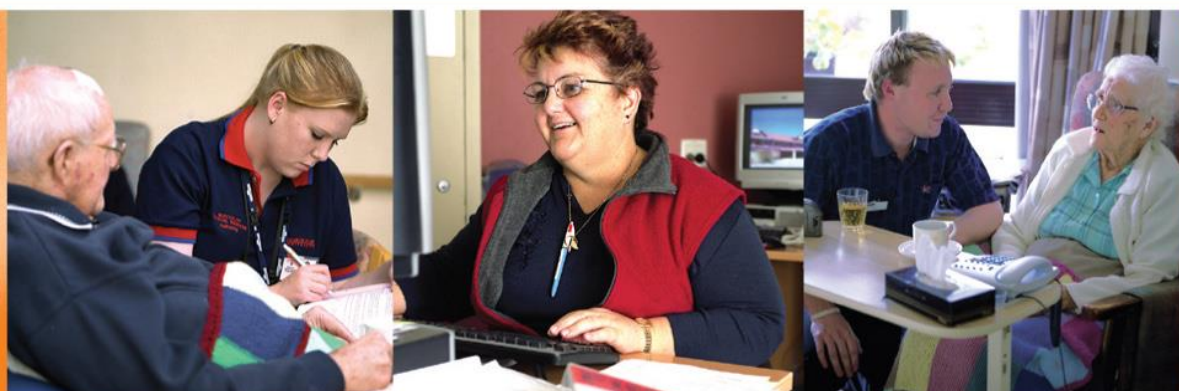




An Australian Government Initiative

# Using Reminiscence with People with Dementia in Sub-Acute & Acute Care



July 2017

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# **Using Reminiscence with People with Dementia in Sub-Acute & Acute Care**

July 2017

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## ■ Executive Summary

Dementia was made a National Health Priority in Australia in 2012 in recognition of the growing population diagnosed and living with the condition. In 2013, an estimated 322,000 people with dementia were living in Australia. This figure is projected to increase substantially to 400,000 by 2020 and 900,000 by 2050<sup>1</sup>. Between 2009 and 2011, dementia was the third leading underlying cause of death in the country<sup>2</sup>.

Compared to those without dementia, those with dementia are more likely to be admitted to hospital, their length of stay is more likely to be longer, the costs associated with hospitalisation tend to be higher and they are more likely to experience negative health outcomes. A study conducted in NSW on dementia care in hospitals found that 35% of the health budget was spent on providing care to those with dementia<sup>3</sup>. Improving the care experience of those with dementia is of growing concern.

Admission to hospital can be confusing and frightening for a person with dementia as they struggle to understand what is happening and where they are. Reminiscence provides a practical and easy to use approach that enables family, carers and staff to engage more meaningfully with the person with dementia. This manual provides practical information that staff and volunteers can use to adopt and implement reminiscence within everyday care of people with dementia who are hospitalised.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/dementia/>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/deaths/causes-of-death/>

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013. Dementia care in hospitals: costs and strategies. Cat.no.AGE 72. Canberra: AIHW

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## ■ Introduction

### Background

Dementia progressively impairs a person's cognition, language and functional abilities. As a result, those providing care and support become increasingly important in assisting and enabling the person with dementia to continually participate in activities that are meaningful and reflect their past interests, roles and routines.

Talking about pleasant memories or reminiscing is one way in which hospital staff, family and carers can communicate with and meaningfully engage the person with dementia. Reminiscence "involves the discussion of past activities, events and experiences with another person or group of people, usually with the aid of tangible prompts such as photographs, household and other familiar items from the past, music and archive sound recordings" (p2)<sup>4</sup>. It is widely used as a way of engaging those with dementia and their carers and is central to providing person-centred care<sup>5</sup>.

This reminiscence manual is an outcome of the My Life, My Story Reminiscence Project funded by a Commonwealth Dementia Community Support Grant. The project involved collaboration between the University of Melbourne and Melbourne Health and was undertaken within a secure dementia specific sub-acute ward. It involved engaging patients, their families, friends, carers and staff in developing and integrating themed and individually tailored reminiscence resources into the care of those with dementia who were admitted to the ward during 2013-2014.

### Intended users and target population

This manual is a practical guide for use by medical, nursing, allied health and volunteer staff with people with dementia being cared for in acute and sub-acute hospitals. Components of the manual may also be used in the care of people with dementia who reside at home or in residential aged care.

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<sup>4</sup> Woods et al (2005)

<sup>5</sup> Russell & Timmons (2009)

## ■ Section 1: Using Reminiscence with People with Dementia

### 1.1 Why is reminiscence used with people who have dementia?

Reminiscence can benefit people with dementia in a number of ways by:

- Reducing depression<sup>6</sup>
- Reducing behavioural symptoms<sup>7</sup>
- Reducing apathy<sup>8</sup>
- Increasing interest<sup>9</sup>, attention<sup>10</sup> and enjoyment<sup>11</sup>
- Increasing social interaction<sup>12</sup>
- Increasing well-being<sup>13</sup>
- Increasing quality of life<sup>14</sup>
- Improving cognition<sup>15</sup>

Reminiscence demonstrates benefits for people from different cultural backgrounds, with varying degrees of dementia severity and different dementia pathologies<sup>16</sup>. Benefits for the person persist during and immediately following the use of reminiscence with some longer term benefits cited<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the many benefits, reminiscence has the potential to raise memories that are distressing to or sadden people with dementia<sup>18</sup>. Some people may find it helpful to talk through these memories. Validation, reassurance and distraction may be useful for others to help shift their focus to something more pleasant. In some cases, it is better to avoid the topic to prevent distress<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Ashida (2000); Bohlmeijer (2003); Haight et al (2003); Scogin (1994); Wang (2007)

<sup>7</sup> Baillon et al (2004); Kajiya et al (2007)

<sup>8</sup> Hsieh et al (2010)

<sup>9</sup> Kiernat, (1979)

<sup>10</sup> Yasuda et al (2009)

<sup>11</sup> Okumura et al (2008)

<sup>12</sup> Lai et al (2004); Tadaka & Kanagawa (2007)

<sup>13</sup> Brooker & Duce (2000); Lai et al (2004)

<sup>14</sup> Thorgrimsen et al 2002

<sup>15</sup> Nawate (2008); Okumura et al (2008); Tadaka & Kanagawa (2007); Yamagami et al (2007)

<sup>16</sup> Tadaka & Kanagawa 2007

<sup>17</sup> Lai et al (2004); Tadaka & Kanagawa (2007)

<sup>18</sup> Schweitzer & Bruce (2008)

<sup>19</sup> Thompson (2011)

Those caring for people with dementia can also benefit from the use of reminiscence. Reminiscence can:

- Assist families, volunteers and care staff in connecting and communicating with the person<sup>20</sup>
- Assist carers to see the person behind the dementia<sup>21</sup>
- Reduce caregiving related strain.<sup>22</sup>
- Increase staff, family and carers' knowledge of the person with dementia and understanding of their behaviours, which improves the delivery of individually tailored care.<sup>23</sup>

Meaningfully engaging a person with dementia in conversation and activity can be quite challenging for families, friends, carers and hospital staff. Reminiscence provides a structured approach that can be used to facilitate this engagement, regardless of the severity of the person's impairment. Pictures and objects are useful in assisting the person with dementia in communicating information that they may otherwise be unable to verbalise<sup>24</sup> thereby enhancing and utilizing their capacities<sup>25</sup>. However, it is suggested that these pictures and objects must be relevant or personalized to the person with dementia for reminiscence to be successful<sup>26</sup>.

Reminiscence may be conducted individually or within group settings<sup>27</sup>. It has been most widely studied within the residential aged care sector, with few studies conducted within the community context.

The Cochrane Review of reminiscence in dementia failed to find sufficient conclusive evidence in favour of reminiscence due to the variable quality and many limitations of studies completed thus far<sup>28</sup>. They conclude that whilst reminiscence does appear to have some benefits, further rigorous research is required. Despite this, reminiscence continues to be recognized as an integral part of person-centred individualised dementia care.

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<sup>20</sup> Chung, (2009); Clarke et al (2003); Hagens et al (2003); Kajiyama et al (2007)

<sup>21</sup> Clarke et al (2003); Hansebo & Kihlgren (2000)

<sup>22</sup> Haight et al (2003); Thorgrimsen et al (2002)

<sup>23</sup> Baines (1987); MacKinlay & Trevitt (2010)

<sup>24</sup> Stallings (2010)

<sup>25</sup> Tadaka & Kanagawa (2007)

<sup>26</sup> Namazi & Hayes (1994)

<sup>27</sup> Cook (1984); Lesser et al (1981); Wang (2007)

<sup>28</sup> Woods et al (2005)

## 1.2 Understanding the Person

Person-centred care is considered best practice for hospitals across Australia. Understanding the patient<sup>29</sup> with dementia is central to providing this care. Reminiscence fits well within the person-centred care framework which advocates adopting an enabling, collaborative and respectful approach that is tailored and responsive to the uniqueness of the person. Reminiscence is built upon gaining an understanding of the patient's past, preferences, experiences and interests and provides a foundation on which effective reminiscence work can be built. For patients with moderate to severe dementia, the family and/or carers can be an invaluable source of information about the patient, including their past. Recording this information can not only assist with engaging the patient but also facilitate communication of this information to all who are providing care, both during admission and following discharge.



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*What do you know about who the patient is that you are caring for?*

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There are three main formats in which this information about the patient is recorded: life profiles, progress notes and life stories/ histories.

### *Life Profiles*

Life profiles provide a brief, usually written or typed, summary of information about the patient. They contain less detail and are shorter than the life stories/histories. Some patients present with already completed life profile forms when admitted to hospital or other care environments. They may be called by different names “About me”, “Respite Passport” etc. It is always worth asking the patient and their family/carers if the patient has a completed life profile form.

In hospitals, life profiles are vital to providing staff with the information they need to provide the patient with person centred care. This information also provides invaluable clues for reminiscence. Examples include identifying: the most appropriate personal care routine for the person; activities which might engage and occupy the patient's time; topics that staff can chat

John	
Things I would like you to know about me	
I worked as a carpenter building houses	I like/enjoy:
Listening to jazz relaxes me	• fishing
I prefer to shower in the evening	• James Bond movies,
I have always eaten dinner in front of the TV	• following Richmond FC
	• Building things
	• Caravanning around Australia
	• Dogs

Sample 'About me' board

<sup>29</sup> Person and patient are used interchangeably throughout this manual and denote the person with dementia.

with the patient about. The life profile form is usually integrated into each patient's medical record. These forms contain a standard set of questions, e.g. "Where were you born?", or prompts, e.g. "I was born in...", and the patient and/or family/carers fill in the details.

Acute and sub-acute hospitals often find it useful to develop their own life profile form containing questions that are relevant to their clinical setting.

An example of a life profile, 'this is me', can be found at: [http://alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=1604](http://alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1604)

*"Knowing about his past interests allowed me to talk with him about something that he enjoyed and was an expert at whilst I assisted him to shower and dress."*

The following are some key themes that should be included in a life profile:

- Significant past and present relationships, including immediate and extended family and friends
- Past and present interests
- Hobbies
- Significant life events e.g. weddings, children
- Cultural background, norms and practices
- Significant jobs/occupations/careers
- Religious/spiritual norms and practices
- Past traumas that may impact on the patient's care or topics to avoid during reminiscence.
- Travel experiences
- Migration experiences
- Food preferences
- Past and preferred routines
- Personal care preferences e.g. showering/bathing routines
- Involvement in groups, societies & organisations
- Preferences for level & type of sensory stimulation

### *Medical History Progress Notes*

Staff providing care frequently record notes of the patient's treatment and care in their medical history. These are referred to as progress notes. Often during an interaction with a patient, staff may identify elements that might otherwise be included in a life profile form. They may also record observations about the patient's response to particular approaches to care delivery, their usual routine, interests, preferences etc. These notes can be invaluable to those who review the notes but often the information is at risk of becoming lost amongst the documentation of other staff.

*"Elena tried to leave the ward this afternoon. She was worried about who was looking after her children. We spent time talking about her 3 children and looking through cookbooks to identify meals she would have cooked in the past"*

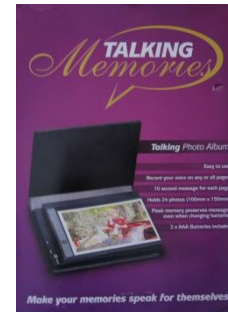
### *Life Story/History*

Life stories or histories are developed from a process of reviewing and revisiting past memories and life events. They may be developed by the person with dementia individually or in



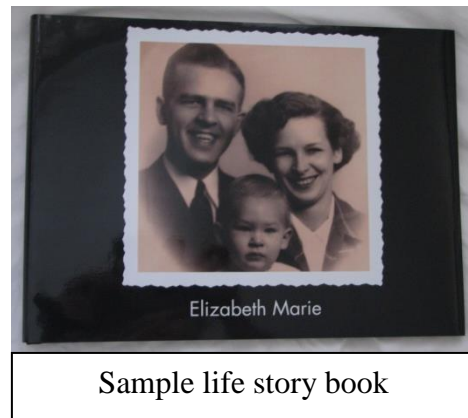
collaboration with family and carers. Life stories/histories may be completed gradually over time. They provide a physical prompt that can be used to facilitate reminiscence.

Life stories or life histories can take many forms from the simple to the more complex. Examples of life story/histories include: albums or booklets containing photographs and writing, photo collages, story boards, digital photo frames with music/voice over, talking photo albums, DVD recordings, slideshows or audio recordings, shadow boxes or memory boxes.



There are a number of considerations when choosing a format for a life story/history:

- Appropriateness to stage of dementia: Biographical information in the form of a detailed life story book may be more useful for the patient in the earlier stages of dementia. In the later stages, a memory box, containing items that are of importance to the person, may be more valuable.
- Preferences: Formats may be chosen based on preference. Some people may prefer a visual collage of photos whereas others may prefer an album.
- Accommodating changes in communication abilities: Dementia can affect a person's language and perceptual abilities. The following strategies may assist:



- Labelling and including brief information about the photo images can reduce the demand on the patient to generate this information where verbal communication or memory is an issue.
- Select photos that are simple in structure. Avoid photos that contain a lot of people or images that are unfamiliar or visually complex.
- Photos that are older may be better identified than more recent photos for patients with Alzheimer's disease.
- Simplify the design. Avoid having too much information and too many colours, patterns and designs.
- Attach items to the pages of albums to help prompt memories about what is displayed on the page. E.g. a piece of lace and satin next to a wedding photo.

The life stories/histories typically remain with the patient as they move through various care environments and may be used to engage the patient in reminiscence by providing physical prompts e.g. photographs to facilitate conversation. This format is often more comprehensive than the life profile and if available, may be used by staff instead.

A number of forms for collecting and recording life stories or life histories are freely available, including:

- Personal Life History Booklet (Alzheimer's Australia NSW): <https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/20110303-NSW-LifeHistoryBook.pdf>
- Personal Life History booklet (Communities of Practice in Dementia Care Project): <http://www.caresearch.com.au/caresearch/portals/0/documents/whatispalliativecare/NationalProgram/PCDementiaCOP/copd1-personal-life-history-booklet-final.pdf>
- Life Story Work templates (Dementia UK): <https://www.dementiauk.org/for-healthcare-professionals/free-resources/life-story-work/>
- Life story template for patients from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background: [https://nt.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/20121218\\_NT\\_Across\\_the\\_Borders\\_August\\_2012.pdf](https://nt.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/20121218_NT_Across_the_Borders_August_2012.pdf)
- This is Me template (Alzheimer's Society UK): [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?fileID=1604](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1604)
- The Life Story of (Legacy Project Canada): <http://www.tcpnow.com/activities/lifestory.pdf>
- A digital platform for developing a customising digital photo album (The Memory Box Network, UK): <http://www.ourbigbox.com/>

Having samples of completed life stories/histories can be helpful for families and carers understanding what they are and what and how information can be recorded. Workshops are sometimes available through Alzheimer's Australia to assist people with dementia and their family in collecting and recording the person's life story.

For further information on developing and using life stories/histories with people with dementia refer to:

- Life Story Work guide (Dementia UK): <https://www.dementiauk.org/for-healthcare-professionals/free-resources/life-story-work/>
- Making a memory book (Best Alzheimer's Products): <http://www.best-alzheimers-products.com/making-a-memory-book.html>
- Remembering together. Making a life history book (Alzheimer's Society UK): [http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=1671](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1671)
- Therapies and communication (Alzheimer's Australia): <https://fightdementia.org.au/support-and-services/i-care-for-someone-with-dementia/communication/therapies-and-communication-approaches>

Life profiles, progress notes, life stories and life histories all provide information about who the patient is and is an effective framework for identifying topics, activities, approaches and routines for engaging the patient in reminiscence. In addition to this information, it is necessary to have an understanding of the patient's current abilities and strengths including their cognitive abilities. Engaging the patient in reminiscing should draw on and utilise their remaining abilities and strengths whilst compensating for their deficits.

#### **Top 5 questions to identify reminiscence topics**

- What memory or memories does the person enjoy talking about?
- What roles have been important to the person during their life?
- What do family and friends talk about with the person?
- What interests is the person passionate about and enjoy talking about?
- What memories or events are distressing for the person if they are discussed?

### **1.3 Engaging a person with dementia in reminiscence**

Patients with dementia may be engaged in reminiscing using a range of approaches. These include:

- Communicating with the patient;
- Engaging the patient's senses;
- Using activities to facilitate reminiscence;
- Using the environment to facilitate reminiscence.

#### ***Communicating with the Patient***

Specific communication skills can assist in enabling the patient to reminisce. These include<sup>30</sup>:

- Listen to the patient and provide them with your full attention. Maintain eye contact and smile. Ensure your body language is telling the person with dementia that you are interested in what they have to say and that you are enjoying talking to them.
- Observe the person's verbal and non-verbal cues.

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<sup>30</sup> Refer to Schweitzer & Bruce (2008) for further information.

- Adopt a non-judgmental approach. Avoid quizzing the patient or correcting them if their recalled memory is inaccurate.
- Be patient, relaxed and pace the communication. Avoid rushing the patient. Allow the patient time to speak and process their memories. They may require additional time to express themselves and process what you have said.
- Keep what you say short and simple. Rephrase, repeat and offer missing words when needed.
- Be sensitive to the memories that the patient is talking about. Be aware that sometimes painful memories may be triggered during reminiscence. Support the person through that process.
- Check your understanding. Repeat back or paraphrase back to the patient what you have heard. This can be useful when the patient loses their train of thought, in addition to checking if you have understood them correctly.
- Be flexible. Be adaptable and willing to change plans when reminiscing. You may need to focus on several different themes or interests when reminiscing, depending on the patient's attention span and interests at the time.
- Speak in a gentle tone and slow down your speech to mirror that of the person you are talking to.
- Use humour, when appropriate, to communicate with the person.
- Always remember that the purpose of reminiscence is for enjoyment, meaningful conversation and engagement. It does not matter if there are inaccuracies in the individual's narrative – so long as they are enjoying the process.
- Suggested topics for reminiscence can be found in Section 3.2.
- Some topics can trigger upsetting or distressing memories for people with dementia. For example: reminiscing about children may be distressing for a person who had a still born child; talking about pets can be distressing for a person who lost their dog, cat or other pet. Some people find it helpful to talk about the memory and explore their grief and distress. For others, it is useful to validate their emotions, provide reassurance and often shift their attention to another more pleasant topic or memory<sup>31</sup>. It may be necessary for some patients to avoid particular topics so as to reduce the risk of distressing them. Topics that trigger distress and strategies used in response should be recorded in their care notes and handed over to other staff.

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<sup>31</sup> For a tip sheet on using validation refer to:  
[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS\\_Quick\\_Ref\\_Guide\\_Psychosocial\\_Approaches\\_Validation.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS_Quick_Ref_Guide_Psychosocial_Approaches_Validation.pdf)

### Engaging the Patient's Senses

Senses are the primary interface with the world for humans. Senses together with perception of sensory information allow people to understand what is happening around them and respond accordingly. What does this have to do with patients with dementia and reminiscence?

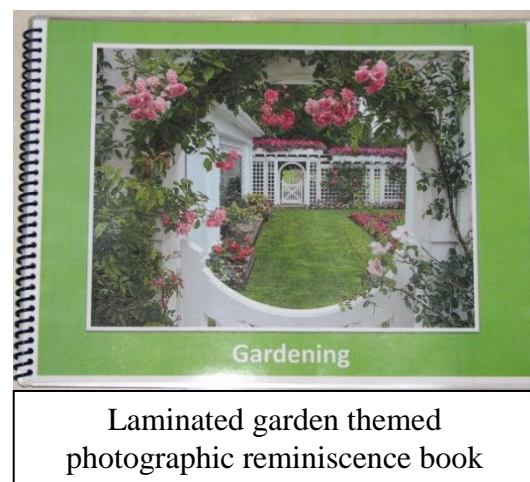
- Involving more than one of the patient's senses can increase the cues that enable them to make sense of the reminiscence experience. Talking about past memories is often enhanced by having physical items present e.g. photographs or memorabilia. Physical items, that the patient can look at and touch, provide an additional source of information for the patient. These items can remind and refocus their attention on what is being discussed. Furthermore they can trigger the patient to recall memories and actions which may not readily be available or accessible otherwise.
- Dementia, ageing and age related illnesses can impair senses and perception of sensory information. In addition, patients may have sensory preferences and/or sensitivities. Understanding the patient's sensory impairments, perceptual impairments and preferences can assist with choosing the method in which reminiscence is delivered. For example:
  - For a patient who has difficulty hearing, reminiscing communication may occur using a white board or cue cards (refer to Section 4.1 for accessing cue cards).
  - For a patient who has difficulty seeing, looking at photos or pictures would be avoided, and other intact senses stimulated instead e.g. listening to music, talking about memories, holding and feeling objects etc.
  - For a patient who is sensitive to noise, reminiscence is best undertaken in an environment where there are lower levels of noise or where the noise levels are fairly consistent.
  - For a patient who has enjoyed tactile stimulation, reminiscence may involve appropriate touch and items or objects to feel and explore.

*"John took the doll we offered and carefully cradled her in his lap. He sang lullabies, rocked it and kissed it on the head. He had not said anything during the entire admission. His family were amazed and overwhelmed seeing him take on the role of doting father"*

Specific strategies for engaging the various senses in reminiscence include:

- Providing their favourite music to listen to. This may be provided in MP3 or CD format and played in their room or in designated ward areas. Music may also be played on headphones connected to MP3 players, portable CD players or infra-red headphones. These options allow the patient to wander whilst listening to preferred tunes.
- Encourage family to bring in the patient's favourite meals to enjoy.

- Providing gentle hand massage or holding hands as appropriate. Consider individual preferences and cultural norms for touch.
- Listening to stories and memories recorded in a familiar voice. Encourage families to record stories and happy memories for the person to listen to via an MP3 player.
- Providing opportunity for olfactory stimulation. Many people have smells that are comforting and associated with good memories. These aromas may be provided in a ward setting by:
  - Placing drops of the relevant essential oil in an air diffuser, on a tissue tucked in the patient's clothing or pillow;
  - Arranging flowers and greenery e.g. lavender and rosemary;
  - Smelling dried herbs and spice;
  - Conducting cooking activities on the ward to provide aromas associated with baking and other food;
  - Running a scented bingo group using small bottles filled with cotton wool soaked with various scents. (Refer to Section 3.4 for information on sourcing products);
  - Applying the patient's preferred perfume;
  - Giving a hand massage with the patient's preferred scented moisturiser;
  - Encourage families to bring in the patient's favourite soaps, moisturisers and other personal care items and encourage the patient to enjoy the smells of the soap while having a shower;
- Looking through a family photo album or reminiscence book with patients who enjoy the visual stimulation.
- Encouraging families to bring in and put inexpensive and replaceable personal mementoes in the patient's bedroom can provide a sense of familiarity to the room and assist with triggering pleasant memories.
- Holding regular BBQs/high teas/lunches on the ward can provide food events that may prompt pleasant memories. A bread machine may be used to regularly bake and spread the smell of bread.
- Providing a range of laminated books themed to different interests.
- Playing DVDs that tap into the patient's past interests and preferences.



These may include old movies and themed ambient DVDs e.g. containing pictures of Europe, puppies, aquarium, trains, sports). DVDs may also be played on personal DVD players or downloaded and played on tablet devices.

- Seating: A glider chair may be used to provide a gently rocking chair experience for the patient who previously found this motion soothing.

Be aware of “overloading” or overstimulating the patient as this can cause distress, increase their confusion and lead to agitation or aggression. Providing stimuli which is not enjoyable can have a similar effect. Pay particular attention to the observations of staff, family and other carers, feedback from the patient, as well as the patient’s verbal and body language to determine if they are responding positively to the sensory engagement.

### *Using Activities to Facilitate Reminiscence*

Reminiscence can be used as part of care delivery every moment, of every hour, of every day.

#### *Activities of Daily Living (ADL)*

While reminiscence is typically associated with a structured, planned one on one or group activity, it can easily be incorporated into all ADL tasks without placing additional demands on time. Strategies to incorporate reminiscence into ADL and care engagement include:

- Providing a familiar soap, towel or personal care item for the patient to use when he/she is completing personal care tasks.
- Providing enjoyable and preferred music for the patient when they are in the bathroom or having a meal.
- Talking with the patient about their past interests and memories during personal care tasks. This may be augmented by providing the patient with relevant laminated photos/ pictures to look through. The laminated pictures may be bound into a book to look through or kept as single pages.
- Talking about the patient’s favourite meals, restaurants, family meal traditions and cooking experiences during meal times.

*“We gave him a laminated bound catalogue (aka junk mail) from the local hardware shop. He would sit there whilst we helped him shower and he would look through the book and tell us what he wanted to buy, what he already had, and what various products were used for. He is an expert in all things tools related.”*

Look for the “every day and incidental” opportunities to engage in reminiscence with patients.







### **Memory boxes**

Memory boxes are individualised to the patient. These boxes contain items that are relevant to and/or important to patient. These items may include: photos, memorabilia, trinkets, letters, toys or other meaningful items from the individual patient's past. The following considerations are important when making memory boxes:

- Include items that are individualised and meaningful to the patient. Speak with the patient and family members to help them choose the relevant items.
- Ensure the items chosen are safe to be handled and are not fragile.
- Ensure valuable items are not included in the box in case the item gets lost on the ward. Where possible, make copies of photos or letters that are included in the box.
- If appropriate, choose items that appeal to the different senses.
- Choose items around a particular theme: eg: wedding day, children, hobbies, the 1960s.
- Consider laminating photos and letters to protect them when being handled.
- Choose items that will assist with starting a conversation with the patient. Remember that not all items need to be used in the memory box when engaging the patient. One or two or the items may be sufficient to trigger memories and facilitate reminiscence with a patient.
- Encourage all members of staff, family, carers, visitors and volunteers to use the memory boxes to start a conversation with the person with dementia.

Making a memory box with a person with dementia does not need to be an expensive or time consuming activity. Families may be encouraged to bring in the relevant items. Items can be stored in something as simple and cheap as a decorated cardboard box, plastic container or a small cane basket from a discount shop. The memory box can be taken with the patient on discharge and items added to the box as appropriate in the future.

Families may find it useful to have one or two examples of memory boxes that they can look at or photos of completed memory boxes. This may assist in providing them with ideas of what the box is and what may be placed in it.

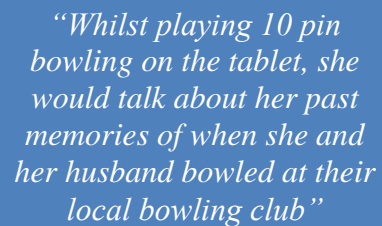
Additional resources for developing memory boxes can be found at the following websites:

- 5 Reasons to Make a Memory Box for Alzheimer's Patients:  
<http://www.alzheimers.net/2014-02-06/memory-boxes-for-patients/>
- Memory boxes: <http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/edinburgh/1899.do/memory-boxes>
- An video tutorial for creating memory boxes:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=perGznqRrDY>

- Making a memory box: <http://www.gem.org.uk/soyh/toolkit/mini/docs/Learner-Toolkit-MemoryBox.pdf>
- How to make a memory box video tutorial: <http://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/dementia-memory-box-tutorial/>
- Making a memory box for an Alzheimer's or dementia patient: <http://www.shadowboxpress.com/blogs/shadowbox-press-blog/14887207-making-a-memory-box-for-an-alzheimers-or-dementia-patient>

### ***Ipads and Other Tablets***

The use of technology to engage people with dementia care is an emerging area of world-wide interest<sup>32</sup>. Android and iOS applications on touchscreen tablet devices (e.g. iPads or Samsung tablets) provide an accessible tool for engaging people with dementia in reminiscence. Given the large amount of applications (apps) available and the countless number of interests and hobbies, tablet devices may be a useful tool to facilitate reminiscing.



*“Whilst playing 10 pin bowling on the tablet, she would talk about her past memories of when she and her husband bowled at their local bowling club”*

Advantages of using apps on a tablet device with people with dementia include:

- Portability of the device.
- Ease of adding and deleting applications.
- Large storage capacity/memory.
- Depending on the applications used, they can provide opportunities for visual, auditory and tactile stimulation.
- Fast access to videos (e.g. youtube), images and audio that can be used to trigger conversation.
- Different applications can be used for varying levels of cognition throughout the dementia progression.
- They can be a useful tool for tech savvy younger people to connect with people with dementia.

If using applications on a tablet device with patients with dementia, consider the following:

- Ensure a protective cover is used in case the tablet device is dropped or thrown.

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<sup>32</sup> Alm et al (2007); O'Rourke et al (2011); Subramaniam & Woods (2012)

- Tablet devices can be placed in secure holders to prevent them from becoming misplaced or lost.
- Appropriate infection control procedures should be adhered to when using the tablet device with multiple users. Refer to Section 2.4 Reminiscence and occupational health and safety for infection control procedures.
- Ensure the battery is fully charged before using the tablet device.
- Some applications only operate with an internet connection and will then require WiFi or equivalent. Other applications may be used without an internet connection once they are downloaded to the tablet device, and are useful when an internet connectivity is unavailable.
- Some free applications have advertisements and pop ups that can be distracting and can also take the user to another screen. This can be addressed in some instances by disconnecting the device from the internet or if it is an applications that requires internet connectivity by purchasing a pop-up or advertisement free version of the application. Pop ups and advertisements can be distracting for the patient and easily lead to confusion.
- If the patient does not enjoy the application you are using, try another application(s). Select apps based on the patient's life history and interests.
- Consider offering the tablet/iPad to grandchildren or younger visitors to assist them in communicating with the patient.
- YouTube can be a great source of video clips that can be custom selected to meet the patient's interests and cultural background.

There are over one millions applications available each on the iTunes and google play app stores which can make choosing appropriate applications a challenge. Section 3.6 provides a list of Apps compiled by the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (Victoria) that may be useful for engaging a patient in reminiscence activities.

### **Other activities**

A range of activity items that can promote reminiscence are available for use with individual patients and with groups of patients. These activity items include:

- Quizzes
- Memory games
- Puzzles
- DVDs
- Aprons



- Life-like (realistic looking) dolls for doll or child representational therapy. A sample information flyer can be found in Section 4.3.

- Weighted, breathable, life-like and robotic pets.
  - Be aware that some cultural and religious groups may have different regulations and beliefs about keeping pets. For example in the Islamic culture, dogs are believed to be unclean. Birds are very popular as pets in the Egyptian culture.
- Boxes of containers filled with used greeting cards, old stamps or playing cards provide opportunities for sorting and reminiscing about holidays and events of the past, stamp collecting interests and card games played. Instructions for sorting activities for greeting and playing cards can be found in Section 4.4.

Australian suppliers for many of these items can be found in Section 3.4. Guidelines are available online for the following:

- Making sensory aprons:  
[https://wa.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/2.09\\_Activity\\_Apron\\_Resource\\_Sheet.pdf](https://wa.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/2.09_Activity_Apron_Resource_Sheet.pdf)
- Child representational/doll therapy:  
[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS\\_Vic\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Child\\_Representational\\_Therapy\\_Reviewed\\_June\\_09.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS_Vic_Guidelines_for_Child_Representational_Therapy_Reviewed_June_09.pdf)
- Animal assisted therapy:  
[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Animal\\_Assisted\\_Therapy\\_in\\_Dementia\\_Care.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Animal_Assisted_Therapy_in_Dementia_Care.pdf)
- Dolls and pets:  
[https://wa.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/2.00\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Use\\_of\\_Dolls\\_and\\_Mechanized\\_Pets\\_as\\_a\\_Therapeutic\\_Tool.pdf](https://wa.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/2.00_Guidelines_for_Use_of_Dolls_and_Mechanized_Pets_as_a_Therapeutic_Tool.pdf)
- Activities for men:  
[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Men's\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_final.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Men's_Activity_Guidelines_final.pdf)

## **1.4 Using the environment to support reminiscing**

The environment has great potential to be used to prompt and promote spontaneous and directed reminiscing. The following strategies may be used to provide environmental reminiscence opportunities:

- Laminated photos or pictures of interest can be temporarily affixed to the wall in the shower, bathroom or bedroom and used to focus the patient's attention on something pleasant during otherwise invasive care tasks like showering.



Movie posters

- Reminiscing stations can be set up within the ward to create a reminiscing milieu.

Reminiscing stations can include:

- A bookshelf containing magazines, laminated books and books covering a broad range of interests.
- A doll or child representational therapy area containing a cradle, baby pram and life like doll.
- A desk containing ledger books, phone directory, Teledex, old rotary dial phone, an old typewriter and paper, a variety of pamphlets, pens, large calculator, partially filled in diaries and folders.
- A reflective/quiet area with soothing background music and a library type set up with shelves containing books. Book shelf wallpaper may be used to augment this reminiscence stations.
- A movie area containing laminated pictures of old movies affixed to the walls where there is access to a TV and DVD player for playing preferred movies.
- A cultural area with laminated and labelled familiar pictures of places in the world affixed to the wall, a display of objects from different countries and laminated books. These posters may be placed in areas patients often sit, such as outside the nurses station area and in sitting areas.
- A spiritual area containing laminated pictures representing different spiritual beliefs affixed to the wall, religious icons displayed and access to different spiritual music.
- A gardening area with various safe gardening tools displayed on the wall, laminated pictures of gardens and gardening affixed to the wall, laminated books of gardens and a 'potting' bench with various garden related paraphernalia.
- A music area with a display of old records and laminated pictures of famous musicians and groups affixed to the wall, musical instruments, and a CD player or MP3 player and speaker to play music.
- A sporting area with various sport related items displayed on the wall, laminated pictures of different sports and jerseys, sporting sections from the newspaper, laminated books of photos of different sports e.g. AFL and sporting events e.g. Olympics.



*"We use the posters of the places in the world to find out where patients have travelled, where they are from and their memories associated with different countries and destinations."*

- A dining area with displays of dining related items e.g. plates displayed on the wall, a shelf containing old cookbooks, a menu for the day with pictures or photos of the food, laminated books of food from Australia and around the world, signs in the predominant languages of patients indicating that it is a dining room or café.

## 1.5 Reminiscing with people with dementia who experience BPSD

Reminiscence can be used to engage patients who experience behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). Many of the strategies in earlier sections may also be used with patients with BPSD. Additional strategies include:

- Playing and singing along to the patient's preferred music during showering and toileting tasks where the patient would otherwise respond aggressively.
- Displaying laminated photographs of interest in the shower or toilet wall to focus the patients attention on something they enjoy whilst accompanying them to the shower or toilet.
- Providing the patient with a life-like doll to care for can settle some people with moderate to advanced dementia. The 'baby' can be used in the shower with the patient engaged in washing it whilst staff are tending to their shower.
- Playing white noise music in patient rooms where the patient is cued to exit their room and wander when they are disturbed by noises outside their room. White noise can assist in modulating the noise in their room by reducing the sound extremes in the environment.
- Providing the patient with a themed reminiscence box matched to their interests for them to fossick through when they are up at night disturbing others.
- Providing a weighted pet for a patient who is fond of pets to sit and pat. This can be useful for people who may be prone to wandering when they are unsafe to do so. When using weighted items, always check that the patient is able to safely remove the item and that it is not causing any pressure areas.

Always ensure that any issues such as medical illness, pain, discomfort, incontinence, hydration, and other immediate needs are addressed which may be contributing to the patient's BPSD.

*"We put the star projector and noise machine on (set to the sound of crashing ocean waves). Instead of getting up, she lay in bed watching the stars on the ceiling and fell asleep."*



*"He sits with the weighted dog on his lap, patting it and singing. Usually he would be up and wandering. The dog provides him with a rest break that he enjoys."*





### ***People of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background***

Consideration should be given to the following:

- Guidelines and ideas for engaging ATSI patients who have dementia in activities can be found at:  
[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Activity\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Indigenous\\_Australians.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/Activity_Guidelines_for_Indigenous_Australians.pdf)  
Strategies for using reminiscence with this group can be found on page 13 of this publication.
- A life story template for patients from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background can be found on page 2 of this newsletter:  
[https://nt.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/20121218\\_NT\\_Across\\_the\\_Borders\\_August\\_2012.pdf](https://nt.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/20121218_NT_Across_the_Borders_August_2012.pdf)

### ***People with Younger Onset Dementia***

Younger onset dementias are defined as being dementias where the onset occurs in people under the age of 65 or 50 for those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- People with younger onset dementia often experience a range of issues and additional losses that differ from older patients. These may include having different interests, a younger family, relationship difficulties and financial strains and losses of independence, employment, and driving.
- Reminiscing with patients with younger onset dementia can provide them with an outlet to express their individuality. Identify topics that the patient enjoys talking about and activities they enjoy.
- They may not feel that they fit in a ward containing older people. The usual repertoire of activities available may not be appropriate for this patient.
- Be sensitive to the additional pressures the patient and their family and carers may be under. Some topics often used for reminiscence may be upsetting. Putting together a life story or memory box may be overwhelming for some.

### ***People who are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (GLBTI)***

When working with individuals who identify as GLBTI and have dementia, it is recommended that the staff have an understanding of the unique challenges that may present for this population through the process of ageing. Patients and carers may be more wary about disclosing some information. The Well Proud: A guide to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender



and intersex inclusive practice for health and human services publication<sup>33</sup>, produced by the Victorian Department of Health provides some practical information and recommendations for providing sensitive, inclusive and respectful care services for the GLBTI population.

### **Family and Carers**

Caring can be a rewarding experience for many carers but a role that is very stressful. Admissions to hospital can be very difficult for the patient's family and carers and some can struggle to adjust to a new role where they are not providing the day to day direct care<sup>34</sup>. Consideration should be given to the following:

- The family and carer can be engaged as an expert in the care of the patient. They can provide invaluable information on the patient, their past history, preferences, routines etc.
- Whilst reminiscence is an everyday activity, the way it is used with patients is slightly different. Families and carers may not have the knowledge and skills to understand the benefits and how reminiscence can be used to engage the patient. Some may not be ready to use reminiscence as they are concerned with other things or overwhelmed by stress.
- Demonstrating how reminiscence can work for the patient can be a powerful teaching tool for family and carers. It can model to them how they might use this approach.
- Some families and carers may not understand the concept of memory boxes and life stories/histories and life profiles. Provide concrete de-identified samples of completed boxes and/or life stories/histories/profiles may assist families and carers in understanding their purpose and engage them in developing these resources.

## **1.7 Using reminiscence in a group setting**

Reminiscence may be conducted with more than one patient in a group setting. Some strategies for facilitating reminiscing in groups include<sup>35</sup>:

- Seat people who require more prompting to remain in the group or remain focussed closer to the group facilitator.
- Include patients who have similar interests or experiences.
- Provide items that patients in the group can look at and hold. This gives an additional clue about what is being discussed.

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<sup>33</sup> Refer to:

[http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/75618B0EE0847E0FCA257927000E6EED/\\$FILE/Well%20Proud%20Guidelines%20updated%202011.pdf](http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/75618B0EE0847E0FCA257927000E6EED/$FILE/Well%20Proud%20Guidelines%20updated%202011.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Bloomer et al (2014)

<sup>35</sup> For further tips refer to: Schweitzer & Bruce (2008) and

<http://www.beamish.org.uk/file/uploaded/runningareminiscencesession.pdf>

- Family and carers may enjoy being part of a group activity.
- Share and compare experiences of patients in the group. For example: What events have they celebrated and how? What foods have they cooked/enjoyed?
- Groups provide an opportunity to celebrate the diversity in experiences and cultures of participating patients.
- Be mindful of maintaining the patient's right to privacy. Seek the patients consent before and whilst involving them in a reminiscence group.
- Avoid including patients who generally do not get along.
- More than 6-8 people may reduce the opportunities for individual patients to share.
- Sitting at a table may prompt patients to remain seated and objects related to the reminiscence can be placed on the tabletop.
- Locate the group in an area that is relatively free of distractions.
- Invite one patient, family member or carer to speak at a time.
- Keep the session to between 30-45 minute duration to avoid over stimulating or fatiguing patients.

## **1.8 Assessing the effectiveness of reminiscing**

The outcomes of reminiscence may be assessed in several different ways including:

- Attach a tick sheet to the themed reminiscence boxes that staff, families and carers tick when they use the box. This provides information about the frequency the boxes are used.
- Provide patients, families, carers and staff with opportunities to provide verbal and written feedback on the usefulness of individual resources, reminiscing environments, use of reminiscing during care delivery and participation in groups.
- At the end of a reminiscence group invite those who attended to provide feedback. This could be in verbal or written form. A simple questionnaire could be used containing 1-2 questions.
- Record attendance to reminiscence groups.
- Administer formal tools to measure changes in:
  - Care culture e.g. using dementia care mapping.
  - Quality of life, refer to the Dementia Outcome Measurement Suite for suggested tools: <http://www.dementia-assessment.com.au/quality/index.html>

- Engagement e.g. using the Pool Activity Level Outcome Sheet<sup>36</sup>, Activity Time in Context<sup>37</sup>, the Menorah Park Engagement Scale<sup>38</sup>
- BPSD, refer to the Dementia Outcome Measurement Suite for suggested tools.

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<sup>36</sup> Pool (2008)

<sup>37</sup> Wood et al (2005)

<sup>38</sup> Skrajner & Camp (2007)

## ■ Section 2: Practical Considerations Within an Acute or Sub-Acute Environment

### 2.1 Building staff capacity to utilise reminiscence in everyday care

There are a range of resources available and strategies that may assist with building the capacity of staff to feel confident and skilled to reminisce with people with dementia. Section 3.5 provides details and links to some freely accessible online educational opportunities. Some strategies for building staff capacity to use reminiscence include:

- Training: Provide formal or informal training in small or larger groups with the staff involved in caring for those with dementia or the ward where reminiscence will be used. Training may cover many of the topics already covered in Section 1 and should be as practical as possible. Suggested topics to cover include:
  - Why use reminiscence? What is the evidence? Refer to Section 1.1.
  - Identifying what topics are suitable for using when reminiscing. Refer to Section 1.2.
  - How to engage patients with dementia in reminiscence. Refer to Section 1.3
  - Responding effectively when a patient becomes distressed whilst reminiscing. Refer to Section 1.3.
  - Using the environment and objects to support reminiscence. Refer to Section 1.4.

Training may include role playing using scenarios, problem solving, brainstorming, case study examples, modelling, individual, small or larger group activities.

- Environmental prompting: Set up the environment to prompt staff to use reminiscence and provide ideas and resources that are readily accessible and useful. Refer to Section 1.4.
- Reminiscence champions: Identify staff who are experienced and confident in using reminiscence take on the role of ‘reminiscence champions’. Within this role they can activity model and demonstrate how to use reminiscence with patients throughout the ward.
- Modelling: Ensure staff who are experienced actively utilise reminiscence in their daily care interactions, modelling this approach to other staff, volunteers and carers.
- Handovers: Include reminiscence in daily handovers. Actively explore with staff what topics they have found and approaches they have used when reminiscing with each patient. Handovers are a prime time for staff to share what works and what does not



*“It helped me to see another staff member using reminiscence with the patients. I felt so much more confident after seeing it done.”*

work, problem solve and work as a team. It can assist in improving patient care by providing more consistency across staff in the approaches used.

## **2.2 Engaging volunteers to assist with reminiscence**

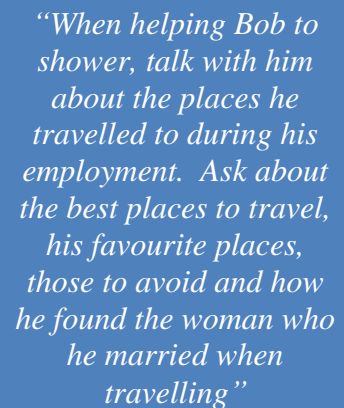
Volunteers have a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences that they bring into their role which can be a great asset to using reminiscence in a hospital environment. It is important to note that volunteers' knowledge and understanding of dementia and reminiscing may vary and not be as advanced as staff members. Their role and the associated expectations also differ from staff members. With this in mind, many of the strategies that are used for building capacity in staff may also be used with volunteers with some modification to match their levels of knowledge and roles.

- **Education:** Ensure education provided meets the diversities in the level of knowledge of volunteers. Practical skills will likely be preferable to theoretical information. It may be beneficial to provide education in smaller informal groups and make use of role plays to practice skills, discussions about experiences volunteers have had using reminiscence already (both successes and challenges), case studies and discussion about how reminiscence could be practically applied within their role. Topics that may be covered include:
  - Identifying what topics are suitable for using when reminiscing. Refer to Section 1.2.
  - How to engage patients with dementia in reminiscence. Refer to Section 1.3
  - How to respond effectively when a patient becomes distressed whilst reminiscing. Refer to Section 1.3.
  - Processes for engaging seamlessly with staff, when and how to hand over any information concerning patient responses to reminiscing.
- **Modelling:** Link volunteers with staff who can model or demonstrate how to use reminiscence with patients with dementia.

## **2.3 Facilitating continuation of reminiscence post discharge**

Passing on information to those caring for the person can help facilitate the continuation of reminiscence in their everyday care following discharge. Some strategies that may assist with this include:

- Include in the person's discharge summary information



*“When helping Bob to shower, talk with him about the places he travelled to during his employment. Ask about the best places to travel, his favourite places, those to avoid and how he found the woman who he married when travelling”*

about the topics they like to reminisce about and how to reminisce with them. Also handover information on topics that may best be avoided because they are distressing to the person.

- Demonstrate or model to family and other carers how to use reminiscence with the person with dementia. This may involve showing them how to use memory boxes.
- One discharge, provide a laminated sheet that lists the top 5 memories the person with dementia enjoys talking about. Encourage the family or carers to put this up in an area in which they frequently spend time with the person with dementia. Show them that the topics listed and give them some ideas of what they can talk about with the person.

## **2.4 Reminiscence and Occupational Health and Safety**

All reminiscence material should adhere to and be used in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011<sup>39</sup>.

- Reminiscence material should be easy and safe to handle. Safe manual handling techniques should always be employed when transferring and storing material. Some tips include:
  - Store reminiscence material in a location that can be easily accessed for safe transfers. E.g. avoid lifting above shoulder height, twisting or other awkward postures.
  - Ensure reminiscence kits or boxes are not too weighty and if so, split contents of the kits across several containers to reduce manual handling demands. Reminiscence kits and boxes should be easily transferrable by one person.
  - Use a trolley or similar when transporting reminiscence materials which are heavy or require transport over a distance.
- Reminiscence material may pose risks to patients with dementia, other patients, family, visitors, carers and staff. Material should be assessed to identify and minimise any associated risks. Management strategies that may be utilised to minimise risk include:
  - Providing supervision when the material is used.
  - Tailoring the material to the individual patient by removing items that may cause them harm or be used to harm others.
  - Removing material from patients who as a result of their behavioural and psychological symptoms may destroy the integrity of the material.
  - Storing the material when not in use in a location that cannot be accessed by patients.

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<sup>39</sup> [http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011A00137/Html/Text#\\_Toc309986326](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2011A00137/Html/Text#_Toc309986326)

Infection control procedures should be adhered to in the design and use of reminiscence material.

- Routine hand washing or alcohol based hand rubs should be used by patients, family, carers and staff prior to and after handling reminiscence materials.
- All materials with hard surfaces should be wiped down using a detergent or disinfectant wipe after being used. Fabric items should be machine laundered or spot cleaned using a detergent (e.g. HC90 and water) ± disinfectant (e.g. Isowipes™) or combined detergent plus disinfectant (e.g. Toughie 5™ wipes). Non machine washable materials should be spot cleaned using a detergent ± disinfectant.
- Single use reminiscence material should be used with patients who have the following:
  - A non-enveloped virus e.g. Clostridium difficile, norovirus,
  - A multi-resistant organism (MRO) e.g. methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), multi-resistant gram-negative bacteria (MRGN) or vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE)
- If shared reminiscence material has been used with a patient with a non-enveloped virus or MRO, a two-step cleaning process should be utilised to clean the item. This involves the initial use of a detergent followed by a disinfectant.

Further information concerning infection control in health settings can be found at:

[www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33\\_infection\\_control\\_healthcare.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/cd33_infection_control_healthcare.pdf)

## **2.5 Maintaining reminiscence equipment**

Strategies for keeping reminiscence equipment securely

Maintaining reminiscence material over time is often a concern as material can often go missing or break. Some strategies to assist with maintaining reminiscence material includes:

- Utilising a log book where reminiscence material is signed in and out. This assists with tracking who is using the material and how frequently the material is being used. It also assists with tracking any missing material.
- Keep material stored in a secure place.
- Label and/or tag all material.
- Maintain a photographic log of material.
- Maintaining a list of where reminiscence material was purchased from to facilitate easy replacement of missing items.

- Avoid using reminiscence material with patients who as a result of their behavioural and psychological symptoms may destroy its integrity.

## **2.6 Auditing of resources and ensuring usability**

Reminiscence material should be regularly audited to ensure all items are structurally sound and are available for use. Auditing should include the following:

- Reminiscence material should be checked prior to and following use to ensure that all items are intact and safe to be used.
- Reminiscence material should be audited on a regular basis to keep track of what items are present and what is missing or damaged. Audits should be conducted every one to two months depending on frequency the material is being used. More frequent audits should be conducted where there is high utility of materials.
- Auditing should include visual and manual inspection of the items.
- Following auditing, a plan should be made to fix, replace or remove any items that are either missing or no longer intact.

A log of the audits should be maintained. Refer to Section 4.6 for a sample audit tool.



## ■ Section 3: Resources

### 3.1 Developing resources for reminiscing

Many resources for reminiscing are available for free or at minimal cost if they are sought out. Some tips for developing reminiscence resources are:

- Place a signs up in prominent areas requesting donations of particular items that are desired for reminiscing, including contents for reminiscence boxes. E.g. old typewriters, rotary and push button telephones, knitting yarn, used greeting cards, sporting paraphernalia etc.
- Run a calendar drive at the start of each year and collect the previous year's calendars. Calendars often contain large colour images that may be laminated and either bound, affixed to the wall or given individually to the patient.
- Consider submitting for grant funding to purchase items.
- Frequent OP shops.
- Frequent discount shops.
- Place wanted advertisements on Gumtree or similar sites.
- Search through and list on Free Cycle <https://www.freecycle.org/browse/AU>
- Collect items that may be useful which you would otherwise recycle or throw away e.g. used greeting cards and ends of wool.
- Ask for donations of items from relevant shops.

## 3.2 Topics for reminiscing

There are a multitude of topics that may be used to prompt reminiscence. Some topics are listed below.

- Coming to Australia
- Having children
- Caring for babies
- Growing up
- First job
- First car
- Driving
- Places travelled
- Going to the beach
- Weekends
- Childhood memories
- Family life
- Homes lived in
- Schooling
- Occupations
- Gardening and gardens
- Animals and pets
- Food
- Cooking and baking
- Holidays
- Hairstyles
- Getting married
- First plane trip
- Famous people
- Buying/selling a house
- Where you met your 'love'
- Where/when were you born?
- What was your first pay cheque for?
- Best memory
- Celebrations
- Playing sports
- Watching sports
- Sporting events
- Music
- Concerts attended
- Learning & playing music
- Grandchildren
- Grandparents
- Handcrafts
- Woodwork
- Shed activities
- Car maintenance
- Interior design
- Learning to drive
- Youth of today
- Best friends
- Favourite summer activity
- Favourite winter activity
- Movies
- First love
- Sewing and handcrafts
- Biggest life lessons
- Places lived
- Housework
- Traditions
- Parenting
- Discipline
- Getting in trouble
- Things you are an expert in

Add in your own ideas:

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### 3.3 Themed reminiscence box ideas

Reminiscence boxes may be built around a range of different themes. Items that are safe, durable, non-perishable and reflect the theme may be included in the box. Examples of themes for reminiscence boxes are listed below.

- Sports
- Families and Home life
- Culturally specific themes
- Cooking and Food
- Gardening
- Working life
- Celebrations
- Farming
- Transport
- Movies and television
- Handcrafts and sewing
- The beach
- Games
- Grooming and hairstyles
- Children and Schooling
- Men's interests
- Pets and animals
- Music
- Art and Craft
- Religion
- Holidays
- Travel
- Babies
- Famous people
- Shopping
- Women's interests
- Changing technology
- Occupations

It is recommended that an instruction/information sheet be included in each themed reminiscence box. This should contain the following:

- A list of the items included in the box
- A list of questions that family, carers and staff may use to reminisce with the patient.
- Optional: A photo of items. This can assist in visually identifying the items in the box and assist with auditing.

Instruction sheets for the 15 themed reminiscence boxes developed for the My Story, My Life can be found in Section 4.2.

### 3.4 Commercially available reminiscence products in Australia

Supplier & contact details	Resources available
<b>Alzheimer's Products Australia</b> <a href="http://www.justamemoryaustralia.com/">http://www.justamemoryaustralia.com/</a> Ph: (03) 9769 5589	Memory boards Memory kits Activities, puzzles and games Life-like dolls Disguises for doors
<b>Box 'n' Dice</b> <a href="http://www.boxndice.com.au">http://www.boxndice.com.au</a> Ph: (08) 9444 9806	CDs and DVDs Reminiscence and themed books and kits Puzzles and games Life-like dolls Activity aprons, mats, cushions and table covers Sensory stimulation activities including a scent quiz Gadget boards
<b>Dementia Care Australia</b> <a href="http://www.dementiacareaustralia.com/index.php?page=shop.index&amp;option=com_virtuemart&amp;Itemid=67">http://www.dementiacareaustralia.com/index.php?page=shop.index&amp;option=com_virtuemart&amp;Itemid=67</a> Ph: (03) 9727 2744	Games Large balloons Dice Books and posters
<b>Jaemond Design</b> <a href="http://www.jaemond.com/product.htm">http://www.jaemond.com/product.htm</a> Ph: 0418 256 426	Activity table covers
<b>Lauretta Kaldor</b> <a href="http://laurettakaldor.com.au/product-category/categories/resources">http://laurettakaldor.com.au/product-category/categories/resources</a>	Reminiscence books DVDs and CDs Games
<b>Lee Middleton Dolls</b> <a href="http://www.leemiddletondolls.com.au">www.leemiddletondolls.com.au</a> Ph: 0417 675 274	Life-like dolls
<b>Sensations Dementia Care Products</b> <a href="http://www.sensationsdcp.com.au/">http://www.sensationsdcp.com.au/</a> Ph: 0414 320 342	Sensory activity aprons, table covers, cushions and washcloths Weighted blanket and vest Gadget boxes and wall panels Music boxes and wall panels Themed reminiscence boxes and books Ambient reminiscence DVDs
<b>Technical Solutions</b> <a href="http://techsol.com.au">http://techsol.com.au</a> Ph: (03) 9737 9000	Sensory activity products Weighted blankets and vests Weighted pets Multisensory room equipment Aromatherapy supplies
<b>Wisdom Activities</b> <a href="http://www.wisdomactivities.com.au">www.wisdomactivities.com.au</a> Ph: 1300 301 319	Activity aprons and table covers Puzzles and games Aromatherapy supplies Dolls

	Musical instruments Gardening activities Reminiscence books
<b>Zest Dementia and Aged Care</b> <a href="http://www.zestdementiacare.com.au/shop/">http://www.zestdementiacare.com.au/shop/</a> Ph: 1300 738 883	Books, DVDs and CDs Games and physical activities Reminiscence, memory, conversational and cognition activities and books Sensory activities including activity mats, muffs and pillows Aromatherapy Life-like dolls and pet therapy supplies

### 3.5 Training

Free resources and training are available to build health professional capacities in caring for people with dementia.

The following Australian online training modules focussing on various aspects of understanding and caring for the person with dementia are available at no cost:

- **NSW/ACT Dementia Training and Study Centre Education Modules**
  - <http://dementia.uow.edu.au/eduonline/index.html>
  - Covers: What is dementia; recognising dementia; communication in dementia; care partnerships with families across the dementia care settings; younger onset dementia; and dementia within CALD communities.
- **Curtin University Centre for Research on Ageing – WA Dementia Training and Study Centre**
  - [http://cra.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/delirium\\_training\\_package/ManagementOfConfusionFinalMarch09/module01/index.html](http://cra.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/delirium_training_package/ManagementOfConfusionFinalMarch09/module01/index.html)
  - Covers: Confusion and delirium
- **University of Tasmania Understanding Dementia**
  - <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/wca/mooc>
  - 9 week online course

Resources and training materials related to special needs groups:

- **The Dementia Education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities** – This education resource provides culturally specific training to enable health professionals to better meet the needs of this group. The training comes in a kit form containing: CD ROM, A4 spiral flip chart, poster, facilitator materials and participant materials. The facilitators guide can be accessed on <https://fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia-and-memory-loss/resources/indigenous-resources/dementia-learning-resource-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities> . Copies of the kit can be ordered from the Department using the order code DEM33. To order refer to: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/consumers-families-and-carers/dementia/dementia-resources> .
- **Cultural Competence in Dementia Care** – This education resource aims to build awareness and competence in caring for people from CALD backgrounds. It can be used by staff or volunteers and includes a CD ROM, hard copy of the CD ROM, workbook and optional assessment materials. Copies of the kit can be ordered from the

Department using the order code DEM59. To order refer to:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/consumers-families-and-carers/dementia/dementia-resources> .

- **Strangers in a Strange Land** - This education resource aims to build understanding of the needs of older carers. It includes a CD ROM and resource sheets. Copies of the kit can be ordered from the Department using the order code DEM48. To order refer to: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/consumers-families-and-carers/dementia/dementia-resources> .
- **2 Young 4 Dementia** – This education resource aims to improve awareness of the needs and issues of people with younger onset dementia, their families and carers. It includes a DVD, training materials and worksheets. Copies of the kit can be ordered from the Department using the order code DEM49. To order refer to: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/consumers-families-and-carers/dementia/dementia-resources>.



### 3.6 Apps that promote reminiscing

Apps that may be used with patients. Taken and adapted from: Apps for People with Dementia compiled by the DBMAS Victoria.

App Name	Cost	Level of cognitive impairment	Description	Android or IOS
Promenade – Revisit a life of memories together	<\$6	Mild → Severe	Collections of photos for many different interests. Carer can search for specific interest. Each photo is accompanied by questions the carer can use to engage the person in reminiscing.	IOS
iReminisce	£12 per year	Mild → Severe	Record and share life stories, create video, photo and audio diaries, view selection of photos, audio clips and videos from different eras. Family can remotely upload photos, audio notes and video to the life story.	IOS
My Life Story	<\$8	Mild → Severe	Patients and families/carers can record life stories, add photos and descriptions as well as stories. View slide show of photos that are meaningful for the patient accompanied by music and voice recordings.	IOS
You Tube	free	Mild → Severe	Endless collection of short video clips that can be searched according to topic. Includes film clips, old news reels and pieces of music.	Both
Tablet Journal	<\$4	Mild → Mod	Capture and organise personal information for day to day activities	Both

App Name	Cost	Level of cognitive impairment	Description	Android or IOS
150 Years of World History	<\$2	Mild → Severe	Search for and view images and information about the last 150 years of the world.	IOS
World History	<\$5	Mild → Severe	Search through historical photos and images, and access descriptions of the event/person.	Android
Keynote	Free	Mild → Severe	Create and view digital photo albums. Can be used to create stories and life stories that are tailored to the individual.	IOS
Power Point	Free	Mild → Severe	Create and view digital photo albums. Can be used to create stories and life stories that are tailored to the individual.	Android
ABC Radio	Free	Mild → Severe	Access ABC stations in Australia and podcasts of favourite shows.	Both
Yesterday USA Old Time Radio	Free	Mild → Severe	Access old time radio shows from 1920s to 1950s.	Both
Getty Images	Free	Mild → Severe	Search through 46 million images on particular topics, searchable by entering keywords.	IOS
Pocket Pond 2	Free	Mild → Severe	Watch, feed and decorate a pond of koi.	Both
iFish Pond	<\$4	Mild → Mod	Fish in a virtual pond. Arrange wildlife	IOS
Clicky Sticky Trains	<\$3	Mild → Mod	Build and run trains, choose scenery.	Both
Pocket Piano	Free	Mild → Severe	Play piano	Both

App Name	Cost	Level of cognitive impairment	Description	Android or IOS
Augment	Free	Mild → Severe	Build 3D images using the tablet's camera. The image is displayed on the screen or can be projected onto a screen.	Both
Flower Garden	Free	Mild → Severe	Create gardens by choosing and planting seeds, watering and them grow.	IOS
Cake Doodle	<\$2	Mild → Mod	Bake and decorate cakes.	IOS
Delicious Cake Decorating	Free	Mild → Mod	Bake and decorate cakes.	Android
Logos Quiz	Free	Mild → Mod	Remember and recall over 500 brands.	Both
Jigsaw Box	Free	Mild → Mod	Complete jigsaw puzzles of pictures of interest. Puzzles of 8 to 252 pieces.	IOS
Jigsaw Puzzle	Free	Mild → Mod	Complete jigsaw puzzles of pictures of interest. Puzzles of 4 to 400 pieces.	Both
Google Maps & Google Street View	Free	Mild → Severe	Explore places travelled and places lived.	Both
iBook	Free	Mild → Severe	Read and peruse e-books. Many free classics can be downloaded. Audio books available.	IOS
E Book Reader	Free	Mild → Severe	Read and peruse e-books. Many free classics can be downloaded. Audio books available.	Android

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## ■ Section 4: Appendices

### 4.1 Communication cue cards

Communication cards containing the words and pictures can be obtained in a variety of different languages.

- **Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing**


- Download from: <http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/resources/multilingual-resources/communication-cards>
- Languages: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Macedonian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Yiddish.
- Format: PDF, 4 or 12 cards per page, colour photos.

- **Eastern Health**


- Download from: <http://www.easternhealth.org.au/site/item/152-cue-cards-in-community-languages>
- Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Assyrian, Bosnian, Burmese, Cambodian (Khmer), Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Czech, Dari, Dinka, Dutch, English, Filipino (Tagalog), Finnish, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hakha – Chin, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Kirundi, Korean, Lao, Latvian, Macedonian, Malay, Maltese, Maori (Cook Island), Maori (New Zealand), Nepalese, Nuer, Oromo, Pashto, Persian (Farsi), Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Tetum, Thai, Tigrigna, Tongan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yiddish.
- Format: PDF, 4 or 20 per page, compics.




## 4.2 Instruction Sheets for the themed boxes developed for the My Story, My Life Reminiscence Project



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### Memory Box: Art

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, taste, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

**This Art themed box contains:**





1 Norman Rockwell laminated book	1 Arthur Streeton laminated book
1 Tom Roberts laminated book	1 Pierre-Auguste Renier laminated book
1 Rembrandt laminated book	1 Fredrick McCubbin laminated book
2 Claude Monet laminated books	DVD – The Artistic Traveller
The Great Artists Book	1 White paint palette
1 Set of watercolour paints & 5 Paint brushes	1 Pad of cartridge paper
1 Painting	1 Paint by numbers kit

**About Art and Reminiscence:**  
Many people have an interest in art. They may enjoy looking at works of art, like paintings, or creating art themselves. Most people have strong opinions about what art works they like and how these art works make them feel.

**Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Art:**  
There are many questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about art. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with art themed reminiscence include:

- Have you painted/drawn/sketched in the past? What have you painted/drawn/sketched?
- What colours would you paint/draw/sketch with? What would you paint/draw/sketch?
- Who is your favourite artist? Painter?
- What is your favourite work of art? What art do you dislike?
- What art galleries and museums have you visited?
- Questions that may be asked whilst showing the person pictures of paintings<sup>1</sup>:
  - What do you see in this painting?
  - What colours does the artist use?
  - What would you name this painting?





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## Memory Kit: Art

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how this kit may be used:

*Jane had always enjoyed visiting museums and galleries to look at paintings. She particularly liked paintings from the Impressionists like Monet. When her husband visited, they would sit together and look through the laminated books of Monet's paintings. Her husband would ask her which she liked best and what they were paintings of. He would frequently talk about the memories of seeing some of the paintings in person when they were shown in galleries around Australia.*

*One of Bill's hobbies had been as a 'backyard painter'. He had a little studio set up at home and had spent much of his free time working on small landscape paintings and had also tried to teach his children to paint. When his daughter visited they would look through the books of various painters. He would often take one of the paint brushes and trace over the laminated pictures showing her some of the strokes that the used painter in creating the painting. On other visits, Bill and his daughter would sit and watch the DVD. He would often tell her stories about the painters who had created the works of art shown on the DVD.*

<sup>1</sup> The Museum of Modern Art, New York. [http://www.moma.org/docs/meetme/Guides\\_Museums.pdf](http://www.moma.org/docs/meetme/Guides_Museums.pdf)

*Models used for illustration*



Version 1 – 20/11/2012





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## Memory Box: Babies

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### This Babies Memory Box contains:

Yellow grow suit & singlet	2 pairs of baby socks
1x bottle baby powder	3 pairs of plastic pants
1x rattle	3 dummies/soothers
1x bottle	1x teething ring
1x blanket	1x doll
5x laminated books of baby photos	White smocked baby dress

### About Babies and Reminiscence:

Babies have been a part of the lives of many people. They provide many stories that are shared across generations as well as advice on how to best care for babies. Be aware that memories about babies can be distressing for some people particularly in the case where a baby has died. Furthermore, for some people the topic may trigger worry and concern about where their children are and who is looking after them. Validating their concerns and grief and then re-focussing their attention may assist with managing these situations so as to minimise any distress. It may be necessary to avoid this reminiscence topic with some people.

### Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Babies:

There are many questions that may be used to spark pleasant memories about babies. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about babies:

- Do you have children/grandchildren? What are their names?
- How did you choose names for your children?
- How did you: wrap them up in a blanket; hold them; settle them when they were upset?  
This can be demonstrated using the doll.
- What toys did your babies play with?
- What do you remember about your children when they were babies?
- What advice would you give a new mother about caring for her baby?

The doll in this memory box may also be used for doll therapy or child representational therapy. This approach works best when the person recognises the doll as being a baby and is happy to engage with it. Ensure that doll therapy guidelines are adhered to.





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## Memory Box: Babies

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Sam is a father of 4 and grandfather of 9. He had been a very involved father and grandfather. When his wife visited, she picked up the doll and wrapped it in a blanket. She then walked up to Sam who was busy walking up and down the corridors. Sam asked her who the beautiful baby was. His wife asked him whether he wanted to hold the baby and after he said 'yes' handed it to him. She then guided him to sit down and rest for a while, whilst caring for the 'baby'. Sam sat and chatted to the baby. His wife talked to him about memories of their children when they were younger. At the end of the visit, his wife asked if she could take the 'baby' to put it down for a sleep. She then handed it to the staff to put away before she left.*

*Jessie had been fond of children but never had the opportunity to become a mum. When her friend visited, they looked through the laminated books of baby pictures and chatted about what the babies were doing and wearing. Jessie always became more relaxed and seemed to enjoy herself more during these times. Sometimes they would sort through the various items in the baby themed reminiscence box.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Children & Schooling

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Children & Schooling Memory Box contains:**

Humming top	Jack in a box
'Dick and Jane Go away Spot' reader	'Dick and Jane Who can help?' reader
2 decks of cards & 6 dice	1x set of dominos
Tin of 36 pencils & 1 Colouring in book	Pencil case with crayons & textas
Snakes and ladders game in tin container	Chess game in tin container
Writing book	2 laminated children & schooling books
Laminated 2 sided maths sheet A3 size	Jigsaw puzzle of kittens
Monkey puppet	

### **About Children & Schooling and Reminiscence:**

Everyone has experienced being a child and all that this involves. For most of us this has included going to school. As children, some of us were mischievous and always getting into trouble whilst others were helpful and well mannered. Whilst our personalities, experiences and behaviour were all different, we all have stories based on memories of being a child.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about children & schooling:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about children, childhood & schooling. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about children, childhood & schooling include:

- What do you remember about your childhood?
- Did you get into trouble when you were younger? What did you do?
- What did you enjoy doing when you were a child?
- What toys did you play with? What games did you play?
- Where did you go to school? When did you leave? Did you enjoy school? What do you remember about school?
- What were your favourite story books when you were younger?
- What manners do you think every child should know?





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## Memory Box: Children & Schooling

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*When Nick's grandchildren visited, they played with the humming top and jack in a box. His grandchildren told him they had never seen these toys before and asked him what sort of toys he had played with as a child. Nick told them about some his childhood toys. His grandchildren were amazed that he did not have computers and television when he was growing up. On another visit, he taught them how to play dominoes and told them about the games he played as a child.*

*From childhood, Maude had enjoyed games and doing puzzles. When her daughter visited, they either played snakes and ladders or put together the puzzle. During this time, Maude would tell stories about when her daughter was younger. She would also tell stories about her childhood and the mischief she got up to.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Cooking & Food

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, taste, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Cooking Memory Box contains:**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 x Sifter, juicer, colander, egg timer | 1 x Whisk, tongs, pastry brush      |
| 1x 2.5 cup measuring cup                | 1x round cake tin & ice-cream scoop |
| 1x bottle brush, apron, rolling pin     | 4 piece measuring spoons            |
| 1x glove & pot holder                   | 3 mixing bowls & funnels            |
| 3x mesh strainers & wooden spoons       | 1x butter pat                       |
| 3 x cookie cutters                      | 1x red scales                       |
| 3x laminated books 'Food'               | 1x laminated book 'Desserts'        |
| The Australian Heritage Cookbook        | Mediterranean Cookbook              |
| Best ever Italian cookbook              | Cookies, muffins and cakes cookbook |
| Robert Opie's Sweet Memories book       | Magazines & other cookbooks         |

### **About Cooking and Reminiscence:**

Almost everyone has had an experience with cooking and everyone has enjoyed eating food. Some people have particular expertise in certain types of cooking and have been taught to cook by their older generations of family. Whilst cooking has traditionally been seen as the women's domain, this stereotype has been shifting with men willing, able and skilled at cooking.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about cooking and food:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about cooking and food. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to spark pleasant memories about cooking include:

- What is your favourite food or recipe? What foods do you hate?
- What did you enjoy cooking/baking?
- What types of food are particular to your culture or family?
- What recipes have been passed along in your family? E.g. from your mother.
- What did you teach your children to cook?
- What are the things that are essential to have in the kitchen/pantry?
- Do you remember when: milk came in bottles; you made your own butter....?







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## Memory Box: Cooking & Food

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Ada was a member of the Country Woman's Association and had always been an enthusiastic cook. In addition to cooking she was fond of talking about cooking and her husband had always been the audience for these cooking chats. When he visited her, he would select a few items (e.g. rolling pin, sifter and mixing bowls) as well as a laminated book or cookbook from the cooking and food box. He would place these items on the table in front of them. Sometimes Ada would remain quiet even after he had put the items on the table. Her husband found that during these times if he placed an item in Ada's hands and asked a question about it she would start talking or she begin to use the different items e.g. rolling on the table with the rolling pin. Together they would look through the laminated food and recipe books and he would talk about the wonderful dishes Ada had cooked for him. Ada's eyes would light up and she would smile throughout this food discussion.*

*Arthur loved food. Cakes and sweets were his favorite. Every time his wife visited she would bring him a cake or sweet that she had cooked. They started every visit with eating. After finishing the cake or sweet, Arthur's wife would select one of the cookbooks from the cooking box. They would look through the cookbook together and talk about what his favorite sweets were and plan the next sweet thing she would cook and bring him when she next visited.*

*Sophie's mother and grandmother had taught her to cook. She mainly cooked from memory and had collected very few cookbooks during her life. When her daughter visited, she would place a collection of cooking items out on the table in front of Sophie. They would then talk about the different recipes that could be cooked using these items.*

Models used for illustration



Version 2, 19/9/12



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## Memory Box: Cultures & Places in the World

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Cultures & Places in the World Memory Box contains:**

Atlas of the world	Europe road atlas
Spain: A picture book to remember her by	4 laminated books on places in the world
1 laminated book of beaches in the world	1 laminated book on cultures in the world
Set of 3 cultural families (24 wooden figures)	DVD a musical journey to Russia, Ukraine & Uzbekistan
DVD a musical journey to Czech Republic	2 travel magazines
1 laminated book of flags of the world	DVD a musical journey to England
DVD a musical journey to Spain	1 set of 5 babushka dolls
Souvenir tea towel from France	

### **About Cultures & Places in the World and Reminiscence:**

There is great diversity in the countries and cultures across the globe. No matter who we are and what our past is, we have all been born and raised in one or more countries in the world. Cultures and languages representing shared values, customs and means of communication differ between and each country. Some countries which are connected through history, for example, through colonisation demonstrate some similarities in culture and language.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about cultures & places in the world:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about cultures of the world and travel interests. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about cultures & places in the world include:

- What country were you born in? Where did you grow up?
- What countries have you travelled to?
- What places would you still like to travel to? What souvenirs have you collected?
- What are some of the customs, traditions and food that are part of your country of birth?
- What are some of the customs or traditions that you are glad to celebrate?
- What languages do you speak? What languages would you have liked to learn?







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## Memory Box: Cultures & Places in the World

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Charles had migrated to Australia from England in the 1950s. When his wife visited, they would watch the musical journey of London DVD together. She would talk about the different places that were shown and the memories she had of those places. During this time, Charles would sit next to his wife holding her hand.*

*Following retirement, Jane, her husband and several of their friends travelled on a tour across Europe and Russia. On this adventure, Jane had fallen in love with the beautiful and unique Babushka or Matryoshka and began collecting them. When her husband visited, he would give her the Babushka dolls and Jane would repeatedly take them apart and put them together whilst they remembered some of the adventures they had experienced. Jane sometimes got the details incorrect. Her husband found that it was better to agree with Jane and not correct her when she got the details incorrect.*

*Manuel was born and raised in Barcelona, Spain. He migrated to Australia with his wife and child in the 1960's. Together with his family, he had returned to travel through Europe and the Mediterranean on several holidays. When his daughter visited, they would sit and look through the laminated books and travel magazines. His daughter would ask him whether he had travelled to various places shown in the photographs and she would also ask about the different Spanish traditions he had grown up with. Occasionally, Manuel would share a story about the places he had been to.*

Models used for illustration



Version 2, 19/9/12



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## Memory Box: Families & Home Life

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, taste, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### This Families & Home Life themed Memory Box contains:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Famous faces laminated book  | 3 Home and design laminated books         |
| 1 Home & antiques and 1 Collectors magazine  | 2 People and families laminated books     |
| 1 Wedding flower magazine  | 3 Country home decorating magazines       |
| 1 Homes in Melbourne laminated book  | 1 laminated collection of telegraphs      |
| 5 x Robert Opie Scrapbooks: 'The Royal Scrapbook'; 'The Wartime Scrapbook'; 'The 1950's Scrapbook'; 'The 1960's Scrapbook'; and 'The 1970's Scrapbook' |   |
| Robert Opie book 'Remember When'   | 1 laminated Australian History Timeline   |
| 1 laminated cover of the Truth Newspaper   | 1 Pair of white ball gown gloves          |
| 2 laminated collections of Women's Weekly stories  | 4 photograph cushions & 12 portraits      |
| 1 DVD compilation of vintage TV ads  | 1 green dial telephone & small typewriter |
| 1 book Authentic Shirley Temple Paper Dolls and Dresses  |   |

### About Families & Home Life and Reminiscence:

Families and home life have undergone many changes over time as we have aged and as cultural values, fashions, circumstances and technology have changed and become more 'modern'.

### Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Families & Home Life:

There are many questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about families & home life. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with families & home life themed reminiscence include:

- Where did you grow up? Did you have brothers and sisters? Aunts and uncles? Cousins? Close friends? How did you spend your time with family?
- How did you keep in contact with family that lived far away? Did you ever send a letter/post card? A telegraph? Were these sent due to special events? (e.g. births, deaths, weddings, Christmas). Did you ever use a typewriter? If yes, what did you use it for?
- How did you find out about the news? Did you read the newspaper? Do you remember: When you first used a telephone? What you first watched on television? When you watched: The 1956 Melbourne Olympics? The moon landing in 1969? The opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973? The opening of the Westgate Bridge in 1978? *For more historical events and their dates refer to the Australian History Timeline book.*







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## Memory Box: Families & Home Life

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*When her daughter visited, Maude would sit with her looking through the 1960s scrapbook and the Women's Weekly books. Maude would often notice familiar objects or faces in these books and tell her daughter stories about them.*

*Joe had worked most of his life as a builder and had seen many changes over this time. When his wife visited, they would look through the Homes in Melbourne, home design and interior decorating books and talk about the many homes he helped to build in the north western suburbs. Sometimes his wife would ask him questions about the photos in the books to encourage him to talk. One of the questions she often asked was 'Do you remember when this style was popular?'*

*Elizabeth had always written letters to keep in touch with her family and friends. During some visits, her husband would get out the small typewriter and put paper in it. Elizabeth would happily sit and type away.*

*During visits with his grandchildren, Bill would sit with them and watch the DVD containing TV advertisements from his younger years. Some of the adverts were for items that his grandchildren were not familiar with. Bill would explain to them what the item was and they would talk about the modern day equivalent. Sometimes Bill remembered the songs associated with the adverts and would sing along to them. He often told them stories about life when he was younger.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 1 – 2/1/2013



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## Memory Box: Gardening & Gardens

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Gardening & Gardens Memory Box contains:**

'Successful gardening' book	'Container gardening' book
3 laminated gardening books	1 laminated book on fruit & vegetables
1 laminated book on outdoor gardens	1 laminated book on roses
2 veggie gardening magazines	3 magazines on vegetable growing
5 Burke's backyard magazines	1 organic gardening magazine
Box with 5 packets of seeds	1 pair gardening gloves & 1 plastic trowel

### **About Gardening & Gardens and Reminiscence:**

Gardens are an important part of the way of life in Australia and many other countries. Gardens here have been heavily influenced by the United Kingdom and Mediterranean countries in part due to colonisation and migration history and similarities in climate. The climate and space in Australia means that the majority of us have had access to a garden area whether this is a public garden/parkland space or a yard attached to a house. Whilst some people enjoy looking at gardens, others prefer to be or as a necessity (e.g. lawn mowing) are involved in gardening activities.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Gardening & Gardens:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Gardening interests. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about gardening & gardens include:

- Did you have a garden or a vegetable patch?
- Do you enjoy gardening or looking at gardens?
- What type of gardens do you like most? E.g. flower gardens, cottage gardens, Mediterranean gardens, Japanese gardens...
- What are the best ways to get rid of weeds?
- What is your favourite flower/fruit/veggie/tree/plant/?
- What can you put in a garden or veggie patch?







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## Memory Box: Gardening & Gardens

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Alex had always been in charge of the vegetable garden at home. He had spent many years growing fruit trees and various vegetables. When his wife visited, they would look at pictures of the fruit and vegetables and talk about the garden. His wife would ask him for tips on how to grow beautiful tomatoes or control the bugs on the broccoli. Alex would give her advice about care of the various fruit and vegetables still being grown at home. Often Alex would repeat the same information over and over. His wife found that it was best not to remind him that he had already said that. Instead, she would either let him repeat himself or she would hand him another book with a picture of a plant that he had previously grown. Sometimes his wife would bring in photos of the vegetable garden along with fresh home grown tomatoes and strawberries.*

*Susan had always admired other people's gardens. She loved walking through the botanical gardens and other garden based parks. At home she had a small garden in which she grew roses. When her husband visited, they would walk out into the courtyard to admire the plants. He would then get her to sit and rest by giving her the laminated book of roses and gardens to look at or the garden trowel and seeds. Susan had difficulty finding the right words to express herself and so often would say the incorrect word. Her husband found that instead of correcting Susan when she used the wrong word it worked better to focus the conversation on the photos in the books. Using this approach, her husband was better able to pick up clues on what Susan was saying.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





An Australian Government Initiative



## Memory Box: Greece

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Greek Memory Box contains:**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 laminated book of Greek festivals  | 4 laminated photo books of Greece          |
| 2 laminated books of Greek food      | 1 laminated book of famous Greek actors    |
| 1 brochure Melbourne Greek Precinct  | 1 DVD Visions of Greece                    |
| 1 laminated book of Greek pictograms | Traditional Greek Music CD                 |
| 48 Greek alphabet flash cards        | Greek schoolbook & set of playing cards    |
| Worry beads & evil eye bracelets     | 1x Religion picture icon and Rosary beads  |
| Coffee grinder & soup ladle          | Greek pot for making coffee 'Briki' μπρίκι |
| 1x metal container with coffee beans | 1x Greek newspaper & Greek flag            |
| 1x crocheted doily & coloured scarf  | 1 book of Greek paper dolls                |

### **About Greece and Reminiscence:**

Greece has a long and rich history and is well known for many things including its food, ancient architecture and ruins, mythology, the Olympics, politics & democracy, music and being a travel destination. The country, food, cooking, cultural events, mythology, politics, traditions and migration to Australia are all topics that may be used to recall memories from the past.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Greece:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Greece. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person. Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about Greece include:

- Where in Greece were you born/raised? When did you leave Greece? How did you travel to Australia? Who welcomed you when you arrived in Australia? Who did you stay with? Have you returned to Greece to visit? Do you still speak Greek at home?
- If you married, was a match maker involved? Do you have any godchildren?
- What Greek foods do you like/dislike? What Greek dishes do you cook?
- What is your favourite part of Greece? Where have you travelled in Greece? What do you remember about your time in Greece?
- What are some of the traditions from the area of Greece you are from? Do you still celebrate these?
- Do you like listening to Greek radio/Greek music? Reading the Greek newspaper? Watching Greek news or Hellas soccer team?





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## Memory Box: Greece

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Athena's grandchildren explored the items in the Greek memory box when visiting with her. They pulled out the Briki and asked Athena what it was. Athena had difficulty finding all the words to tell them what it was but was able to demonstrate how it was used. When they pulled out the Greek flash cards, Athena encouraged them to recite the Greek alphabet and praised them on their success. She tried to teach them some of the Greek words on the cards.*

*Nick's daughter used the kit when she visited. During one visit she placed a laminated book of photos from Greece in front of Nick and helped him start to turn the pages. She would ask Nick to name some of the places that were pictured and ask him whether he had been there or not. Sometimes, Nick was unable to name the place. When this occurred, his daughter would fill in the gap by talking about the colours or beauty in the photo.*

*Alexandra's husband gave her the Rosary beads to look at. Alexandra a Greek Orthodox and had always carried Rosary beads with her. Alexandra picked up and held the beads between her fingers. On another visit, Alexandra and her husband sang along to the Greek music CD. They would talk about the music they like and the times when they had gone dancing.*

*Models used for illustration*

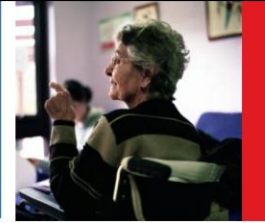


Version 1, 8/1/2013





An Australian Government Initiative



## Memory Box: Sewing, Crafts & Handcrafts

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Sewing, Crafts & Handcrafts Memory Box contains:**

2x laminated quilting books	1x laminated craft & sewing book
The world of wooden bobbins book	All you can knit & crochet for men book
1x laminated knitting pattern book	Complete book of handcrafts book
Mary Thomas knitting book	Stamp style book
Bumper book of bright ideas	Sewing case with bobbins, thread, ribbons & trims
Crafts for baby book	Better Homes & Gardens magazines
Quilting and handcraft magazines	Pieces of fabric
Balls of wool	Knitting Nancy
1x crochet table topper	

### **About Sewing, Crafts & Handcrafts and Reminiscence:**

There are many different handcrafts including sewing, knitting, crochet, embroidery, cross stitch, tapestry, tatting, weaving and smocking. Some handcraft skills have been passed from older to younger generations within families. Other skills have been learned during specific handcraft classes or from friends or employers. Many handcraft items have become sources of pride and some have been passed down from one generation to the next.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Sewing, Crafts & Handcrafts:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about sewing, craft and handcrafts. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

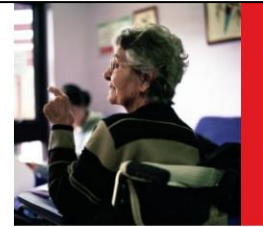
Some questions that might be used to spark pleasant memories about sewing, craft & handcraft include:

- What handcraft skills did you learn? E.g. sewing, tapestry, knitting, crocheting..?
- Who taught you these different skills? What items have you sewn/knitted/crocheted...?
- Do you still like to sew/knit/crochet...?
- Are there any handcraft items that have been passed down from your mother/grandmother...?





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## Memory Box: Sewing, Crafts & Handcrafts

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Beth was taught to knit by her mother and grandmother and had been a 'knitter' ever since. She had passed on the skill to her own daughter. When her daughter visited, she gave Beth the bag full of yarn. Beth sat and wound the yarn into tight balls of wool. Her daughter also brought her current knitting project. Beth would examine the knitted project and praise her daughter on the neat and consistent knitting stitches. Beth and her daughter would sit and talk about the things they had knitted.*

*Jill had never learnt any handcraft skills but was an admirer of the art. She had collected various quilts which she used to decorate her home. When her husband visited, they sat and looked through the laminated quilting books. She would comment on the patterns and colours. Her husband often asked her if she liked the quilts displayed in the photos. Sometimes he had difficulty understanding what she was saying or noticed that she would repeat herself. He found that it was best not to make a big deal of it, instead preferring to allow her to say whatever she would like.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





An Australian Government Initiative



## Memory Box: All things Italian

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Italian Memory Box contains:**

4x laminated books with photos of Italy  
2x DVDs - Musical journey through southern Italy & Sicily & Northern Italy  
1x Laminated book of Italian holidays, festivals and feast days  
2x set of rosary beads  
Pasta maker & 1 gnocchi board  
1x bright scarf  
1x Italian food magazine  
1x Neapolitan set of Scopa cards  
1x Connie Francis CD of Italian Favorites  
1x red espresso coffee pot

2 Laminated books of Italian pictograms  
2 laminated books of Italian people and items  
1x Laminated book of famous Italian actresses  
3x photographic canvases of Venice  
1x ABC Italiano children's book  
1x hand puppet & 1x Venetian mask  
2x Italian newspapers  
1x metal container with coffee beans  
1x Italian prayer book  
1x book of Italian paper dolls

### **About All things Italian and Reminiscence:**

Italy has a long and rich history and is well known for its food, architecture, music, literature, art and religion. The country, food, cooking, cultural events and traditions, art, migration to Australia and family are all topics that may be used to recall memories from the past.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Italy:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Italy. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about Italy include:

- Where in Italy were you born/raised? What Italian foods do you like/dislike?
- What is your favourite part of Italy? Where have you travelled in Italy? What do you remember about your time in Italy?
- When did you leave Italy? How did you travel to Australia? Have you returned to Italy to visit? Do you still speak Italian at home?
- What are some of the traditions from the area of Italy you are from? Do you still celebrate these?
- How would you use this? (Items from the box can be provided e.g. scopa cards).





An Australian Government Initiative



## Memory Box: All things Italian

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Luigi's wife used some of the items from the "All things Italian" reminiscence box when she visited him. She provided him with the container of coffee and asked him to smell it and tell her what it was. "Caf  " he replied. She then asked him questions about where they would go for coffee in Brunswick where they lived. They would talk about the 'best' cafes in that area.*

*Marco's daughter used the kit when she visited. During one visit she placed a laminated book of photos from Italy in front of Marco and helped him start to turn the pages. She would ask Marco to name some of the places that were pictured and ask him whether he had been there or not. Sometimes, Marco was unable to name the place. When this occurred, his daughter would fill in the gap by talking about the colours or beauty in the photo.*

*Elena's husband gave her the prayer book and Rosary beads to look at. Elena was Catholic. She picked up and held the Rosary beads between her fingers and started reciting the rosary. On another visit, Elena and her husband sang along to the Italian CD.*

*Josephine's daughter placed the pasta maker and magazine of Italian recipes on the table in front of her. She talked with her mother about how they would make pasta from scratch when she was younger. Josephine's daughter asked her mother what ingredients were important to making a good fettuccini. Sometimes Josephine had difficulty remembering all of the details, but she had little difficulty showing her daughter how to use the pasta machine to roll out the fettuccini. They then talked about what ingredients were important to making a good pasta sauce. When Josephine had trouble remembering the word she wanted to say, her daughter would suggest possible ingredients to assist her mum in finding the ingredient she was looking for.*

Models used for illustration

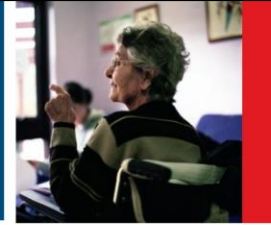


Version 2 27/7/12





An Australian Government Initiative



## Memory Box: Laundry

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### This Laundry memory box contains:

1x old tealpol detergent tin	5 old flat wash house pegs
Plastic pegs	5 new wooden dolly pegs
Laminated laundry book	Laundry Bygones book
Box of Ivory soap	1x plastic iron
12 Pairs of socks	Napkins, placemats & tablecloths
Children's and baby clothes	3 Doilies
1 faux fur scarf	

### About Laundry and Reminiscence:

Doing the laundry has always been an important part of keeping house and appearing well kept and clean. Over time, laundry has gone from being done manually to being done by electric machines. Washing machines have replaced hand washing devices including washboards and wringers. Laundry also has particular scents which include the fragrances of the soap, detergent, fabric softener and the smell of sunshine dried laundry.

### Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Laundry:

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about laundry. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

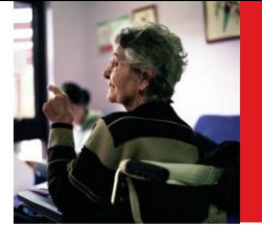
Some questions that might be used to spark memories about laundry include:

- When did you get your first washing machine?
- How did you wash your clothes before getting an electric washing machine?
- What did you use to make sure your white clothing and sheets were clean and bright?
- Can you assist me to fold these items? What are the best ways to fold a ....? (Provide the items one at a time).
- How did you dry your laundry? Who did the ironing?
- What are the best ways to remove tomato sauce/chocolate/red wine/...stains?
- How do you use this or what do you use this for? (Provide the items one at a time).
- Did you use a particular brand of laundry detergent, fabric softener or stain remover?





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## Memory Box: Laundry

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Liz had always done the laundry. Sundays were her ironing days. Earlier in her life she had used Lux soap flakes and Silver Starch for her washing and ironing needs. She later replaced these with OMO and Fabulon. Within the hospital, Liz spent a lot of time walking around trying to find things to do. When her husband visited he would take out the basket of laundry and she would settle in one place and fold the items. He would reminisce with her about how clean she kept her all the clothing and linen in their house. Sometimes after finishing the folding, Liz and her husband would sit and look through the laminated laundry book at the various pictures including old packaging of laundry detergents. Occasionally, Liz would tell a story about when she tried the particular laundry product.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Men's Interests

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Men's Interests Memory Box contains:**

Laminated book of cars	Vintage motor cars book
Laminated books of hardware & car items	Paint roller kit, 2x paint brushes
Cars of the 50s book	Truth newspaper page, Racing section
2x laminated books of tool photos	1x fishing tackle box (line, lures & floats)
Car chamois, car washing sponge	2x business ties, 1x payslip
1x Rex Hunt fishing world book	Tool box: 6 nuts & bolts, 10 dowel joiners,
1x wool bale stencil	1 spanner, 1 torch, 3 clamps, 1 tape
1x Vintage motor car deck of cards	measure
Plastic level, sanding block, bike pump	5x gadget boards
National Geographic Magazine	

### **About Men's Interests and Reminiscence:**

Men's interests are broad, ranging from job and shed based activities to sporting pursuits and handyman activities around the house. Many men have also enjoyed cars including caring for their own car. This kit contains a number of items which cover an array of interest areas including fishing, woodworking and handyman activities, cars and bike care. Other Reminiscence boxes contain items which may also be of interest to men including sports, cooking, travel & cultural interests, family & home life and pets.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Men's Interests:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Men's interests. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Questions that might be used to spark Men's Interests themed memories include:

- What did you enjoy doing in your spare time? Did you play cards?
- What was your job? Did you enjoy it? Did you have a uniform/wear a suit?
- How old were you when you started working? What was your first pay?
- What handyman activities did you do around the house?
- Did you have a shed? What did you do in the shed? (e.g. woodwork, mechanics work...). What did you keep in your tool box? How would you use these tools?
- What was your first car? How do you care for a car? Any special car care tips?
- Did you ever go fishing/hunting? Where are the best spots? What did you catch?
- Did you read the newspaper? Which paper? What sections did you read?





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## Memory Box: Men's Interests

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Jenny's father was a car enthusiast. When she visited, she would look through the vintage motor cars book and ask questions about the various cars that were pictured. On days when he was struggling for words, she would put the car chamois and sponge on the table in front of him. He would pick them up and talk about how they were used. They often talked about the Kingswood which was the first car he owned.*

*Carlo has spent many years of his life tinkering and making things in the garage which served as his shed. When his son would visit, he would get the tool box out and he and his father would empty it talking about the various projects which Carlo completed in his life. When Carlo has difficulty remembering all of the details, his son would ask him to demonstrate how the various items in the tool box were used and would assist him by suggesting possible words which Carlo was looking for.*

*John had always enjoyed fishing and hunting. When his grandson visited, he placed they would look through the fishing tackle box and fishing book. Sometimes when John was restless and continually walking around, his grandson would take the objects from the fishing box and hand them to John. His grandson would ask him what the objects were used for, whether he had used them in the past, what sort of fish were the 'best catch' and where was the best place to fish. At times, his grandson could get him to sit down and show him in the fishing book what the 'best catch' fish looked like.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Music

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### This Music Memory Box contains:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Tamborine   | 2 x Maroon egg maracas                    |
| 1 Pair blue maracas                                     | 1 Pair cymbals                            |
| 1 Pair wooden finger castanets                          | 1 Set sleigh bells                        |
| 1 Red ape drum  | 1 Wooden drum with drumstick              |
| CD The very best of the Irish Tenors                    | CD World Travel Russia                    |
| CD Classical Egyptian Dance                             | CD Turkish Traditional Music              |
| 2 CDs The Rat Pack Original Recording                   | CD Bush songs from the Australian Outback |
| CD Traditional Chinese Music – Silk and Bamboo Ensemble | Laminated book of music scores            |
| Laminated book of musical artists                       | 1x Musical wall panel                     |

### About Music:

Preferences for music differ greatly from one person to the next. These preferences may be based on: music which was popular during their generation; music which was popular within their culture; and musical instruments learnt during their life. Music can help people relax and it can help energise people. Some people have strong dislikes for particular types of music. As preferences for music and its power to relax or energise are so individual, it is important that the music provided is consistent with the person's preferences, interests and needs.

### Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Music:

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about music interests. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking memories about music include:

- What music do you like listening to? E.g. jazz, opera, musicals, folk, blues...
- What music did you grow up listening to? What music or what musicians/bands were popular when you were growing up?
- What music makes you feel relaxed? Energised or makes you want to move?
- What is your favourite song? Singer? Band?
- Do you like this music? Musical instrument? (Play CD song or musical instrument)





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## Memory Box: Music

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Tony had learnt violin, piano and guitar when younger and had played these instruments off and on every since. He preferred operatic music as well as listening to Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jnr. When his son visited, they would sit and listened to CDs of Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jnr singing. When this music was played, Tony seemed to come alive and sing and hum along. Sometimes he would pick up and play one of the musical instruments in time with the music. During these visits, Tony would tell his son about the nights when he was a young adult that he had spent playing music in a band.*

*Jill disliked the current popular music. Instead she liked listening to Elvis and singing along to traditional Australian bush songs (which she had learnt when in school). When her daughter visited, Jill was often busy walking around the hospital ward. Her daughter found it difficult to get her attention and get her to sit down and rest. Her daughter found that putting on a CD of Australian Bush songs in the communal area helped her to direct Jill to this space and helped her to focus on sitting down and resting. Once seated they would sing along to the songs playing on the CD.*

**Note: Italian and Greek music can be found in the Italian and Greek themed boxes.**

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Pets

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories

### **This Pet Memory Box contains:**

1 x robotic toy dog	1 x robotic toy cat
Squeaker ball	1 x scamper toy mouse
1 x pet brush & bowl	All about kittens book & pet care book
The love of dogs book	3 x laminated books of pet pictures
2 x laminated books of dog pictures	2 x laminated books of cat pictures

### **About Pets and Reminiscence:**

Pets have been a part of the lives of many people. They can range from dogs and cats through to birds and animals typically associated with farming such as horses and chickens. Many pets have been given names and have taken up a special place in the person's life. Be aware that some memories about pets can be upsetting with the death of pets being one such memorable event. Furthermore, the person whilst reminiscing about their pet may become focussed on trying to find their pet or become worried about who is looking after the pet. Validating their concerns and grief and then refocussing their attention may assist with managing these situations so as to minimise any distress.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Pets:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Pets. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to spark memories about pets include:

- What pets did you have when you were younger/an adult?
- What were the names of your pets?
- Did your pets live indoors or outdoors?
- How do you look after a dog/cat/bird etc?
- How did you know if your pet was happy/sad?
- What naughty things have your pets done in the past?
- Do you like particular breeds of dogs/cats/birds...?
- What do you remember most about your pets?





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## Memory Box: Pets

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Josephine was a cat lover. When her daughter, Sally, came to visit, Sally would get the robotic cat out of the box, turn it on and carry it to Josephine. Josephine would see the cat and smile. Sally would ask her if she wanted to hold the cat and when her mother held out her arms, Sally would lay the cat in her lap. Josephine would talk to the cat and talk about the cats that had been a part of her life.*

*John had cared for pets since his childhood. When his son visited, they would sit and look through the laminated books of dogs, cats and other animals. Sometimes John was busy walking around. His son would turn on the robotic dog, leave it on his bed and then walk his dad to where the dog sat. John would often then sit next to the dog, patting its fur and chatting to it. His son would talk about the various pets he remembered from growing up. Occasionally, John would add a story or two about these pets.*

*Andrew grew up on a farm with many different pets. He recognized the robotic dog and cat as being toys and so said they were not for him. Instead he enjoyed looking at the pictures of the various pets. His wife would sit and ask him questions about his memories about particular pets that had been a part of their life. They would spend several hours just remembering these precious memories.*

Models used for illustration



Version 2, 19/9/12





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## Memory Box: Sports

Talking about and sharing pleasant memories from the past, or reminiscing, can be fun and rewarding for everyone. In dementia care, familiar items and sensory stimulation (e.g. hearing, touch & smell) can assist the person to share their memories.

### **This Sports Memory Box contains:**

The top 10 of sport book	25 great Australian golf courses book
2x Laminated book of sporting photos	2x Laminated book of football photos
Laminated book of Norm Smith medallists	Laminated book of football hall of fame
4 table tennis bats and ping pong balls	Soccer ball, football, tennis ball, golf ball
Goggles and inflatable swimming float	Badminton racquet and shuttle cock
Bicycle horn & pump	Tennis racquet, bocce set
20 Football cards	Carton Football Club magazine
7 laminated AFL Club Jerseys	

### **About Sports and Reminiscence:**

Sport is an interest shared by many people and is an important part of many cultures including the Australian culture. Interest may range from playing or competing to being a fan or spectator of particular sports. For some sports it is about exercise whilst for others it is about enjoyment and belonging to a social group e.g. AFL team.

### **Questions that may be used to spark reminiscence about Sports:**

There are many questions that may be used to spark memories about Sports. Alternatively, objects from the box may be given to the person to hold/touch/explore and questions and discussions about these objects may be used to engage the person.

Some questions that might be used to assist with sparking pleasant memories about sports include:

- What sports did you enjoy playing when you were younger?
- Who taught you these sports when you were younger?
- What sports do you still enjoy playing? What sports do you enjoy watching?
- Do you have a football/soccer/cricket... team you follow?
- Have you ever been to a sporting match/game? What games have you seen?
- What are the major sporting events in Australia/the world?
- What is the most memorable sporting event or moment that you remember?
- Do you remember when.... the Olympics was held in Melbourne/Sydney? Australia won the America's Cup sailing? your AFL team won the premiership?
- What is your favourite sport at the Olympics?
- How do you use this? (The items from the box can then be provided).





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## Memory Box: Sports

The items in this box can be used to help the person remember pleasant past memories.

### Examples of how the items in this box may be used:

*Peggy has been a lifelong Collingwood supporter. When her family visited they would sit and look through the laminated football books and Peggy would talk about all the games and premierships she had been there for. She has been a club member and had always helped out with fundraising activities. Her family would ask her questions about what she had done to help out and would get her to list the famous footballers she had met during her life.*

*Charles was an excellent tennis player in his early years. When his son, John, visited with the grandchildren, John would hand him the tennis racquet and ask him to tell them about when he learned to play tennis and what competitions he had played in. Charles would often talk about the quality of the racquet and how this has changed over time. Sometimes Charles would get the dates of the competitions he played in mixed up. John found that it was best not to correct him, but to encourage him to tell his story about his experiences.*

*Giuseppe had always enjoyed playing and watching bocce and soccer. When his wife visited, she would hand him one of the bocce balls or the soccer ball from the sports box. He would hold these and turn them round in his hands, feeling their weight and smoothness and occasionally comment on their quality. Sometimes when she brought their grandson, he would sit opposite Giuseppe and they would softly kick the soccer ball back and forth. Occasionally, Giuseppe would talk about famous Italian soccer stars he had watched on TV.*

*Models used for illustration*



Version 2, 20/12/12



### 4.3 Information Sheet for Families on Doll/Child Representational Therapy

No matter the age, many people enjoy caring for and spending time with babies. Unfortunately with the progression of dementia, many of the opportunities to safely care for babies decline. Doll or child representational therapy can have a number of benefits for people with dementia, including:

- Increasing communication, reminiscing and engagement
- Decreasing behaviours like agitation or aggression
- Increasing happiness and sense of purpose and meaning
- Opportunities to participate in familiar tasks



Staff have found that your relative/friend identifies life-like dolls as being real baby and they happily spend time looking after them. This 'misidentification' is common, caused by their dementia.

#### **How can you help your relative in participate in doll therapy?**

Some of the following tips may be helpful in using doll/child representational therapy with your relative/friend:

- **Introducing the 'baby':** Wrap the 'baby' in a blanket and carry it to your relative/friend as you would carry a real baby. Invite your relative to look at the 'baby'. Comment on the 'baby's' appearance e.g. look at her eyes. Ask your relative/friend if they would like to hold the 'baby'. If they say 'yes' or hold out their hands, carefully give the 'baby' to them as you would a real baby.
- **Reminiscing:** Talk about the babies that were important in the life of your relative/friend. E.g. their children. Ask for their advice on how they got babies to sleep, eat, stop crying etc.
- **Monitor:** Do not leave your relative/friend with the doll for long periods of time. Some people will happily care for the 'baby' for short periods, e.g. 5 minutes, whilst others will care for it for longer periods, e.g. several hours. Check your relative/friend every 15-30 minutes to see if they are happy to continue caring for the 'baby' or if they need a break. A cradle, pram, baby bouncer or capsule may be placed near your relative/friend so that they can put the 'baby' down when they need a break from caring for it.
- **Naming the 'baby':** Your relative/friend or you may name the 'baby'. You may find it helpful to attach a name tag to the 'baby' or it's blanket. The 'baby's' name may change. This is OK.
- **Removing the 'baby':** Sometimes the 'baby' will need to be removed from your relative/friend, e.g. during mealtimes, or when going to the toilet or showering. When removing the 'baby' from your relative, do this how you would normally remove a baby from someone. Some

ways the 'baby' may be removed include telling your relative/friend that the 'baby':

- needs to be put down for a sleep.
- needs its nappy changed.
- is hungry and needs to be fed.

Never just take the doll away as your relative/friend may try to protect the 'baby' by hitting out.

- **Storing the 'baby':** Store the doll either out of site or in a place accessible to your relative/friend such as a cradle, pram or bed. Avoid storing the doll in a cupboard as this may be distressing to your relative/friend.
- **What not to say:** Do not refer to the doll as being a doll. To your relative/friend it is a baby, and reference to a doll may be distressing.

### **Cleaning**

- Have your relative/friend wash their hands before using the doll.
- Wash any plastic surfaces with a damp cloth and antibacterial spray or an anti-bacterial wipe.
- Machine wash blankets and doll clothing.
- Spot remove to clean other fabric surfaces on the doll.

### **Purchasing a doll**

There are a variety of different dolls. More life-like realistic dolls are recommended.

Some of the suppliers of dolls that may helpful are listed below:

- **Zest Dementia & Aged Care** <http://www.zestdementiacare.com.au/shop/>  
Ph: 1300 738 883; Doll type: Lee Middleton dolls; Price: \$145+
- **Lee Middleton Dolls Australia** [www.leemiddletondolls.com.au](http://www.leemiddletondolls.com.au)  
Ph: 0417 675 274; Doll type: Lee Middleton dolls; Price \$145+
- **Box n Dice** [www.boxndice.com.au](http://www.boxndice.com.au) Ph: 0402 976 212 ; Doll type: Realistic therapy baby dolls; Price: \$310+
- **Target Australia** [www.target.com.au](http://www.target.com.au) Doll type: Lots to cuddle huggable dolls. Designed as toys, less realistic & made of a harder plastic. Price: \$20+

**For more information:** Refer to:

[http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS\\_Vic\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Child\\_Representational\\_Therapy\\_Reviewed\\_June\\_09.pdf](http://dbmas.org.au/uploads/resources/DBMAS_Vic_Guidelines_for_Child_Representational_Therapy_Reviewed_June_09.pdf) .

## 4.4 Instructions for Greeting and Playing Card Sorting Activities

### 4.4.1 Card Sorting Instructions

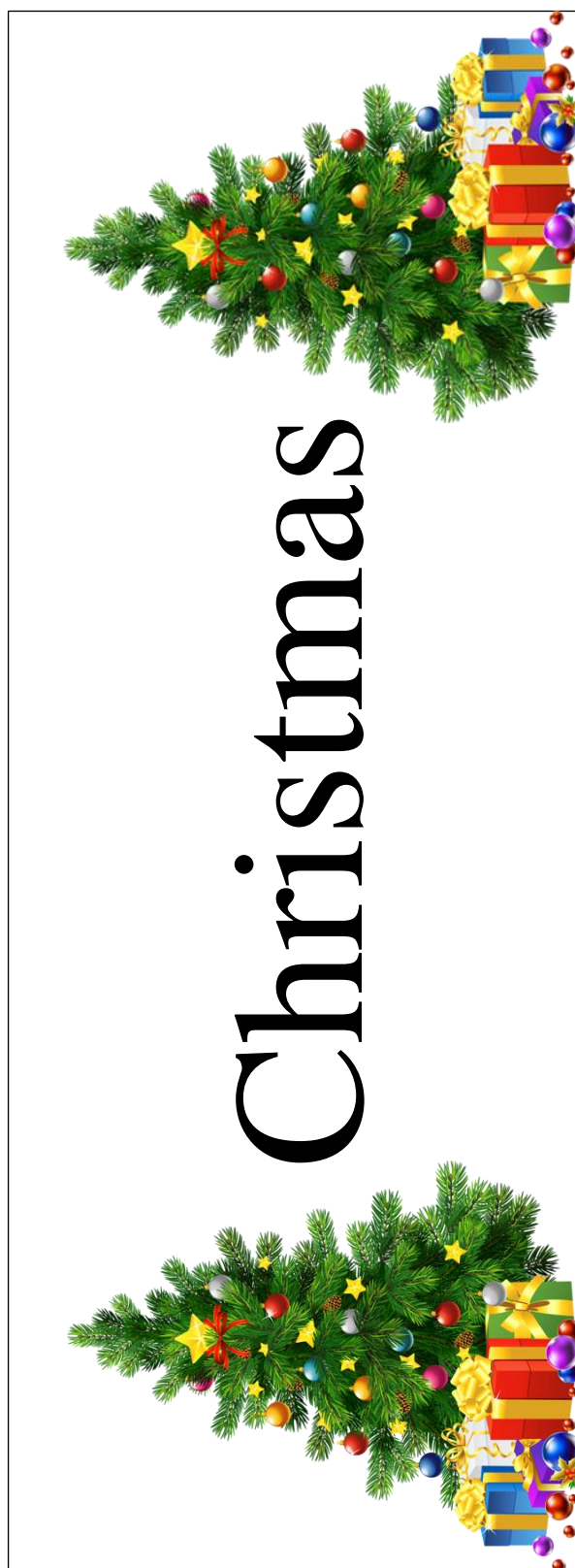
#### **Materials:**

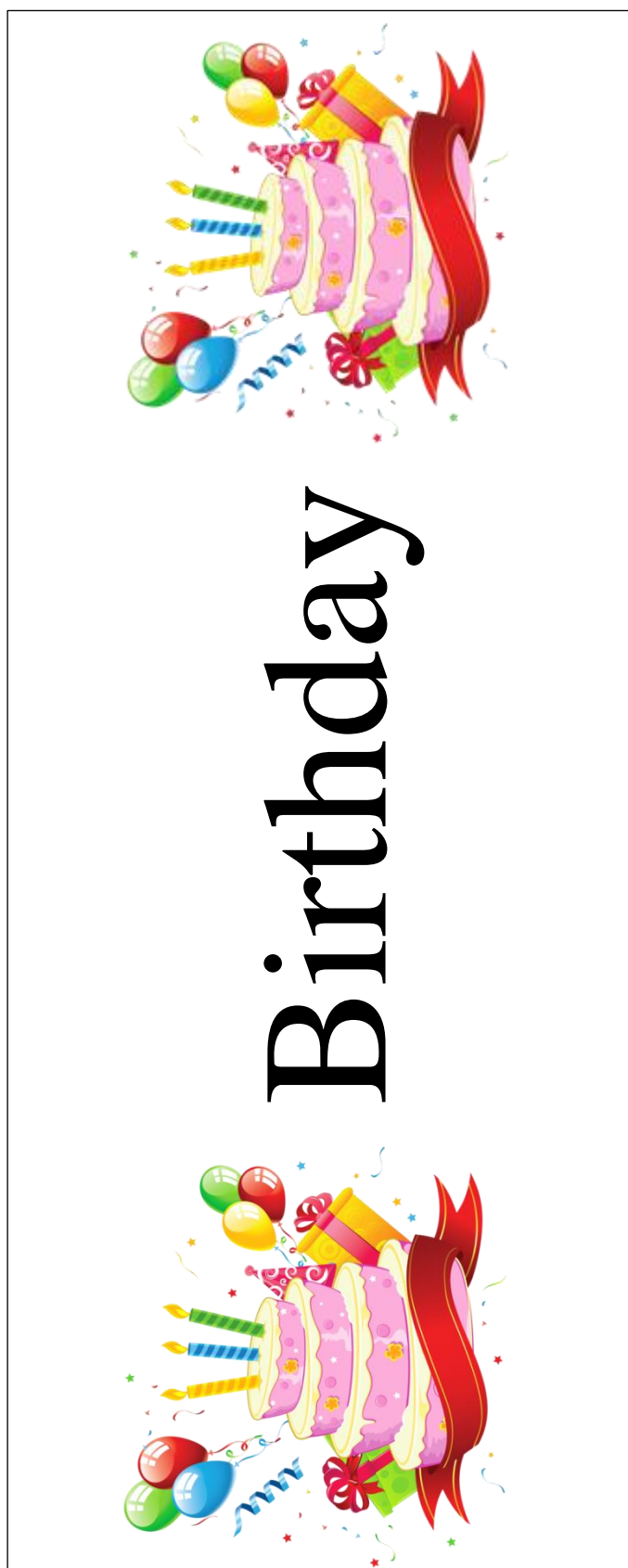
Container of used greeting cards and laminated sorting labels.

#### **Instructions:**

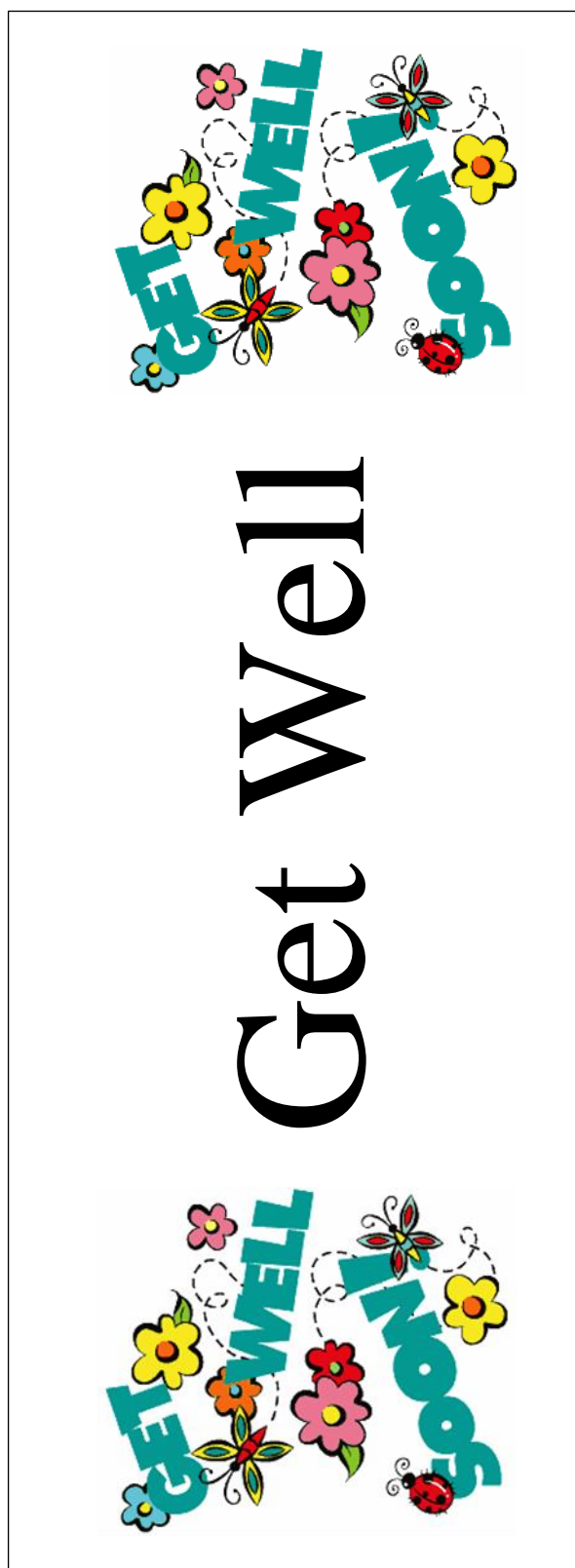
1. Seat the patient at a table
2. Pull out one or two hand fulls of cards. Fewer cards for patients that have may have more difficulty. More cards for patients with may find the activity easier.
3. Place the cards on the table in front of the patient.
4. Ask the patient to help sort the cards. The cards can be sorted in 3 ways:
  - a. Category: Type of greeting card using the categories Christmas, birthday, get well or other cards. The following laminated prompt signs may be used to remind the patient what they are doing and help them progress with the task: Christmas, Birthday, Get Well, Other. If the patient has difficulty with sorting into 4 categories, the activity can be simplified to 2 categories e.g. Christmas and other cards.
  - b. Preferences. Sort the cards into two piles, one of the cards the patient likes and the other the cards he/she does not like. The following laminated prompt signs may be used to remind the patient what they are doing and help them progress with the task: Cards I like, Cards I dislike.
  - c. Shuffling through: Patient can sort through the cards, counting them, looking at the types of cards, reading them etc.
5. Show the patient what you want them to do by sorting several cards until the patient is able to follow the directions. If the patient has difficulty sorting by categories or preferences, engage the patient in looking though the cards using option c above.
6. Thank the patient for their assistance.
7. Remove the sorted piles of cards. Shuffle the cards and return them to the card container. **Do not** do this in front of the patient.











# Other cards

# Cards I like

Cards I don't like

#### **4.4.2 Playing Card Sorting Instructions**

##### **Materials:**

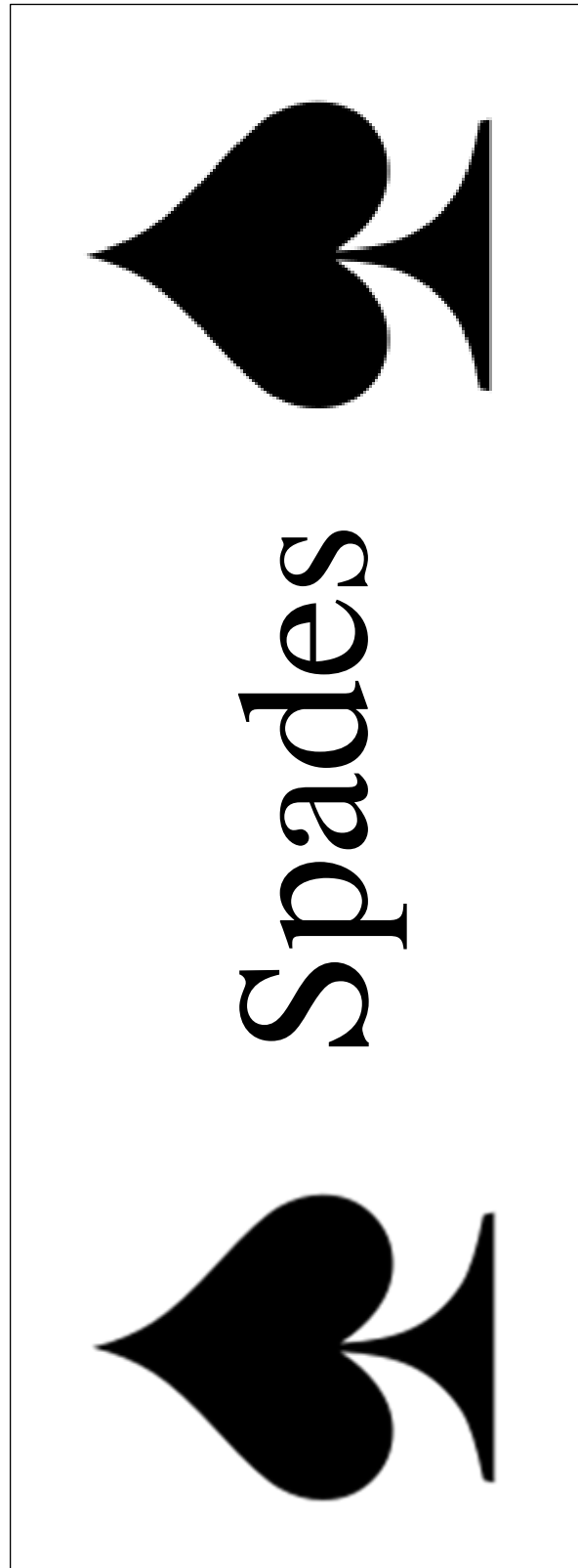
Container of multiple decks of playing cards and laminated sorting labels.

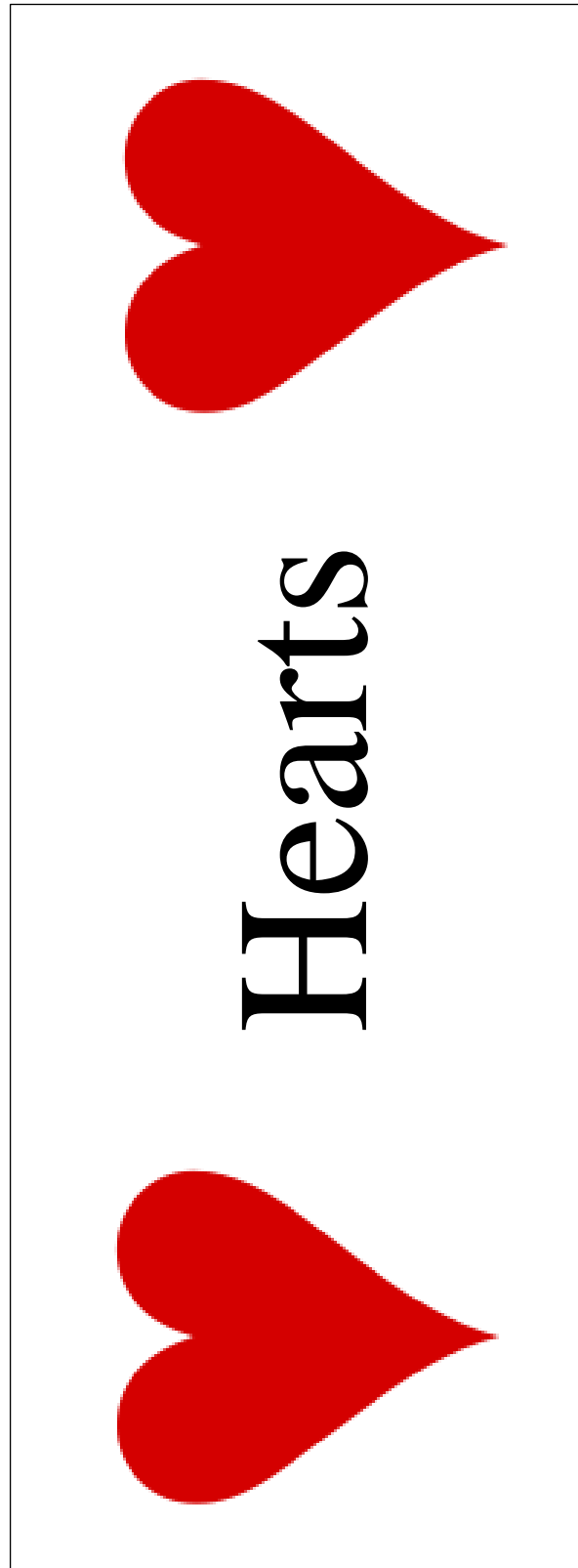


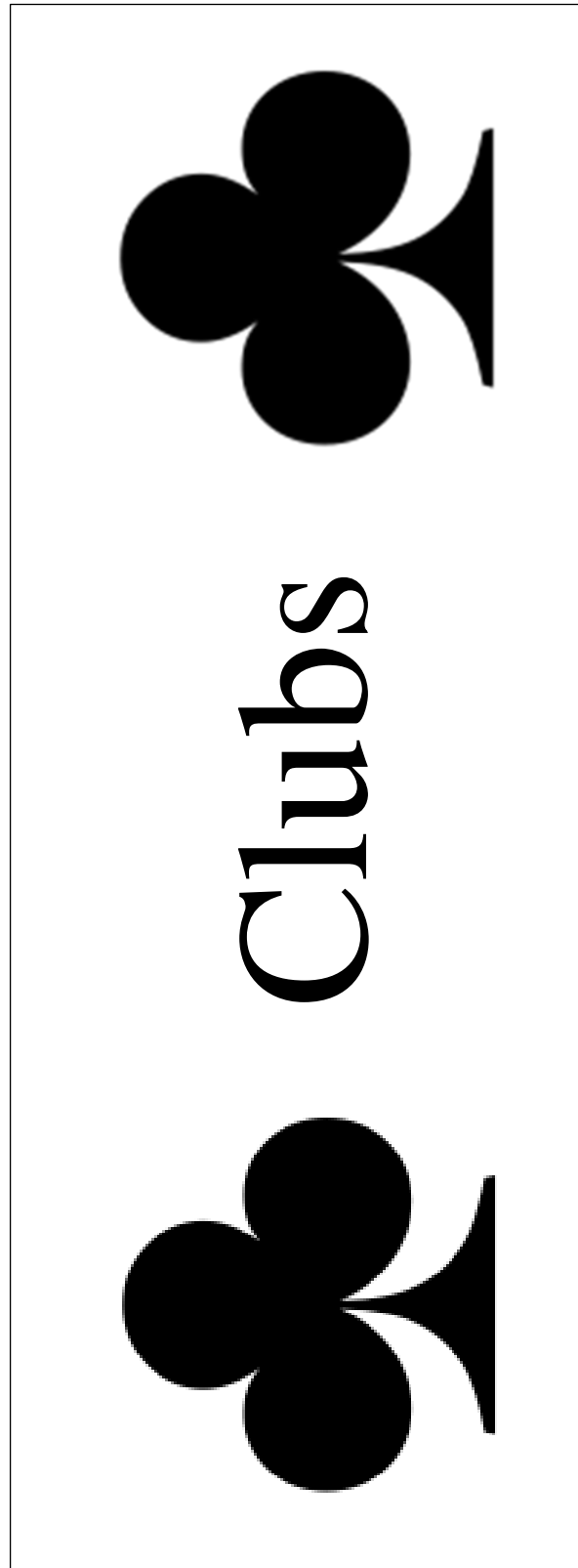
##### **Instructions:**

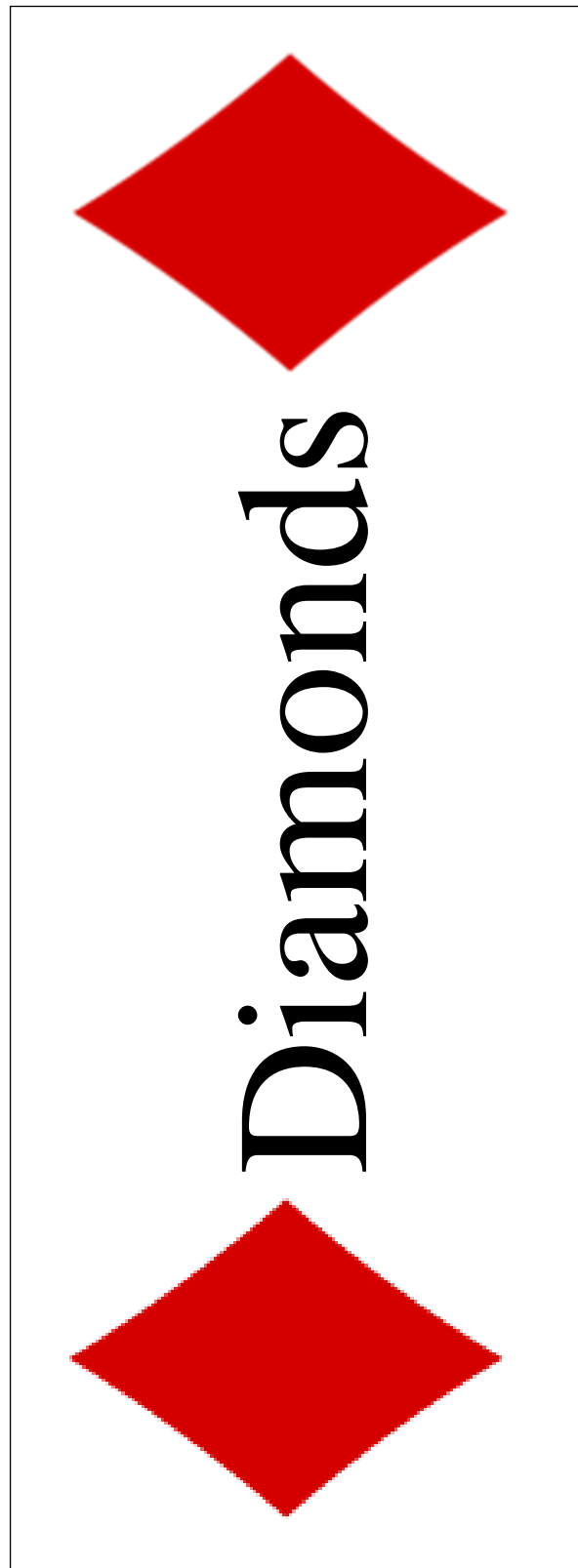
1. Seat the patient at a table
2. Pull out one or two hand fulls of playing cards. Fewer cards for patients that have may have more difficulty. More cards for patients with may find the activity easier.
3. Place the cards in a pile or stack on the table in front of the patient.
4. Ask the patient to help sort the cards. The cards can be sorted in 3 ways:
  - a. Suit: The cards can be sorted into their different suits eg. Hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds. The following laminated prompt signs may be used to remind the patient what they are doing and help them progress with the task: Hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds. If the patient has difficulty with sorting into 4 categories, remove two of the 4 suits and give the patient mixed up cards containing just 2 suits of different colours e.g. e.g. diamonds and clubs.
  - b. Value. Sort the cards according to the value of the card. E.g. all jokers together, all 1's together, 2's, 3's, 4's etc in separate piles.
  - c. Decks: The cards can be sorted into complete decks.
5. Show the patient what you want them to do by sorting several cards until the patient is able to follow the directions. If the patient has difficulty sorting using one category (a, b or c) trial sorting using one of the other categories.
6. Thank the patient for their assistance.
7. Remove the sorted piles of cards. Shuffle the cards and return them to the card container. **Do not** do this in front of the patient.



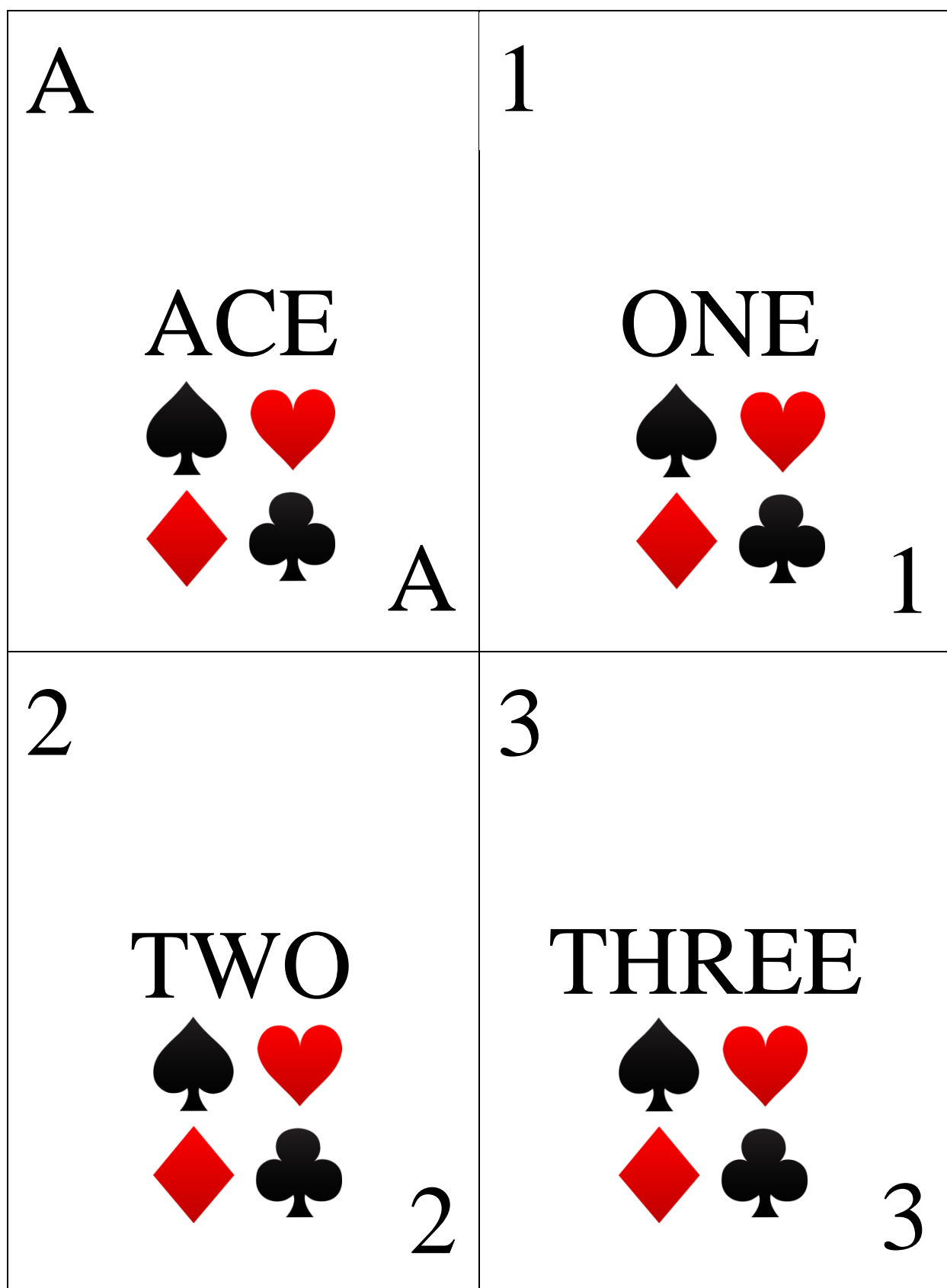


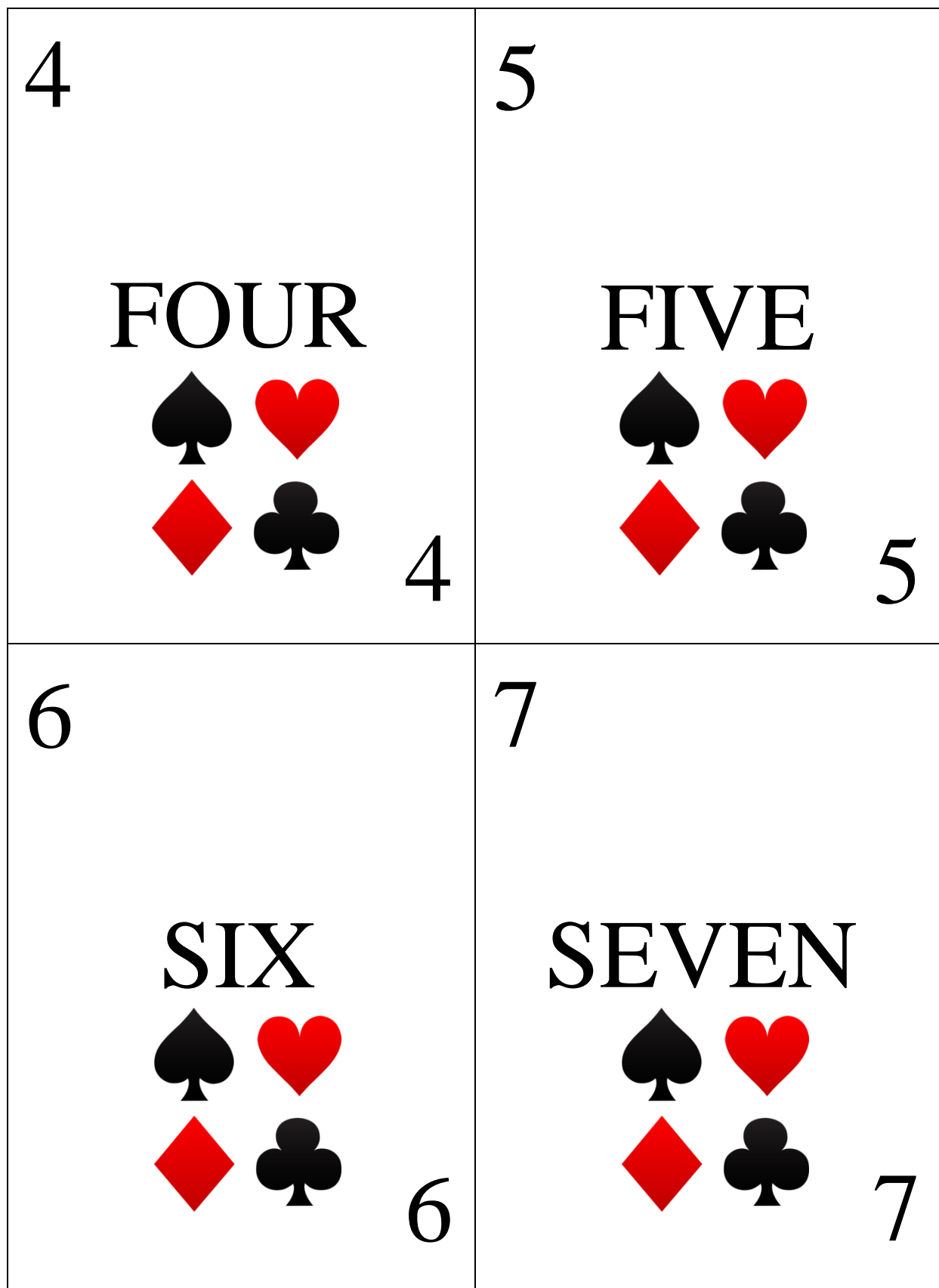


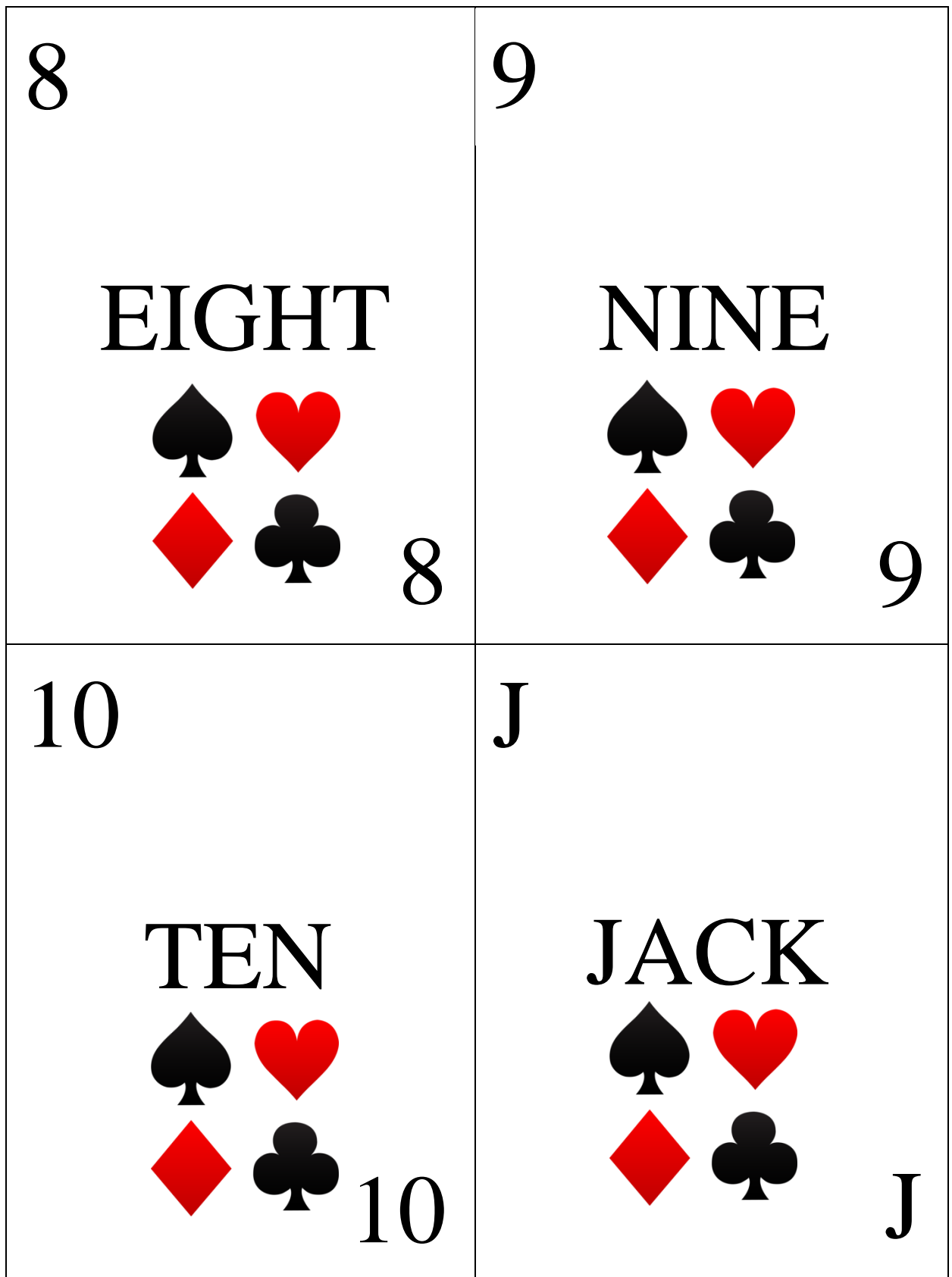


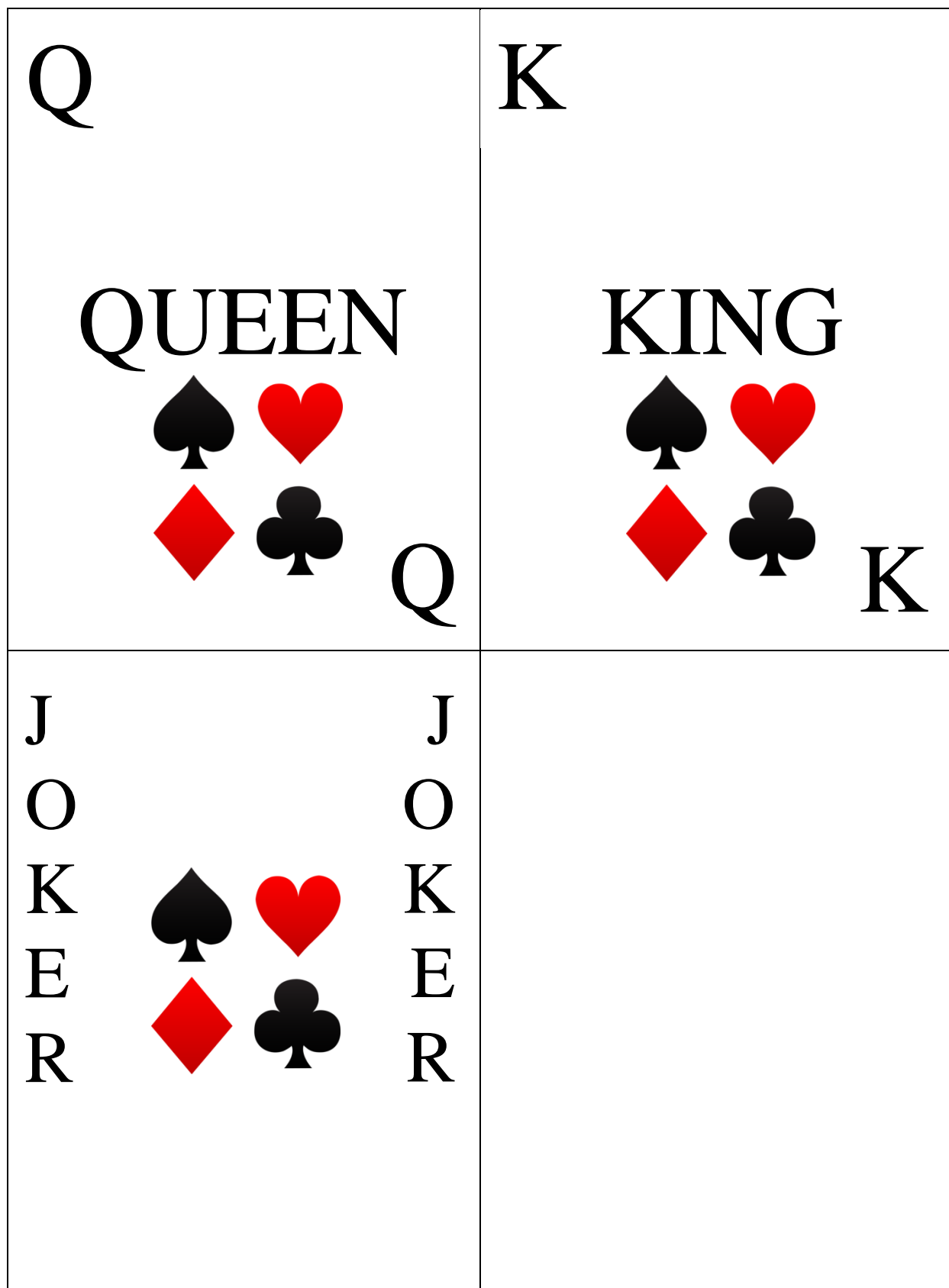












## 4.5 Sample Form for Reminiscence Discharge Information

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*This patient enjoyed reminiscing or talking about past pleasant memories during their admission. The following information may assist you in continuing to reminisce with the patient following their discharge from hospital.*

The top 5 topics that this patient enjoys reminiscing or talking about are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Resources or objects that were used when reminiscing with this patient are:

---

---

---

During their admission, staff used reminiscence with the patient during the following activities and interactions:

---

---

---

Some topics can trigger distressing memories. Staff have identified the following topics as ones that may best be avoided when reminiscing with this patient are:

---

---

---

Additional information:

---

---



#### 4.6 Sample Reminiscence Material Audit Tool

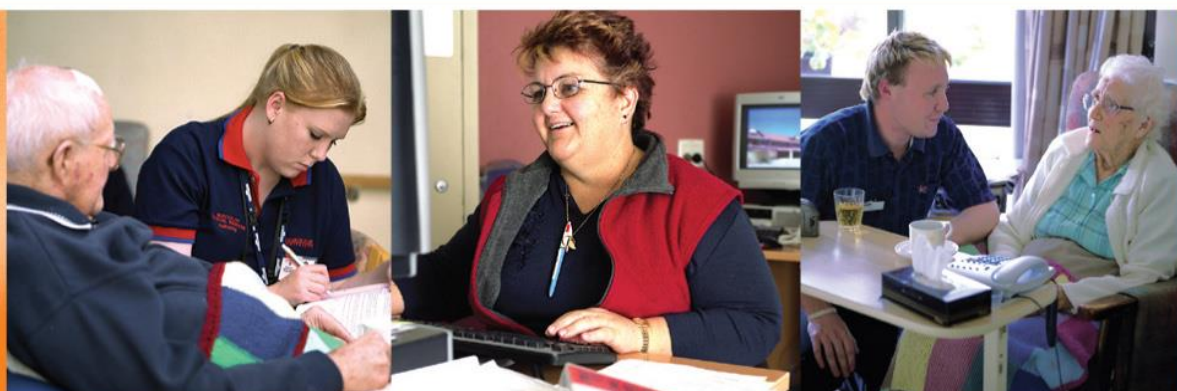
Item	Date of audit							
	12 / 1 / 2015		/ /		/ /		/ /	
	Present	Intact	Present	Intact	Present	Intact	Present	Intact
<i>Laminated pets book</i>	✓	✓						
<i>Laminated book of babies</i>	✓	x						
<i>Doll</i>	✓	✓						
<i>Espresso coffee pot</i>	✓	✓						
<b>Audit completed by:</b>	<i>Sally Jones</i>							

#### Actions:

Action completed	Audit Date	Issue & Actions to be taken
✓	12/1/2015	<i>Laminated baby book: Pages removed from binding. Organise Admin to re-bind the book.</i>



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Helping Australians with dementia, and their carers