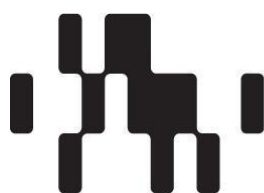
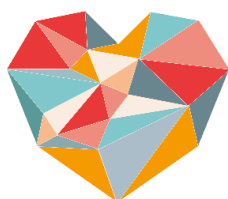




Spoken Word



ODENSE
LIBRARIES AND
CITIZEN SERVICE

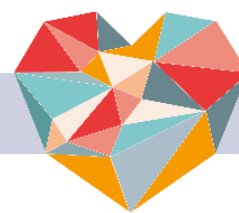


Dementia
in Cultural Mediation



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

The activity



Name of the activity

Spoken Word.

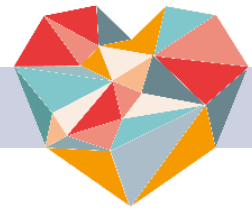
Summary

The activity is a literature activity. It is a way of making it possible for people living with dementia to still experience and enjoy literature.

The artist, Martin Anker Jensen, performed his poems/poetry slams after introducing himself thoroughly. He emphasizes his own vulnerability in order to make it easier for the participants to talk about their difficulties.

After each poem the artist discusses the poem, and its subject with the participants. The participants recognize their own situations in his poems such as loneliness, vulnerability and sadness.

Content



Target group

It is an activity for people with an early stage of dementia still living at home. The activity is also of value for the closest relatives of people living with dementia.

Objective

The object is to give people living with dementia and their relatives the possibility to experience and enjoy literature.

People living with dementia have difficulty concentrating on reading and this activity is the opportunity to experience the literature using multiple senses.

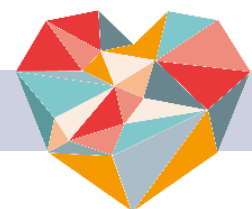
The method is actively mediated and including and thus more spontaneous compared to reading or reading aloud.

Partners

The local partner in Denmark is Dementia Community of Funen, an advisory and activity center for people living with dementia and their relatives.

The organization helps finding participants and the group uses the facilities of the organization for the activities.

Read more about Demensfællesskabet Fyn: <https://www.xn--demensflesskabet-fyn-l3b.dk/>



Practical

Venue

The Spoken Word activity can take place in different venues. The activity does not require any special equipment or stage.

The focal point of the activity is the artist and her or his interactions with the participants. Therefore the activity can take place at venues across different cultural institutions and settings. An option could be to choose a venue or setting that supports the theme of the artist's poems.

The activity requires a clear and visual host.

To ensure a cozy atmosphere you can set the venue with a coffee table to welcome the participants.

Day, time & duration

The Spoken Word activity can take place at any time during the day, as it mostly takes place indoors. In order for the relatives still working to be able to participate, it is recommended to plan the activity to take place in the late afternoon e.g. from 4.30 pm - 6.00 pm.

The duration of the activity is about 1,5 hour including arrival and goodbye.

Planning activities in the late afternoon can conflict with dinnertime and cooking for the participants. Serving a sandwich or other light meals could be a solution. In addition, eating together strengthens the social bonds and breaks down boundaries between the participants.

Group size

A group size of 10 persons including relatives is recommended. The maximum group size is 14 persons.

To ensure time and opportunity for as many participants as possible to take part in the dialogue, take the number of participants into consideration.

A group size of 10-14 people helps to create a safe space for all to participate in the activity.

Supervisors and hosts

2 hosts for the activity are recommended. e.g. 2 librarians, museum staff or other staff from the host organization.

Supervisors are not needed when the relatives are participating in the activity. If there are no relatives, supervisors could be considered.

Materials & facilities

Depending on the activity various materials are needed. The materials could be a print of the poems being performed or print out of songs if you sing a song during the activity. Print out of texts can serve both as a support during the activity and as a memory or something tangible when the couples or friends talk about the activity later on.

Serving coffee and a sandwich is a way to create a cozy atmosphere. It is recommended to bring print outs of the poems, texts or songs, so you can hand out the materials during the activity and afterwards the participants can bring home the printouts.

Costs

The Poetry Slammer is an artist and must be hired to do hers or his Spoken Word activity. In addition there will be smaller expenses for food and drinks.

Be aware that the participants' financial situations can vary, when you set a price for participation.

Name tags

Start the activity with a short presentation by each participant including relatives, artists and hosts. These short presentations make the participants feel acknowledged. The use of name tags can make the activity seem formal or institutional, but the presentations keep an informal relation with the participants. But feel free to do what seems right in your specific settings.

Memento

It is recommended to offer the participants a printout of the poem or literature used in the activity. The participants will be happy to receive it. They use the printouts to read and listen to the poem at the same time, which counters the difficulties of concentration and ability to listen and remember, of people living with dementia. This combination of reading aloud and reading addresses several senses.

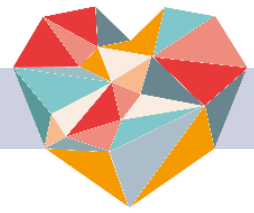
Afterwards

The Spoken Word activity in Odense, Denmark was a part of a cultural activity course for a group of people living with dementia and their relatives. The group met a number of times during a period of months.

The participation of the relatives also ensured a connection to the participants' everyday life and gave the couples and friends experiences to talk about at home.

It is also possible to organize a single Spoken Word activity either in the library or in other cultural institutions. In that case you might need to do a short evaluation or debriefing after the activity. At the same time you could do a short advertisement for other relevant activities for the target group.

Communication & Registration



Communication

As the spoken word activity was a part of a cultural course the communication took place on different platforms.

A combination of handout flyers with information about the different activities contained in the course and e-mail communication ensures a physical document and digital information.

The flyer can be put on the family board in the kitchen and the digital communication works for those participants using online media.

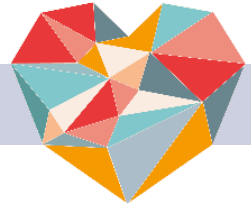
It is recommended to send reminders via email two weeks before the activity takes place, and again a few days before the activity. You can use the reminders to give specific information on the program or in case of changes in the program, so everyone is informed about the plans in advance. If you collaborate with other organizations, institutions or communities you can ask for their support to spread information about the activity to people living with dementia and their relatives.

Registration

As a maximum number of participants in the spoken word activity is recommended, it is important to ensure a registration. The registration also gives you necessary contact information, so you can send out information about meeting place, time and other practical information before the activity.

It is recommended that the participants sign up via email or registration form and receive a confirmation email in return containing initial information about the activity. The registration and communication often goes through the relatives, which eases the communication process.

Description & Program



Lay the table with coffee cups before the participants arrive.

Stand at the door to welcome each participant.

Introduce yourself briefly.

After your presentation let the artist take over the scene, and let her or him go through with the short presentation of the participants. This is a way for the artist to connect with the participants from the beginning.

The artist introduces her/himself and starts the performance of her/his slams and poems. After each slam or poem the artist discusses the subject of the poem with the participants.

The aim of the discussion is to reflect on the subject, to talk about it in the group and to relate it to the participants' own lives.

The poems create a good discussion about the situation and lives of people living with dementia.

The theme of the poems can be e.g. mental vulnerability, which is a theme that many of the participants can relate to.

The conversations can be very personal and include, among other things, stories about losing friends due to illness, and therefore the feeling of loneliness.

At the end of the activity you can serve a sandwich or light meal.

Remember to save time for goodbyes to each participant.

Evaluation



To collect notes, observations and new ideas you can use a logbook. As a host you have to focus on the participants and lead the group through the program, and therefore a logbook for short notes to remember can be useful in your evaluation of the activity. The notes can also be valuable in planning upcoming and new activities.

Depending on the setup of activities in your organization a short evaluation after the single activity. If the activity is a part of a course where the group is gathered for a series of activities you can choose to do one final evaluation at the end of the course.

Remember to include the relatives in the evaluation if they participated alongside the people living with dementia.

Checklist, when to do what



One month before the activity

- Appointments about the activity with partners and involved staff.
Advertisement for the activity e.g. flyers, emails etc.
- Contract and appointments with the artist.
- Booking of room and location for the activity.

Two weeks before the activity

Invite participants.

The week before the activity

Follow up with the artist on appointment and other practical matters.

Print out mementos, poems or texts for the participants.

Order coffee and fruit or sandwich.

The day before the activity

- Send a reminder to the participants. Remember to include information about location and other practical matters.

Day of the activity

Setup the room.

Pick up sandwiches.

Brew coffee.

Be a good host and guide the participants through the activity from the beginning to the end.

Clean up after the activity.

Evaluation of the activity.

Corona

In case the activity takes place during a pandemic or other critical circumstances, always follow the guidelines of the local authorities in your country.

In relation to the spoken word activity alternative locations could be outdoor or in locations with space enough to keep a distance.

Another alternative is to lower the number of participants. But keep in mind that this activity is social in the sense of the participants sharing thoughts and experiences with each other, based on the poem presented by the artist.



Points of attention

