



BELONG WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF

Art Kit Instructions from Alana Moore and Amber Phelps Bondaroff

Being creative and making art at home can be a rewarding and joyful experience. This time will likely be shared between family members, care partners and the person living with dementia. We will provide some tips, tools, and prompts for getting started, but ultimately you know each other best. It is your relationships and experiences that will guide you through this joyful and scary process. Feel free to change or adapt any of the suggested tools and projects to best serve your needs.


Both you and your loved one and/or care partner can make art individually or in a collaborative effort. The aim is to initiate self-expression and self-exploration. Pay attention to your interests. What materials, ideas, processes make you curious, bring you joy or challenge you? There are a wide range of materials, ideas, and practices that you can use when making art. The introductory art package includes materials for drawing, collage, storytelling, journaling, and poetry. There will be many opportunities to explore more mediums and ideas throughout the year.

Dates and times

Choose a date and time that are best for you. You can plan some art making time ahead, keeping in mind it can change. Try to carve out half an hour to an hour without other activities or appointments to avoid conflicts. It's hard to put a time restraint on making art. Sitting together and making something for 10 minutes can be just as valuable as an hour.

Environment

The optimal space for making art is relatively intimate and quiet. You don't need a special art room—the kitchen table is a perfectly good space. It is important to have a sturdy table, comfortable seating, and adequate lighting. Consider your physical needs when choosing materials and processes. Arrange the tables and chairs so that you can see each other to encourage conversation and connection.





CREATIVE PROJECTS


Process over product

- We encourage you to approach this art package as an opportunity to try something new, to be imaginative and playful.
- Focus on time spent together and the process. It's already hard enough to sit down and make art, don't make it harder by expecting perfection!

Take your time

- Be present. Choosing to be creative can be hard. That's ok. Take this time to connect with yourself, your family, and your care partner.
- What happens off the paper is just as important as what happens on the paper. It's more important that the person living with dementia feels seen and heard.
- Take your time using the materials. Notice what materials, ideas, and stories bring joy.
- It is perfectly fine if you run out of time or need to pause during an activity. You can always come back to it another time or start again.

Adjust and experiment

- Try to engage with materials as freely as possible and without judgment. This package is not about teaching someone how to make art, but supporting them as they make art.
 - We encourage you to embrace when someone uses materials in unexpected ways. Maybe you draw off the paper and onto a placemat. Let it happen! Maybe someone uses the paper to fold instead of draw on. That's great! Maybe someone rearranges collage papers but doesn't want to glue them down. That's ok! Art doesn't have to be permanent. Maybe someone draws a series of lines and shapes. Beautiful!
 - You might have liked a particular activity or process. Try it again later with different materials.
 - Give yourself permission to keep going with materials you enjoyed. If any of the materials or prompts don't resonate with you, that is absolutely fine.
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Bring your own story

- We encourage you to bring your own story to the creative process. Think of what previous experiences you may have had with creativity. You might be surprised at what you've done that is creative that you don't initially think of as "Art." For example, if one person was interested in woodworking, think of ways you could channel that into a focused project. At one time have you sewn, baked a cake, written a poem?
- We will work together to find what brings you joy and make creative adjustments. For example, if someone wants to write a poem, but may not be able to write the words, could you transcribe it for them? Could we record their poem?

Celebrating and supporting each other

- Be sincere in celebrating the process. For example, "Examples of things to say other than that looks "good"
- Spend time looking and sharing what you are making together.
- Write down titles of artworks when complete. Titles can give added meaning to an image and share insight into someone's process. The title can be one word, a small poem, or a few sentences.
- Write your name, title, and date on the back of the artwork (in pencil). If someone needs assistance with writing, that's perfectly ok.

Any questions? Want to talk about your work?

As Lead Artists in this project, we want to be in touch with you regularly throughout, including at meetings in and around Yorkton, and in telephone calls or emails in between. Feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions, or if we can assist with anything.

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GETTING STARTED

Here are some basic prompts to get things flowing (because often, starting is the hardest part!). Feel free to use these as creative launch pads, only if useful to you. If they don't resonate, don't worry about following the prompts precisely (there is no right or wrong way to get started). Maybe you come up with your own 'prompts' that suit you better, or maybe one prompt resonates with you, and takes you down a creative rabbit hole of further exploration. Feel free to use these as *suggestions* rather than assignments, and pay attention to what resonates with you throughout the process.

- Remember something that you did today and recreate it. This could be a literal recreation, (writing, drawing, collage, etc.) or a depiction of how this thing made you feel. Are there colours associated with this memory? Images? Words? Sounds, tastes, textures?
- Recall something from your distant past. Take a while to think about this memory. Sit with the memory and feel it in your body. Then, depict this memory using any of the materials provided.
- Find an object from your surroundings that brings you joy. Sit with this object and observe it using all your senses. (Sight, touch, sound, smell, taste - if appropriate!) Make a creative depiction of this object, remembering that your depiction doesn't have to 'look' like the thing itself at all!
- Blind Contour Drawing: Take 5 minutes to sit and look at a loved one. (Maybe your care partner or another family member or friend.) Now, close your eyes, and take 1 minute to draw a picture of each other's faces without lifting your hand from the page. Your hand should move in a continuous line, without lifting - even if this means retracing or making lines in places you wouldn't expect.

(This technique is called 'blind contour drawing' and it is often employed by visual artists to loosen up our ideas of what representation should look like. You can use this technique to depict other things as well, objects, landscapes, still lives, etc.!) 

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- Blind Contour Drawing 2: Find an object (or a couple objects) from your home and set them in front of you. Have a good long look at them. Without looking at your page, do a drawing of these objects, without lifting your pen/pencil from the page. Keep looking at the object(s) rather than at your hand on the page. Your hand should be moving the entire time that you are drawing the object(s)!
 - Automatic Drawing: Set a timer for 3 minutes (could be 2 minutes, or 4 minutes or longer too!) Using a mark making device of your choice, start moving your hand around the page, until the timer stops! Your hand should be moving the entire time! Don't worry about what it looks like, just keep moving and making marks on the page!
 - Automatic Writing: Like above, set a timer for a set interval (maybe start with 5, 10 or 15 minutes). Start writing whatever comes to mind. (If handwriting is challenging, this can be done on a keyboard as well). Keep writing until the timer goes off, even if you don't know what to write, just keep the words flowing (you might be surprised at what comes out!)
 - Black out Poetry: Using one of the book pages provided and a dark marker or pencil, black out words on the page so that the words left visible form a poem. You can use the entire page, or just a portion of the page, and cut it down to size.
 - Write a story from the point of view of an object/thing from in or around your home. You could describe what it is like to live a day in the life of a toaster/tree/river/clock or sandwich!
 - Find a place outdoors where you can sit quietly for at least 5-10 minutes. If weather allows, after sitting silently, you could write, or draw a depiction of this place, while still in the place. If it's cold - go back inside, and describe the place, using any techniques that call to you!
 - Come up with 3 of your own creative prompts and then try them out!
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