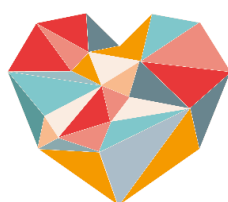




# Dancing Stories



**no-label**  
puppet theater & dance  
[www.no-label.org](http://www.no-label.org)

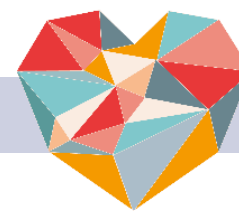


Dementia  
in Cultural Mediation



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

# The activity



## Name of the activity

Dancing stories

*Dance & Dementia.*

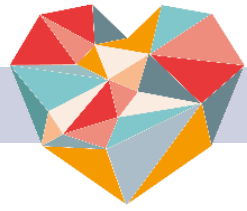
## Summary

When you turn on the music, people will spontaneously start moving, you will see a wobbling foot or fingers drumming on a table. And for people suffering from stiffness or rigidity, dancing is a nice way to move. But dancing gives more. When your world keeps getting smaller and more passive due to dementia, dancing provides new contacts. It is a non-verbal way of communicating. You don't have to be a prima ballerina or be able to remember steps to dance. Dancing is in all of us and closer than you think. In a chair, at a table or in the room. Everyone can dance. The smallest movements can have the greatest effect.

People with dementia can intensely enjoy listening to music, singing songs, and dancing on music. Dancing with a loved one or a family member gives you the opportunity to be yourself again for a moment. Dancing is an alternative way of communicating in which people can connect again which is normally more challenging due to their dementia. Dancing helps to connect with others and have fun together. And dancing is healthy! Rigid and stiff muscles become more flexible. The blood circulation increases, the flexibility of joints improves, as well as the condition of the connective tissue. Dancing is good voor the brain and improves your mood.

Dancing is moving, it makes you happy, gives energy and connects you with yourself and with the people around you.

# Content



## Target group

The participants are people who suffer from dementia. It does not matter in which stadia of dementia the participant currently is. The activity is also possible for people with dementia who have mobility issues or who are in a wheelchair. They are able to do the moves and exercises from a seated position and as best they can.

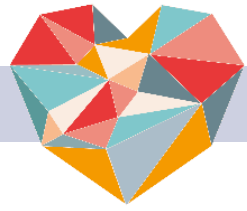
## Objective

Dance gives a sensation, a stimulus, an inexpressible feeling which cannot be put in words. The contact becomes more intense and opens someone up to the environment. Physical vulnerable people can find support with someone else: a care dancer. Besides this main purpose, dancing gives an additional benefit of making or keeping the muscles more flexible.

## Partners

At this activity, organisations where people with dementia live or frequently visit are involved. These are mainly care centre. Potential other organisation are the Odensehouses and community centre for people with dementia who still live at home. These organisations also provide the location of the activity.

# Practical



## Venue

- The activity is possible in multiple group settings. It can be performed in a living room, a group in a care centre or one on one. It can even take place in someone's own living room.
- The activity be held with a group up to 10 participants. The size of the room depends on the number of participants. Think of a community centre or activity room in a care centre.
- The room needs to be large enough to seat everyone (one chair for every participant) and enough space to be able to dance.
- Besides a chair during dancing (without a table) there should be enough chairs and tables to drink coffee or tea at the end of the activity. These tables cannot be in the way of dancing.
- When choosing a room, it is good to take into account people with walking difficulties or who use a wheelchair.
- It is desirable to organise the dance class in a closed room, in order to have as little distraction from the outside as possible.
- To be audible to the participants, make use of a sound system and a (headset) microphone is desirable. This is especially important in larger rooms and for larger groups.

## Day, time & duration

In the morning your muscles are often still a bit stiff. Later in the day, the participants can become tired. This is why the afternoon or at the end of the morning are the ideal times to organise Dancing Stories. However, this also depends on the daily structure of the care centre or other hosting location.

## Group size

There are more possible group compositions. The activity can be performed:

- One on one.
- In a small group of about 5 people, for example a living room group.
- A larger group is possible with a maximum of 10 people with dementia and with them 10 care givers/volunteers. This is the maximum capacity to guarantee a safe environment and secure personal attention from the instructor.

## Supervisors and hosts

- When the activity is individual, one on one, only the dance instructor and participant are present. The added value of this privacy is the direct contact between the two, without distraction of others.
- When the activity takes place in a living room group of a care centre (with around 5 people with dementia) one activity supervisor will be enough to supervise together with the instructor.
- With larger groups it is necessary to have a companion for every participant, excluding the instructor. This can be a nurse, care giver, family member or volunteer.

## Materials & facilities

- A music installation is needed. It might be possible the instructor brings one.
- In larger rooms a headset is needed, this way everyone can hear the instructor.
- It is important to have a good dance floor. The floor cannot be too slippery or too rough and no carpet or loose rugs.
- After the activity, coffee and tea will be served.

## Costs

If the participant needs to contribute financially, depends on the hosting organisation or person. In general, the instructor is paid per hour by the guest organisation (financial conditions according to the Fair Practice Code).

## Name tags

With larger groups name tags can be useful to personally address all participants.

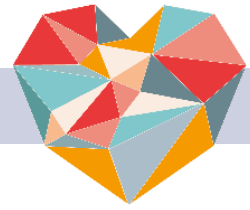
## Memento

There is currently no specific memento. However, the teacher can keep a little log/diary in which will be noted how the lesson went and which progress is seen. Family members can read this and follow the process and progress from a distance.

## Afterwards

Depending on the care centre, there might be a sequel. The power is in repetition, so weekly lessons are preferred. It is desirable to keep family member posted about the activity and the influence this has on their relative with dementia. However, this is up to the care centre.

# Communication & Registration



## Communication

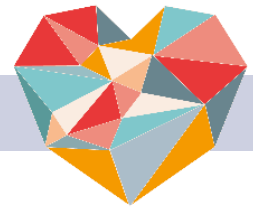
The instructor provides the marketing by actively calling care centres or community centres and through word of mouth. Direct contact with the managers and coordinators is made. Within the care centre or community centre it is then transferred to the activity supervisor. They are responsible for the implementations and invitation of the participants.

- Via marketing channels of the care centre and community centre, such as the paper, digital board etc.
- Flyers and posters are spread in the care centre or any other place Dancing Stories is presented.

## Registration

The activity supervisors of the care centre or other organisations are responsible for inviting and registering the participants.

# Description & Program



- Setting up a room which is large enough to be able to dance and has space for one chair per participant. The tables must be cleared.
- The participants will be taken to the room, where calm and quiet music is playing. This to get them already in the mood and they don't immediately have a lot of noise around them.
- The participants will sit down until the group is complete, in the meantime the instructor will greet the participants individually.
- When the group is complete, the first exercise is performed sitting. Calm music is still playing.

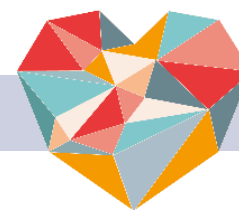
The noise level should be build up slowly. The dance lessons starts with very simple exercises to have a warming up. Most of the exercises of the lesson are included in the next song so the participants have done them already before the lesson really starts.

The actual lesson often starts by showing pictures. When there is a song or a story about the sea, pictures of the sea are shown. Or maybe even a seagull appears in the story and becomes part of the movements. Then the music is turned on and the story is danced. Talk about what you hear in the music. Maybe it is nice and warm, and at sea you might have your feet in the sand. Big waves, small waves. This way you really create a dance expression. Build up from calm music to more intensive and exiting music. After this, finish the story with calm music and a cooling down. Close with a well-known song from the past where the participants don't have to do much anymore. They can just enjoy the lyrics and music while doing some slow movements. The instructor again makes contact with all individual participants.

Depending on the group, pictures of the story are shown with music or it is just the music next to the story.

- When the group is larger than 5 participants, they are split in two sub groups. One group will perform the dance and the other group will sit down and watch. There will be multiple switches between the groups. The seated moments can be used to rest and watching is just as fun as doing!  
After a few switches between groups and performances of the dance exercises, the whole group will sit down.
- After the activity, coffee and tea will be served in a room with tables.
- The participants will return or be picked up to their own living space or home.

# Evaluation



Both before and after the activity a short evaluation will take place between instructor and activity supervisor about the specific conditions and health of the participants that are important for the dance lesson. Think about aggression, grief, health etc.

The coffee moment after the lesson with the participants and their companions is a good moment to evaluate the dance lesson with them. This is mostly verbal, there is no written evaluation unless the care centre prefers this. To keep family members of the participant posted of the process a logbook or diary can be kept. This can be nice for the family members since some of the participants do not remember the dance lessons themselves.

It would be nice if family members also take a dance lesson every now and then. Dance is a way to connect again in a different manner. Dance works on the empathic feeling. If you cannot reach someone with words anymore, it might be still possible to reach them with music and dance.



# Checklist, when to do what



## One month before the activity

- The instructor will be hired by the care centre (or community centre or other organisation).
- The instructor and activity supervisor meet each other to discuss wishes.
- Organising volunteers, possibly care givers or family members.

## Two weeks before the activity

- Enlistment of participants.
- Announce activity to family members (by care centre).
- Reserve the room.

## The week before the activity

- Reserve coffee and tea (catering) at the hosting location.
- Reminder announcement activity.
- Check/enrol volunteers, care givers, family members.

## The day before the activity

- Check facility: room, coffee & tea, participants volunteers, music installation (headset when necessary).

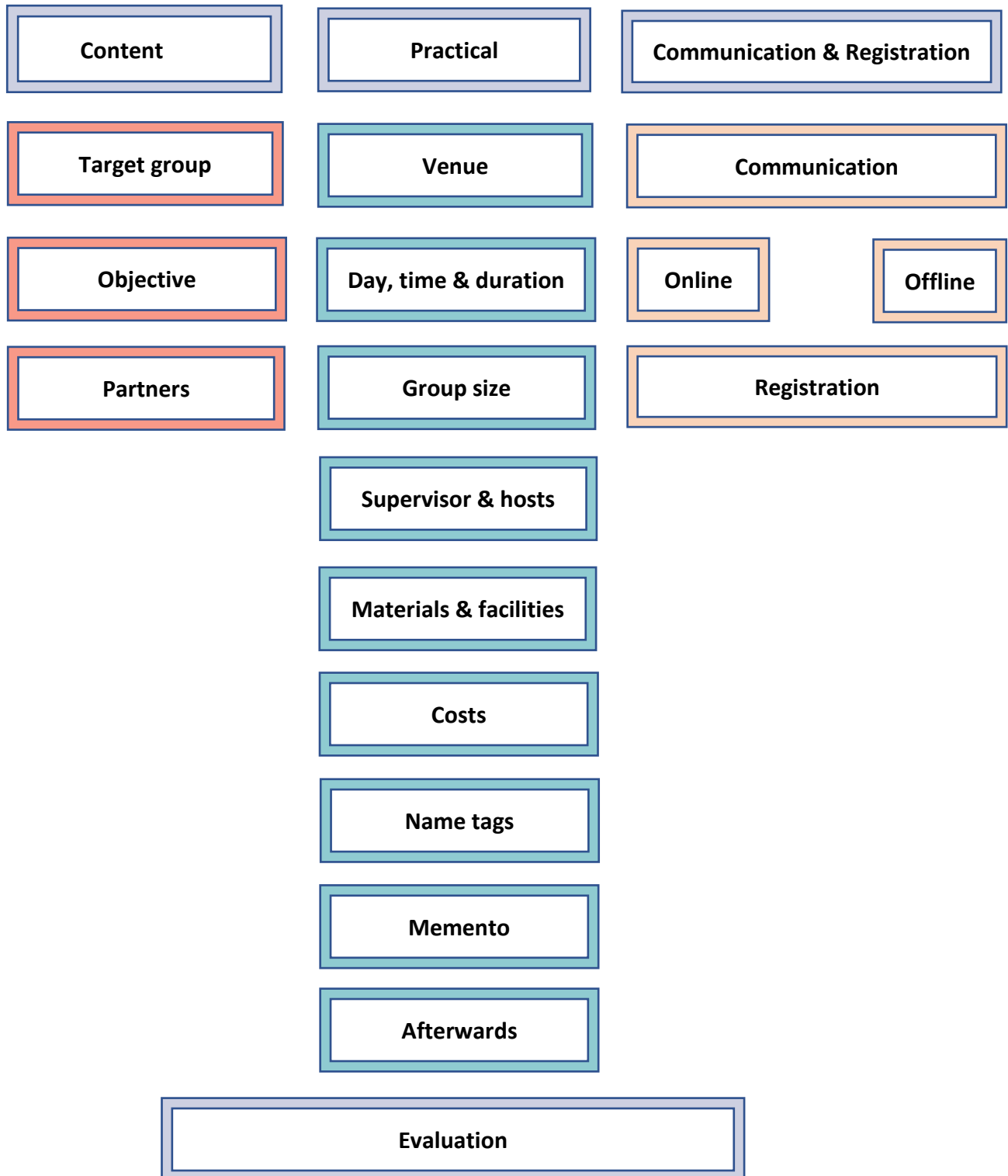
## Day of the activity

- Teacher and activity supervisor talk through (health) condition of the participants.
- Set room, with chairs at the side.
- Prepare coffee and tea.
- Set up and check music installation (and headset when necessary).

## **Corona**

This activity is difficult when the 1,5 meter measure is in effect, dancing needs touching and guidance. An alternative option is a lesson in which the participants remain seated during all exercises. However, this is very different from the dancing when standing. It also needs to be possible for the instructor, within the corona measures and the measures of the care centre, to visit the care centre.

# Points of attention



Dancing moves people, makes people happy, gives energy and connects you with yourself and with the people around you.

## DANCING STORIES



Get back **IN TOUCH** through dance



Dance does not say it with **WORDS**, but with **MOVEMENTS!**



Dance is an **EXPERIENCE**

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