Arts Engagement for People with Alzheimer’s Disease and Their Caregivers

Amir Parsa and Laurel Humble
Department of Education
The Museum of Modern Art

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Program Design: Possible Parameters

- Onsite/Offsite
- Individuals/Families
- Art-looking/Art-making
- One time/multiple times
Gallery Programs

• Inquiry-based discussion
• Thematic explorations
• Art historical information
• 1–1½ hour program
• 4–5 works of art
• 15–20 minutes per work
• Scaffolded conversation:
  • Observation
  • Description
  • Interpretation
  • Connection and evaluation
Images of America
In Front of a Work of Art

Observation (looking)

Description (naming what you see)

Interpretation (assigning meaning)

Connection (to other areas of life, to other works of art)

Evaluation (personal opinion)

Edward Hopper. *Gas*. 1940
Art-Making Programs

- Materials-based
- Examples: images and reproductions for discussion
- Collaborative or independent art-making
- 2-hour sessions
- Multiweek course
- Culminating exhibition
Example Images
Participant Artwork
Culminating Exhibition
The MoMA Alzheimer’s Project

- MoMA staff have worked with over 180 different museums.
- MoMA staff have connected with over 6,000 people through conferences and trainings.
- MoMA staff have presented at 22 different conferences.
- Over 55 museums have committed to working with the audience.
Meet Me: Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia

www.moma.org/meetme
NYU Evaluation of Meet Me at MoMA

• Overview
  – Evidence-based research study to evaluate the efficacy of Meet Me at MoMA
  – December 2007–August 2008
  – 37 dyads—person with early-stage Alzheimer’s and family caregiver

• Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis
  – Self-rating scales (questionnaire packet + smiley face assessment scale)
  – Observer-rated scales
  – Take-home evaluation
  – Focus groups
NYU Evaluation Findings

• Caregivers reported fewer emotional problems during the week following their visit.
• Both participants reported elevated mood.
• Participants with dementia reported an elevation in their self-esteem.
• Caregivers reported an increase in social support.
Engagement with Art Allows for …

• participation in a meaningful, intellectual activity and opportunity for personal growth;
• a forum for exploration and exchange of ideas without relying on short-term memory;
• opportunities to share personal experiences and access long-term memories;
• new insight into others’ ideas and interests;
• a means to make connections between individual experience and the world at large;
• social interaction and connection to one’s peers;
• a respite, both physically and psychologically;
• emotional carryover and extended conversation;
• a learning experience for participants and educators.
Key Considerations

- Goals
- Participants
- Cost and budget
- Spaces and time
- Full-time and part-time staff directing, coordinating, and assisting with the program
- Educators, artists, staff leading programs
- Training
- Sustainability
Working with a Museum

• Contact the *right person* at the museum to meet with and begin the conversation (*education staff focusing on accessibility, older adults, or community outreach*).

• Discuss the benefits of engaging with art for people with dementia.

• Discuss the benefits and the challenges of the partnership for you and the museum (*organization’s mission, publicity, expertise, costs, staffing*).

• Discuss program structure and potential implementation.

• Make a plan to hold workshops for the docents or educators about the basics of dementia and communication strategies for this audience.