



MBAT4Seniors: Mindfulness Based Art Therapy as Effective Tool to Improve Mental Health of Seniors in the context of COVID19 pandemic

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IO1: TOOLKIT - Crafting techniques



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Short summary/introduction

Crafting is an excellent way to practice mindfulness. Because our hands have a lot of nerves, they are wonderful tools to help us connect with what's happening *right now*. Our body is always in the present, sensations are always a door to enter the now. And many studies have demonstrated that crafting techniques helps reduce anxiety and stress, increasing well being and inner peace.

Relaxation, self-expression with EBRU ART MARBLING

Benefits:

- Stress Reduction and Relaxation
- Development of Creativity
- Increased Attention and Concentration
- Emotional Expression and Processing
- Increasing Self Confidence
- Feeling of Peace and Happiness
- Ability to Express Yourself

Necessary materials:

- Food coloring or water-based paint
- Pasta water to give consistency to marbling water
- Paintbrush
- paper
- salt
- This needle, toothpick or similar fine-tipped tool (to create patterns)
- Flat tray

Application instruction

Stage 1: Preparation

When starting the art of marbling, ask questions to understand the individual's interest and motivation in the art of marbling. Why are you interested in the art of marbling? What is your motivation to start marbling? Have you had any previous experience with the art of marbling?

Talk about their experiences, expectations and goals regarding the art of marbling. Meanwhile, for the preparation:

- Strain the water in which you boiled the pasta and add salt.
- When the salt melts, wait for it to cool.
- Pour the water into a flat tray

Stage 2: Creating a pattern

Ask questions about the emotions, thoughts and awarenesses experienced by the individual while dealing with the art of marbling. How do you feel while doing marbling?

Where do you focus your attention when dealing with the art of marbling?

Pattern Creation:

- Drop the food coloring or watercolor in the house with the help of a brush.
- Shape with a needle or toothpick.

3. Ending

Talk about the thoughts, feelings, and meanings that arise when she examines marbling patterns. Ask questions about how the art of marbling plays a role in the individual's self-expression and discovery process.

Transferring, Drying and Fixing the Pattern:

- Cover the appropriate paper on the tray and let it absorb the paint.
- Carefully pull out the paper and let it dry.
- This stage is the Stage of Reflecting and Examining the feelings of the individual.

After working with the art of marbling, ask questions to reflect and analyze the experiences of the individual. Ask questions about how the art of marbling has an impact on the emotional and mental well-being of the individual. Talk about what the individual noticed, learned and progressed in the process of marbling.

How does the art of marbling affect you? Are there things you noticed or learned while doing marbling? What do you think the art of marbling means to you?

Tips

With this technique, you can reveal the stressful emotions that bother you, and you can cope with many ailments. Most importantly, your self-confidence increases with the happiness of revealing your emotions. You can discover ways to express yourself in situations that are troubling you.

Log ornament



After painting our feelings and thoughts on the stone, it is the art of arranging it on a log by forming a whole with the waste materials we collect from nature.

This handicraft has a versatile function. In addition to evaluating waste materials, there are positive effects in the spiritual and emotional sense. Artistic activities improve personal physical and mental health and contribute to the socialization of individuals.

On the social side, it provides solidarity and integration.

Art therapy, especially for the sick and elderly, uses art to provide support for older adults with emotional expression, stress management, communication skills and coping with the aging process. This therapeutic approach boosts older adults' self-esteem, improves their quality of life, and supports their general well-being.

As the benefits of stone painting and arrangement on logs;

- It makes people feel happy and peaceful.
- It enables people to socialize.
- Contributes to physical and mental development.
- It reduces stress and anxiety.
- If there is a loss in motor skills, it provides development.
- People do not isolate themselves from society, they see themselves as a part of society.
- It protects people from boredom and depression.
- It gives the opportunity to use personal skills and abilities.
- It reveals creativity.

- The ability to express oneself develops.
 - Enters friend circles and can make new friends.
 - It has a positive effect on work success and work efficiency.
- Especially in elderly care services who receives treatment/support;
Protection of mental and motor functions,
Delaying the complications of chronic diseases,
To increase the quality of life,
It contributes to the strengthening of the connection with life.

Benefits:

- Stress Reduction and Relaxation
- Development of Creativity
- Increased Attention and Concentration
- Emotional Expression and Processing
- Increasing Self Confidence
- Feeling of Peace and Happiness
- Ability to Express Yourself

Necessary materials:

- apron,
- plastic glove
- different-tipped art brushes
- water bowl
- acrylic paint in various colors
- pen
- duster
- paper towel
- plastic plates to mix paints
- plastic glove
- round cut logs (1 log for every 2 people)
- spray varnish
- glue gun (1 for every 4 people)
- silicone
- wall mount for hanging logs
- screw

Application instruction

1st stage: For the stone painting activity, firstly, starting with the separation of the participants into groups and after the distribution of the materials to the groups, first washing and drying the stones so that the surfaces of the stones are smooth and clean. Drawing pictures of dreams on the stone with the help of a pencil. Painting the

patterns drawn on the stones with acrylic paint. Finally, top up the painted patterns with a fine paint brush. Allowing the painted stones to dry.

Before starting the activity, ask participants how they feel.

Ask what this event means to them.

Ask in what mood they chose the paints when they started to paint.

2nd stage: The painted stones are adhered to the slab with a silicone gun. Dry branches, cones, pieces of wood, leaves are left to the creativity of the participants and placed on the log. The hanging apparatus is screwed to the back of the log. Finally, the finished product is polished with spray varnish.

As a result of the activities, the participants get a new product by bringing together the materials found in nature.

Once the whole activity is over, ask again how they felt.

Ask if the painted stones mean anything to the people.

Ask if their activity expresses the emotions they want to express.

Tips

Thanks to this technique, your inner feelings and thoughts will be transformed into concrete art. In this art, you will feel free and you will reflect your emotion to the visual. You can find ways to express yourself in situations that make you feel relaxed and distressed.

Emotional Well-Being through Recycled Crafting for Elderly Individuals: Solo Sanctuary

Solo Sanctuary is a mindfulness art-based therapy designed specifically for elderly individuals who are alone at home. This therapeutic approach focuses on crafting with recycled materials, providing a creative and mindful outlet for emotional expression and well-being. The use of recycled materials emphasizes resourcefulness and environmental consciousness.

Benefits Engaging in crafting alone enables individuals to independently express themselves, nurturing a feeling of autonomy and creativity. The use of recycled materials not only contributes to environmental responsibility but also adds a positive and purposeful dimension to the creative activity. Through the crafting process, individuals find an opportunity for emotional exploration, allowing them to delve into and process their emotions through non-verbal means. Additionally, crafting serves as a mindful and absorbing activity, providing a constructive and positive distraction from stressors and negative thoughts.

Materials needed:

recycled materials such as cardboard, fabric scraps, buttons, bottle caps, and any other items

Instruction for the implementation

Phase 1:

- Gather a variety of recycled materials such as cardboard, fabric scraps, buttons, bottle caps, and any other items that can be repurposed.
- Encourage the individual to explore these materials using their senses. Feel the textures, listen to the sounds, and appreciate the uniqueness of each recycled item.

Phase 2:

- Ask the individual to reflect on a positive memory or experience. It could be a moment of joy, a significant achievement, or a special place they cherish.
- Write down or mentally list the key elements of this memory. Consider how these elements can be represented using the recycled materials.

Phase 3:

- Guide the individual in crafting an object or artwork using the recycled materials. For example, they can create a collage, a sculpture, or a decorative item that symbolizes the positive memory.
- Encourage the person to focus on each step of the crafting process, paying attention to the textures, colors, and shapes of the materials.

Phase 4:

- As the crafting progresses, prompt the individual to express gratitude for the positive memory and the opportunity to engage in this creative process.
- Encourage them to acknowledge any emotions that arise during the crafting, whether they are related to the positive memory or other feelings that may surface.

Phase 5:

- Once the crafting is complete, ask the individual to take a moment to admire their creation. Reflect on the positive memory and the emotions associated with it.
- Express appreciation for the time spent engaging in a mindful and creative activity. Emphasize that the crafted item serves as a tangible representation of positive emotions.

Tips

Solo Sanctuary provides a personalized and mindful approach to emotional well-being for elderly individuals at home, offering a meaningful and environmentally conscious crafting experience.

Mindfulness arts therapies

Duration: Set aside approx. 30 -45 minutes for the activity

Choose the creative activity that you want to spend time doing.

Set aside the next 30-45 minutes for the activity with a mindful approach.

Instruction for the implementation

Sit for a few minutes, noticing your whole body. Now notice your breathing. And make room for a few exhalations that are a little longer and preferably with a release and a sigh. This allows the body and mind to relax.

Now notice your thoughts coming up right now and notice how your mood is. Just notice it and tune in on the activity.

With kind present attention, you must now find the materials that you will need for the activity and then sit where you will do the activity.

Notice how you sit. How are the feet positioned and is it possible to sit relaxed on the chair. Notice your hands and again notice your breathing.

During the activity, you will now be guided in how to do the activity with a mindful approach.

Doing the activity with a mindful approach means that you from moment to moment are aware that you are sitting here and doing an activity.

When thoughts arise, e.g., about something you have to do later today or planning dinner, then it is quite natural that it comes up, and the intention here is not to dwell on those thoughts, but to practice letting them be - letting them go and turning your attention back to the activity. It is always possible again to notice how the hands work, feel the materials in the hands in general and you can register what you notice in the room and in the body.

Moods and feelings will probably also appear along the way. It happens quite naturally. Again, simply register them and, as far as possible, have a curious approach to them and accept that they arise, but without going into them. Unfolding the activity can, for example, be difficult. You don't find that it's shaping up the way you'd like. You might feel a sense of frustration. It can simply be frustration and is not wrong. But again, try to see if you can accept it, let it go and return to the activity by feeling the hands and seeing what they do and possibly notice the breathing.

Now start the activity:

When the hands are in motion through an activity like this, it can help the body and mind to calm down. The activity does not require special prerequisites, which is an important prerequisite, since in this way we can reduce the tendency to become too performance-oriented. The intention is more to approach a relaxed state of being, where we discover what we are preoccupied with from moment to moment. We can

discover what thoughts the head is full of, how the body is experienced and what mood we are in right now.

This activity helps to find peace in the body, thoughts and mind.

The participants do not necessarily have experience in noticing how they feel while we are doing an activity.

It is important that we prepare the participants for the purpose and intention of the MBAT activity, as well as that we use simple formulations about what is meant by doing an activity with a mindful approach.

We are preoccupied with different things in life and everyday life. It can be positive and uplifting experiences, but it can also be discomfort, e.g., worrying thoughts, pain or restlessness in the body or feelings such as sadness, frustration and the experience of being lonely.

When we do an activity with a mindful approach, we are concerned with sharing the attention, so that we are both aware of the activity – e.g., notices how the material we work with feels in the hands, and at the same time notices what we discover in the body, in the thoughts and in the emotions. And all the time with a friendly non-judgmental approach. Whatever we discover, everything is perfectly fine.

When we give attention to the activity again and again, we may find that e.g., discomfort in the body or mind changes or perhaps completely disappears - or simply that we encounter it in a different way. The intention is not that the discomfort should disappear, but that despite the discomfort we can find meaning in doing an activity.

Doing activities with a mindful approach can contribute to the following:

The ability to stay focused is strengthened

The body's muscles are relaxed

Circulation and breathing rhythm are slowed

The mind calms down and we respond more balanced to discomfort

The ability to shift focus from circling thoughts is strengthened

Kindness and compassion to oneself and others are strengthened

Doodle art

Materials for the activity:

Good quality paper – e.g., bamboo paper or Fabriano 160gr.

Pencil, ruler, pencil sharpener, eraser, poscatusch e.g., 0.7mm and 1.8-2.5mm black and an artline marker 0.3

Substrate and possibly picture frame for the finished result.

Phase 0

Watch possibly a video demonstrating doodle art

Phase 1

Set a specific period of time for the activity. Ex. one hour.

Materials for the activity are found and made ready on the table where the participants will be seated. Make the room and the table ready and inviting for the activity. Fresh air, possibly water bottle, possibly flowers on the table. Simple and only very little, so that it does not interfere with the activity. Consider whether there should be music in the background.

Phase 2

The participants now take their seats by the materials and get ready. They are instructed to do the activity as quietly as possible. You don't talk unnecessarily with others and if it happens pay attention to what it does to your focus.

We prepare ourselves to be here and to do an activity which is an activity called doodle art. Notice the body and breathing. Take a few minutes to discover it. Regardless of what is noticed, we practice acknowledging what we feel. Next, notice what the mood is right now. Regardless of the mood, it's perfectly fine. It should not be pushed away. Notice the thoughts. Are there many thoughts and what is the content of the thoughts?

Phase 3

The instructor shows how the activity can be carried out - follow-up on video.

Choose composition: symmetry/asymmetry, harmony/dynamic, organic/with lines, etc. Vary with lines, circles, triangles and other geometric shapes. Vary with thin and thick marker strokes

The participants now start the activity. Finds paper and pencil and draws the first lines and is inspired by what arises and continues to draw as it goes.

The participants are continuously guided in noticing how it feels to do the activity. Is the body relaxed, is the mind calm, etc. Is there an urge to perform and do it "nicely" and/or can you stay in the process. Do you become preoccupied with being "better" than the other participants. It is not the product that is central, but the process.

Phase 4

The instructor ensures that the activity is completed. The participants sit for a few minutes and are guided in discovering body and mind right now. Next, there may be a time when the participants go around and look at the others' doodles.

The participants say in a few words what it was like to do the activity and how they can do it at home when they are alone.

Perhaps a doodle should be framed to finish the process.

Literature:

Anne Marie Kirketerp: Health and well-being through craft activities.

Anne Marie Kirketerp: Craft psychology

Lone Fjordback , Tatiana Chemi , Elvira Brattico : Art and mindfulness education for human flourishing

Scrapbooking

Scrapbooking is a form of therapeutic activity that can be used to support seniors in creative self-expression. The technique involves creating a visual representation of memories and experiences with the use of a variety of materials, such as photos, papers, stickers, dried plants, old tickets, e.g. to the cinema or theater, ornaments from the arts and crafts category, buttons and other decorations. Scrapbooking allows seniors to reflect on their life stories and also promote self-esteem, empowerment and well-being. As a form of self-expression, scrapbooking can help seniors explore their emotions and memories in a safe and creative way. It is also a way for seniors to connect with others by sharing their stories and experiences. It begins with the selection of a theme, such as family, travel, or a specific event, which serves as a guiding thread throughout the project. This theme helps seniors organize their photos, memorabilia, and journaling to create a cohesive and engaging narrative.

Using archival-quality materials ensures the longevity of their creations, and seniors can experiment with various techniques to enhance their pages. These techniques may include layering papers, using decorative elements like stickers and ribbons, incorporating die-cut shapes, and adding texture and dimension with foam adhesive. Seniors can also employ techniques like rubber stamping and calligraphy to further personalize their scrapbooks.

Scrapbooking benefit

encourages seniors to reflect on their memories and experiences. Through journaling, they can write down meaningful anecdotes, captions, and personal reflections alongside their photos, providing context and emotional depth to their creations.

offers seniors the opportunity to seek inspiration from magazines, books, online resources, and scrapbooking communities. They can share their works, learn new techniques, and connect with fellow enthusiasts, fostering a sense of community and creativity. scrapbooking as an art technique for seniors combines the joy of creativity, storytelling, and reminiscing. It allows them to artistically preserve their memories, share their life stories, and find fulfillment in a rewarding and engaging artistic pursuit.

Benefits:

- Improving memory
- Creative remedy
- Social relations and connections
- Stress reduction for emotional health
- Maintaining family History
- Therapeutic effects
- Involvement in physical activity

Materials needed:

Select an album or scrapbook that has pages free of lignin and acid if you want your pictures and memories to last a lifetime.

- Paper: Various colors and patterns of acid-free scrapbooking paper for embellishments and backgrounds.
- Adhesives: To attach photos and paper to the pages, use photo-safe adhesives like double-sided tape, glue sticks, or photo corners.
- Scissors: A set of precise, sharp scissors for trimming paper and pictures.
- Pens and Markers: For journaling, labeling, and adding details to your pages, use archival-quality pens and markers.
- Decorative elements: Decorative pieces that add flair to your pages, such as die-cuts, stickers, ribbons, buttons, and brads.
- Images: Print off or collect the pictures you wish to use in your scrapbook. Ensure that they are sprayed with a photo-safe solution or printed on acid-free paper.
- A ruler and cutting mat are useful tools for precisely measuring and cutting materials like paper and photographs.
- Stamps and Ink Pads: Use archival ink pads and stamps to add distinctive patterns and designs to your pages.
- Page protectors are transparent plastic sleeves that shield your pages from possible harm and abrasions.
- Stencils and Templates: Stencils and templates help you create consistent shapes and designs on your sites.
- Storage Containers: Use storage containers to keep your tools, papers, and embellishments in order.
- Old publications and Books: To create a vintage or eclectic vibe, repurpose the text and photos from old publications or books.
- A tool called a corner rounder is used to give pictures and paper a polished appearance at their corners.
- Decorative Punches: Punches made of different forms that are used to create accents and borders.
- Washi Tape: Decorative sticky tape for your pages that comes in a variety of colors and patterns.
- Journaling cards are pre-made or handcrafted cards used to jot down ideas, memories, and specifics.
- Paper trimmer: An instrument for creating neat edges and straight cuts.

Instruction for the implementation

(speak directly to the trainer/facilitator explaining the exercises in phases and add any pictures if needed to better explain the concept)

Trainers should welcome the participants. The trainer should explain to Seniors that with this activity they want to provide seniors with a creative outlet for self-expression, reminiscence, and social connection. Als this technique will ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for participants.

Phase 1: Introduction and Inspiration

Start with a warm and friendly welcome. After that make an overview and introduction to the world of scrapbooking. Present examples of completed scrapbooks to encourage and inspire Seniors and demonstrate the possibilities. Discuss about the mental and emotional advantages of scrapbooking for senior citizens.

Phase 2: Gathering Materials

Provide each participant with a basic scrapbooking kit, including an album, paper, adhesives, scissors, pens, and embellishments. Explain the purpose of each item and demonstrate how to use adhesives and tools safely.

Phase 3: Choosing a Theme

Assist participants in choosing a theme for their scrapbook based on their interests, such as family, holidays, hobbies, or any other topic that reflects to their mood. Encourage participants to share their chosen themes with the group, fostering a sense of community.

Phase 4: Organizing Photos and Memorabilia

Give participants instructions to gather any materials related to their selected subject, including pictures and souvenirs. Give advice on how to classify and arrange supplies to make scrapbooking easier to handle.

Phase 5: Designing the Layout

Before you attach the photos and paper, show how to arrange them to create the layout. Encourage creativity in combining colors, patterns, and textures for visually appealing pages.

Phase 6: Adding Personal Touches

To improve the visual appeal, add stickers, decorations, and other decorative components. Stress how important it is to include personal touches to the scrapbook, such handwritten comments, to make it special and memorable.

Phase 7: Journaling and Reflection

Discuss the significance of journaling in scrapbooking for capturing memories and emotions. Provide prompts for reflection and storytelling to accompany the visuals.

Phase 8: Sharing and Celebrating

Create a supportive and inclusive environment so that attendees can share their scrapbook pages with the group. Encourage conversation on the memories and tales that are captured in the scrapbooks.

Phase 9: Closing Remarks:

Express gratitude to participants for their involvement and inventiveness. Promote scrapbooking as an ongoing and enjoyable activity.

Remember to adapt the pace and level of assistance based on the needs and preferences of the participants. Take pleasure in the process of creating beautiful and meaningful scrapbooks together!

Tips

There are many different topics that seniors might explore with scrapbooking, and the selection frequently comes down to personal preferences and life experiences. The following themes for scrapbooking can be interesting to seniors:

- **Life Milestones:** Record important occasions in your life, such as marriages, anniversaries, graduations, and retirements.
- **Family Heritage:** Arrange old family pictures, anecdotes, and genealogy data into a scrapbook that follows the family tree.
- **Travel Adventures:** Showcase pictures, tickets, and mementos from your travels and vacations to preserve memories.
- **Friendship Album:** Honor the relationships that bind friends by keeping a scrapbook filled with recollections and events that you two have in common.
- **Interests & Hobbies:** Highlight a senior's passions, whether they be cooking, art, gardening, or anything else.
- **Military Service:** Honor and remember your time in the armed forces with a scrapbook devoted to your experiences there.
- **Holidays and Celebrations:** Make scrapbooks for certain occasions or holidays, like Christmas, anniversaries, or family get-togethers.
- **Memory Lane:** Record your early adulthood, school years, and childhood recollections to take a trip down memory lane. Seniors should be invited to share their life experiences, wisdom, and thoughts on a range of subjects.
- **Legacy Project:** Create a scrapbook that shares life lessons, ideals, and anecdotes as a way to leave a personal legacy.
- **Animals and Pets:** Put together a scrapbook with pictures of your cherished animals and moments spent with them.
- **Community Involvement:** Highlight the ways in which a senior has volunteered, participated in civic affairs, or supported neighborhood events.
- **Favorite Recipes:** Create a scrapbook with your family's culinary customs, favorite recipes, and cooking memories.
- **Creative Works:** If a senior has artistic or crafty interests, keep a scrapbook as a record of their creative journey.
- **Technology Evolution:** Document the evolution of technology over time, incorporating vintage devices, images, and recollections.
- **Love Story:** Create a scrapbook devoted to the courtship, milestones in their relationship, and common experiences of a senior couple.
- **Accomplishments and Honors:** Highlight the honors, awards, and distinctions a senior has acquired over their lifetime.
- **Weathering Storms:** Capture a senior's inner strength and resilience by demonstrating how they overcame adversity and persisted.

Incorporating a circular economy and eco-friendly approach into scrapbooking can help make it a sustainable and environmentally conscious activity. Here are some ways to do so:

- Use recycled materials: Encourage seniors to use recycled materials for their scrapbooking, such as old newspapers, magazines, or other paper products. This helps reduce waste and supports a circular economy.
- Choose eco-friendly products: When selecting adhesive, stickers, and other decorative elements, choose eco-friendly options made from sustainable materials. This helps reduce the environmental impact of the activity.
- Use digital scrapbooking tools: Consider using digital scrapbooking tools, which eliminate the need for physical materials altogether. This approach is more sustainable and also offers more flexibility and creative options.
- Repurpose old scrapbooks: Encourage seniors to repurpose old scrapbooks by reusing old pages or incorporating them into new projects. This helps reduce waste and supports a circular economy.
- Share scrapbooking materials: Encourage seniors to share their scrapbooking materials with others, such as friends, family members, or other seniors. This helps reduce the need for new materials and supports a circular economy.

Implementation of circular economy and eco-friendly approach into scrapbooking, will allow seniors to enjoy a sustainable and environmentally conscious activity that celebrates their memories and experiences.

Scrapbooking is a popular hobby that involves creating albums or memory books to preserve and showcase personal experiences, events, and memories. It is a creative way to document one's life story through the use of photographs, memorabilia, and decorative elements such as stickers, embellishments, and paper. The process of scrapbooking involves selecting and arranging photographs and other materials in a visually pleasing and meaningful way, often with the goal of telling a story or capturing a specific moment in time.

According to Hall and Buzwell (2009), the popularity of scrapbooking has grown in recent years as people seek to document their lives and preserve their memories. Scrapbooking has been found to have therapeutic benefits, including reducing stress and improving mood, as it allows individuals to reflect on positive experiences and connect with their emotions (Grainger, 2017). Additionally, it can promote family bonding and strengthen relationships by allowing individuals to share their memories and stories with loved ones (Rosenberg, 2010).

Documenting and preserving personal memories and experiences through scrapbooking is a creative and fulfilling endeavor. It can be a tool for introspection and personal development, and it can also be a way to build family ties and establish connections with loved ones.

Art and Therapeutic Planting for Seniors

Setting up Well-being through Nature and Creativity

One of the techniques that can be used to improve the well-being of Seniors is Art and therapeutic planting, which is perceived as an innovative and holistic approach that combines the benefits of gardening with artistic expression. This form of horticulture treatment recognizes the significant impact that engaging with nature and participating in artistic activities can have on physical, mental, and emotional health. The aim is to design and create inclusive and accessible spaces that go beyond typical or traditional gardening, giving seniors chances for social interaction, personal development, and a revitalized sense of purpose..

Seniors can benefit from art and therapeutic planting, because it involves the intentional design and cultivation of gardens to promote overall health and wellbeing among older individuals. This approach incorporates the therapeutic benefits of interacting with plants and nature, and it integrates creative elements to stimulate the senses and foster self-expression. It goes beyond the traditional concept of gardening by featuring artistic activities, like painting, crafting, or sculpting, into the gardening experience. This multidimensional approach takes into account seniors' physical and cognitive capacities in order to create an environment that caters to the unique requirements and preferences of seniors.

Aims: Promoting Physical Health

- Engaging in Gentle Exercise
- Creating Accessible Spaces
- Stimulating Cognitive Functions
- Learning and Knowledge Sharing.
- Memory Enhancement
- Fostering Emotional Well-being
- Sense of Accomplishment
- Stress Reduction
- Encouraging Social Connection
- Community Building
- Group Activities
- Stimulating Sensory Experiences
- Diverse Plant Selection
- Artistic Expression
- Cultivating a Sense of Purpose and Meaning
- Personal Connection to Nature
- Contributing to Community

Benefits:

- Physical Well-being

- Improved Flexibility and Mobility
- Enhanced Strength
- Social relations and bonding
- Shared Experiences
- Team activities
- Sensory and cognitive Stimulation
- Mindfulness
- Holistic and emotional well-being
- Memory Enhancement
- Improved Mood and Mental Health, Positive Mood
- Therapeutic Environment
- Reduced Isolation
- Stress Reduction
- Creative Expression
- Nature Therapy and environmental awareness
- Enhanced Quality of Life

Materials needed: list what materials are needed

Depending on the particular activities and size of the gardening project, different equipment will be required for art and therapeutic planting for seniors. The following is a general inventory of tools that could be helpful for these kinds of tasks:

Gardening Tools and other necessary gardening equipment:

- Pruners or secateurs
- Lightweight rakes
- Ergonomic garden gloves
- Kneelers or knee pads
- Elevated beds for easy access and reduced bending
- Container pots for versatile planting options
- Watering equipment (watering cans, hoses with adjustable nozzles, drip systems for efficient watering)

Seating and Rest Areas:

- Comfortable benches or chairs for breaks
- Shaded areas for protection from the sun

Educational Materials:

- gardening books and magazines
- reference materials

Art Supplies:

- Paints and brushes
- Blank canvases or papers for painting activities
- Craft materials for creative projects (e.g., cans, plant pots, mosaic tiles, glue)

Sensory Elements:

- Aromatic plants (like mint and lavender) to stimulate the senses;
- Outdoor musical instruments or wind chimes
- Pathways with texture (such as textured tiles or smooth stones).
- Community and Collaboration Tools:
- Rooms for shared equipment and materials to be stored;
- large communal work areas or shared gardening plots;
- sign-up sheets or calendars for group activities

Safety Equipment and Accessibility Aids:

- First aid kit
- Sunscreen and hats for sun protection
- Non-slip surfaces on walkways
- Mobility aids for individuals with specific needs
- Stability handrails or supports

Environmental Considerations:

- Composting bins for organic waste recycling
- Rain barrels or water collection systems

Instruction for the implementation

(speak directly to the trainer/facilitator explaining the exercises in phases and add any pictures if needed to better explain the concept)

How to implement step by step Art and Therapeutic Planting Activities

Phase 1: Preparation Phase

Make a detailed evaluation of each participant's physical abilities and any specific needs and/or requirements. Design the layout of the garden, take into account locations for seats, dedicated art spaces, and accessibility. Make sure that all of the equipment, art supplies, and gardening tools are well arranged and easily accessible. Assemble sitting sections, raised beds or containers, and any other necessary safety elements. Arrange gardening books or reference materials for participants to explore. Make sure that safety rules are clear for all participants.

Phase 2: Gardening Basics Workshop

Begin the program with a warm welcome and make introductions before the session (workshop) starts. Give a brief description of the program, highlighting its goals and the holistic benefits for participants.

Organize a workshop on fundamental gardening techniques, including topics like seed planting, watering, and taking care of plants. Encourage questions and discussions to Promote dialogue and inquiries to create a cooperative learning atmosphere and a collaborative learning environment.

Introduce the artistic aspect of the program, explaining art supplies that are available and possible creative tasks. Emphasize the healing effects of integrating gardening with artistic expression.

Phase 3: Practicing Art Activities and Gardening

Involve participants in practical gardening tasks and activities, such as planting seeds, weeding, or tending for already-existing plants. Provide guidance and support, also make sure that everyone can participate at their own pace.

Start a session on artistic expression, allowing participants to paint plant pots, create garden markers, or engage in other creative projects and tasks. Emphasize teamwork that may foster a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere for self-expression.

Arrange for the group to work together on a collaborative art project, such making a garden sculpture or a community mural. Emphasize teamwork and shared success.

Phase 4: Healing Techniques and self-reflection

Introduce healing practices like meditation, yoga, or gentle exercise within the garden environment. Make sure participants are comfortable and adjust modifications as needed.

Create a space for participants, where they may reflect on their experiences. Encourage group discussions, allowing individuals to can express their ideas, emotions, and any insights gained.

Phase 5: Community Building and Development

Make a plan for routine garden care, including watering, weeding, and pruning. Encourage participants to take charge of particular duties to foster a sense of responsibility.

Plan regular community-building events and activities, such as group picnics, garden-themed celebrations, or educational workshops. . Encourage a feeling of teamwork and shared accomplishment. You can use the yearly celebrations like Easter, Halloween or Christmas and any others. Consider seasonal changes when planning activities and educate participants on the unique characteristics of plants during different times of the year.

Tips

- To provide specific expertise and a range of perspectives, invite local guests and experts such as horticulturists, artists, or therapists for guest sessions.
- Promote keeping a journal throughout the workshops to give participants gardening diaries and to record their experiences, insights, and introspective thoughts.
- To make the educational materials more interesting, use interactive components like games or quizzes on plant identification.
- Take into consideration cultural preferences and sensitivities, by including a variety of flora and artistic pieces and art elements that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the participants.

- Encourage participants to continue their connection to nature and gardening at home.
- Create a Memory Wall – establish a designated space for participants to showcase their artwork, photographs, and any other memorabilia, creating a visual representation of their journey.
- Implementing circular economy principles in the context of art and therapeutic planting for seniors can contribute to sustainability and resource efficiency. Here's a list of ten important considerations:
 - Promote the recycling of resources for art projects, such as upcycling unwanted things, pallets, or disused containers into garden décor.
 - Provide special recycling bins for non-organic waste, such as plastic containers or packaging materials used in gardening and art activities.
 - Form alliances with local businesses for the donation of reclaimed materials, promoting a circular economy loop within the community.
 - To encourage equipment reuse and lower the need for new resources, encourage participants to investigate reconditioned or used gardening tools.
 - Install a composting system to process organic waste from gardening tasks and produce compost that is high in nutrients for the garden.
 - Implement water-saving measures like rainwater harvesting or a closed-loop irrigation system to minimize water waste and promote efficient water use.
 - Prioritize locally sourced and native plants to support biodiversity, reduce transportation emissions, and promote the health of local ecosystems.
 - Conduct repair and maintenance workshops of gardening tools and equipment, extending their lifespan and reducing the need for new purchases.

Tips - equipment

Therapeutic Elements that might be useful:

- Meditation cushions or mats for designated meditation spaces
- Gentle exercise props (e.g., yoga mats, resistance bands)
- Relaxing background music or nature sounds