

Photographic Treatment ©

Manual Photo intervention for elderly with dementia in a group context and individual.

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Target group:

- Group activity: approximately 10 people with a mild case of dementia, who can speak, hear and see well.
- Individual activity: for both people with a mild and with a more severe case of dementia.

Material:

- 100 photo blocks (15 x 10 cm; 05. mm)
- 5 books *Photographic Treatment ©*
- the manual

Time span:

- Group activity: approximately 45 min. (1 or 2 rounds)
- Individual activity: 30 min.

The environment:

Group activity:

- Place two tables separately in a quiet space. The tables need to be empty, no cups, glasses or vases on the table. Make groups of an equal level. This fosters the quality of the intervention.
- It is recommended to have two attendants per table to help.

Individual activity:

- This takes place in a quiet space where the resident cannot be easily distracted or it could be in the room of the resident.

Content:

Group activity:

Inspired by the clear examples given in one of the books *Photographic Treatment ©* the attendant shows how to make pleasant photo combinations. Afterwards distribute approximately 50 photo blocks. The participants will be encouraged to

make their own combinations. Attendants individually support this creative process and the results will be discussed in several stages within the group.

Individual activity:

The attendant shows the participant photographs from the so-called happy package. These are photos on an A4-paper that call forth a feeling of aesthetics, rest, empathy, gracefulness, coziness as well as many photos of spontaneously smiling people. This stimulates in the observer a reflex feeling of well-being thanks to the functioning of mirror neurons.

Have a conversation about the photos or let the participant react to the photo.

It is also possible to have a conversation based on the books of *Photographic Treatment* ©. The photo combinations within the book can serve as a springboard into the group intervention.

Recommendations for a pleasant duration:

- Make sure that everyone can see and hear you, both during the introduction and during the activity.
- Use little words during the introduction and speak as calm as possible; people with dementia process information slowly.
- Don't stand next to a participant, it implies haste; rather sit next to the participant.
- Try to immediately respond to newly found combinations, because the participant soon forgets.
- Give time to the participant to react.
- Influence the self worth of the participant. Bring up the interest of the self.
- Be expressive in giving compliments and encouragements. Always explain that there are no right or wrong combinations and that the process of searching is more important than the final results. It is important that the participant feels at ease in the tasks that he/she is doing and that you are there to support.
- Tell the participants that everyone can participate. You do not need to be creative to make combinations. It is not easy but the more you practice the better you get.

An example of how a group intervention can be done:

'Today we have come together to work on a nice and interesting activity based on photos. I will show you in short a few combinations of photos and then I suggest for you to make them yourselves. I will help you and together we will discuss the results. It is fun to do something new and to help each other in it. We are curious to see what you will come up with.'

To start I will give you a book named *Photographic Treatment* ©, it is made by an artist.'

Select beforehand the combinations you would like to show and explain these with

approximately 6 examples. Make sure you show different kinds of combinations: combinations based on shape (i.e. an Italian ice-cream and spiral stairs), combinations based on content (i.e. hanging as subject: a mountain climber and an African earring).

After the introduction distribute the photo blocks on the table. Make sure that the participants can observe the blocks from the front and that the blocks are equally distributed on the table. Ask the participants to make as many combinations as possible, which is the way to find the right combinations. This means that many blocks have to be literally put together in order to try the combinations. Help the participants in making their own photo combinations.

When the combination is not interesting you may say that it is a good starting point, however there might be even better combinations. When someone is very good at making combinations and sitting next to someone who finds it more difficult, than you could ask them to work together.

After approximately 15 min. check on the individual participants and ask what they have found. Let them tell why they combined the particular photos. When the combination is suiting, make a compliment and ask if you may present it to the whole group. Take the photo blocks with you and sit somewhere where everyone can see and hear you. Ask for everyone's attention and say that you are going to show several good combinations. Start with a combination that you like yourself. Call the name of and make a compliment to the maker. Ask him/her to describe the combinations that he/she has made to the group and if the person is not able to express himself/herself, put into words what he/she can't or repeat what has been said. Show the combinations to everyone around the table so that everyone has a chance to look at it.

The attendants at both tables present the results of the whole group.

If a second round is possible, switch the photo blocks from one table to the next. Encourage the participants to make even better combinations.

After the activity give thanks to the people for their open attitude and creativity.

Variety of the group activity:

- Ask the participants to name their combinations.
- Give a title and ask the participants to look for combinations that can serve as an illustration for a little story. A title as 'the temptation' could relate to a photo of a mother and kitten and the photo of fried fish in a plastic container that could result in a story.

- Let the participants listen to short music fragments that are made for film or other music that has a clear atmosphere. The music is made to increase the visual and the emotional. The objective is NOT to recognize the film or the music, rather to help create a new story or scene with the photos that suit the atmosphere of the music.
- In the same way many more variations can be made.