not happen on the basis of literacy or reading experience of the participant. Some seniors learn to love (reading) stories at a late age or simply come because Shared Reading is fun or because they they enjoy*

# Description & Program



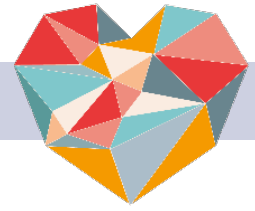
1. The reading companion prepares the room.
2. The participants come themselves or are taken to the reading room.
3. The reading companion welcomes everyone and introduces himself (if necessary).
4. The reading companion introduces the story and starts by reading a section out loud.
5. During a reading break, the text is discussed. Those who have lost the thread are helped by other members of the group.
6. The reading companion asks if someone would like to read a piece themselves.
7. (some reading breaks).
8. The reading companion invites you to read the poem. He/she reads twice.
9. Open questions.
10. Last reading of the poem.
11. Finalisation.

# Evaluation



*The reading companion learns to see how they react and respond to the stories and poems.*  
If possible, second companion helps to collect reactions and effects through observation.  
In some places

# Checklist, when to do what



The day before the activity

- Copy the texts for each participant

Day of the activity

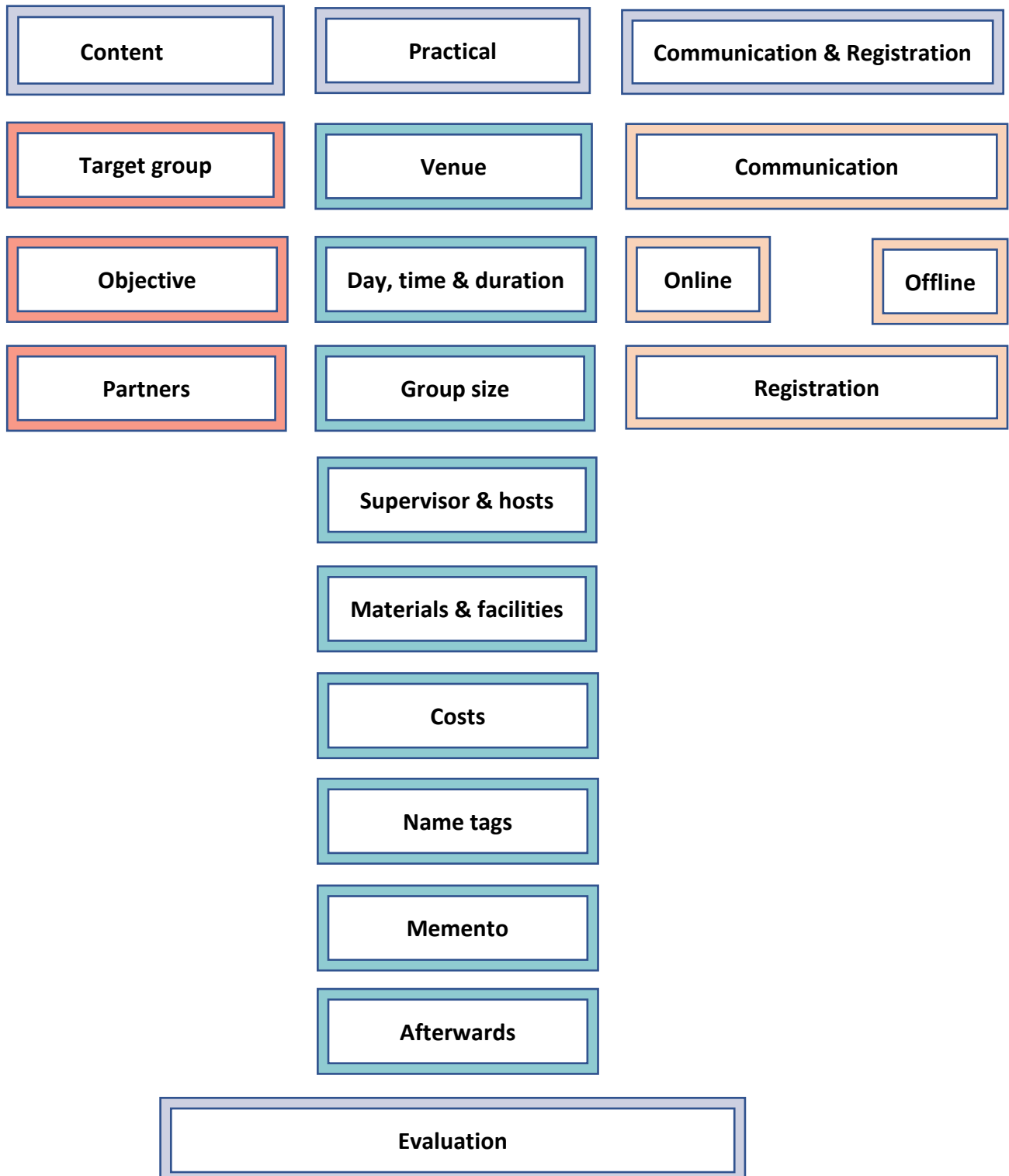
- Decorate the room where the activity takes place. Pay attention to the position of the table, the chairs, ... Decorate the table.

## Corona

During the hardest period of the lockdown, no volunteers were allowed to enter the care facility. That is why Shared Reading has strongly focused on trained staff within the walls of the nursing home. Shared Reading helped to break through the confinement and seclusion. Even though a lot has been read online for other target groups, Shared Reading online proved not to be a good alternative for people with dementia.



# Points of attention



*Inspirational page relevant to the activity*

*Add pictures, collages, illustrations, quotes, etc*



*I often wondered why I had to learn to play bingo in my old age... I've been reading all my life. With Shared Reading I can pick up something I like and share it with others.*

*Singing together and Shared Reading are the top activities here...never feel like it's bullshit.*

*I've never liked poems, but talking about them together makes me happy.*

*I never thought that I would learn something like this in my old age.*

*I get to know the others better by listening to what they say about a story or poem. It seems that a text helps you find words for what you want to say*

