

GUIDE FOR Care Organizations

This guide focuses on the structure and set-up of off-site programs at museums or art galleries and on-site programs at your facility. Programs at your facility can be a source of pleasure and pride for participants. They also allow everyone to engage with art in a safe and familiar environment and might allow for greater participation, as some individuals may not be physically capable of making a trip off-site. Museum visits can also provide intellectual stimulation through social experiences. At the end of this guide, you will find a brief primer on issues to consider when planning a trip to a museum.

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General Planning

Logistical Considerations

Program content

Within your own organization, consider offering:

1. Art-looking programs: These programs could be initiated by your staff, participants, or art educators from nearby museums or other arts organizations. Artworks can be chosen from books, Web sites, or other collections and displayed as large-scale reproductions, projected slides, or digital images.
2. Art-making programs: Artists in your community may be interested in sharing their talents with your facility and leading a creative art-making experience. This could include drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, or photography. Your staff could also facilitate these art-making workshops.

You can also create a program that includes both art-looking and art-making. At the end of this guide you will find a sample program conducted by a MoMA educator at a care organization. This four-week program integrates both art-looking and art-making sessions.

Participants

With any program, keep the size of the groups small. A group of six to eight people with dementia is ideal. If more people will be participating, try to create smaller subgroups to individualize the experience as much as possible and to address the specific interests and needs of each person. You may also wish to invite family members and professional caregivers to participate.

Dates and times

Programs can be regularly scheduled or offered upon request. Choose dates and times that are best for your organization and the participants. Work around other scheduled or anticipated activities to avoid conflicts. Programs should last no longer than two hours. Start small, perhaps with a program every other month, and plan to expand as you gain experience. Prepare a schedule of programs and share it with your staff.

Spaces

Find a space that is relatively intimate and quiet, wheelchair accessible, and near restrooms and elevators. Try to use warm and welcoming rooms that evoke positive associations. Make sure the space has sturdy tables, enough comfortable chairs for all, and adequate lighting. Arrange the tables and chairs to encourage conversation and allow everyone to see the artwork easily. If you plan to make art, be sure to give each person enough space to work.

Costs

You may incur costs for art-making supplies, reproductions of art, equipment for displaying reproductions, and hiring educators. Consider minimizing expenses by seeking sponsors and patrons, applying for grants, soliciting donated artwork and reproductions, and exploring partnerships with other relevant organizations to share costs.

Advertising

Prepare a flyer and/or an article in your newsletter to let individuals and their families know about the program. Display the flyer around the organization in well-trafficked areas. Work with people in charge of public relations and marketing at your organization



“Art has the potential to unlock doors and elicit responses that are unexpected and refreshing and energizing.”

Susan Puttermann Jacobson, former Curator of Contemporary Collection and Director of the Judaica Museum at The Hebrew Home at Riverdale, Riverdale, New York

who can help to further disseminate the information. Include an e-mail address and a phone number in the flyer that connects directly to knowledgeable staff who can answer questions.

Preparation and last-minute adjustments

To get off to a good start, set up the room and arrange any equipment and supplies one hour before the program begins. Ask the educator and other assistants to arrive early to help with set-up. Have another staff member bring the participants to the designated room and help them get comfortable. Prepare name tags for the staff and all the participants in order to help everyone become familiar with each other from the beginning. In addition, it is wise to recognize that very few plans are implemented exactly as designed, so expect the unexpected. When your program is in its early stages, meet with your program staff the day before the program to revisit your plan and identify needed changes. Then stay flexible and adjust to the abilities and interests of the participants.

Resources

There are many resources for artworks to discuss. Most art institutions have reproductions available for purchase in their stores, in the form of posters or postcards. If you will distribute reproductions to each participant, make sure to have one larger work to keep at the front to use as a reference. Museum Web sites often include reproductions of the works in their collections as well as information about the artists and art movements they are associated with. You can use these Web sites to download images to print or to project onto a screen. If you are using a computer or a television, make sure the screen is big enough, the lighting appropriate, and the environment comfortable.

In addition, you can tap into the interests of participants with artwork that you have in the facility or that they already have at home. Decorative objects, family photographs, and other works can all be used to engage in both art-looking and art-making experiences.

MoMA's online collection is an extensive resource, containing images and information about modern and contemporary works and artists. You can access the online collection at www.moma.org/collection. A set of art modules with accompanying art cards and a DVD of images from MoMA's collection are included with this publication.

Staffing

Effective programs rely on trained, committed staff. For this program, you will need a program coordinator, art educators, and assistants.

Program coordinator

You will need one staff person to coordinate and oversee the program. Ideally, this individual would be a paid, full-time staff member who is experienced with working with people with dementia, interested in art, and highly organized. He or she will be responsible for planning the programs, locating art educators and assistants, advertising the program, inviting and signing up participants, reserving appropriate spaces, gathering art supplies and other material, and troubleshooting during the program.

“This is a quality experience for Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers out in the world. The benefit to the community is that it definitely helps to break down the stereotype of a person with Alzheimer’s.”

Kathleen T. Burg, Director, Chesed Project, Taos, New Mexico

Art educators

Ideally, your art programs would be led by professional art educators or teaching artists from your community who are hired by you or a partnering organization, or who volunteer their time and expertise. They can be identified through local museums, artists' groups and consortiums, or local universities and art schools. Reach out to local organizations to elicit interest and involvement. Establish written agreements with the educator to document expectations and time commitments. Look for educators that engage the participants and have experience working with people with disabilities. Be sure that your staff interacts with the educators on a regular basis.

Assistants

Additional staff or volunteers can help support the art-looking or art-making experiences outlined in the following sections. They can help participants focus by giving them individualized attention. They can also be of great assistance in the planning stages, during workshops, or on visits to museums.

Art-Looking Programs

If you are hosting an educator from outside your facility, he or she will plan the program content and may ask you to assist with logistical aspects of the program. If your staff will be leading the art-looking program, they should be familiar with specific strategies for planning and facilitating discussions. Anyone who will be leading a program should read *Foundations for Engagement with Art* (page 111), which provides specific examples and describes the following process in detail.

Preparing the Experience

Selecting a theme

Your theme should be appropriate and relevant for individuals with cognitive impairment and also capture the interest and imagination of all participants. Consider themes such as: Portraiture, Identity and Community, Materials and Processes, Landscapes, Real and Imaginary Worlds, Women in Art, or Storytelling in Art. You could also focus on a single artist, an art movement, art from a specific geographical region, or art from a certain time period. Themes like Relationships, Seasons, or Holidays and Celebrations might be especially accessible for all audiences.

Selecting the works of art

Choose four to six works that fit into your theme. Try to select works that you find interesting, that you are comfortable speaking about, and that you think will engage the audience. The more at ease you are with your choices, the more contagious your enthusiasm will be to others.

Preparing art-historical information

Research the works and artists that you will be showing and discussing using online resources, exhibition catalogues, museum wall labels, and books. Plan to weave relevant information into your conversation that will enhance participants' understanding, help validate their interpretations, and spark further conversation.

Preparing questions

Plan three to five concrete discussion questions per work that invite exploration of that work. Start with simple questions like, "What do you see in this

"The MoMA event, with its thoughtful design and compassionate staff, makes it possible for my husband and me to both participate as a 'normal' couple, as responsive viewers of great art."

MoMA participant

painting?" or, "What colors does the artist use?" As the group gets more comfortable, move on to more interpretive questions, such as, "What would you title this painting?" or, "What do you think happens next?"

Planning a small-group conversation (Turn and Talk)

Prepare a small-group activity connected to one of the works to facilitate further discussion and foster interaction among the participants. The activity should be straightforward and allow participants to connect the work and theme to their personal lives and stir their imaginations.

Facilitating the Discussion

If you or someone from your staff will be leading the discussion, it is important to keep the following structure in mind. These steps create a supportive environment that encourages each participant's engagement.

Welcome

As participants arrive, greet them warmly. Be welcoming with your tone and body language. Introduce yourself and others. Never mention Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Call people by name and speak slowly and clearly. Put participants at ease by letting them know where they are and what they will be doing. Reinforce this information throughout the program. Try to connect with the participants by sharing some personal information about yourself.

In front of a work of art

OBSERVATION

Invite participants to take a close look at any artwork before they take their seats. Original work or large reproductions can be displayed on an easel, a wall, or anywhere else they can be easily viewed by all. Reproductions can be passed around and/or shown on a screen or a white wall using a projector or on a computer monitor. Dim the lights closest to the projection wall so that the image is clear and visible, but keep as many lights on as possible. The seating arrangement should allow for every person to have an unobstructed view of the work. If you are passing around reproductions, make sure you allow enough time for everyone to have a close look. Encourage participants to observe quietly for a minute before they begin to describe what they see.

DESCRIPTION

Start by simply asking people to list what they see and describe the work. Ask questions that prompt description: What do you see in this painting? Is this person inside or outside? Talk directly to each participant and make eye contact.

INTERPRETATION

After taking a complete visual inventory, ask participants to begin interpreting the work. Encourage breadth and variety of interpretation. Keep building on what is said and connect ideas. Balance your questions with art-historical information that is relevant to the group's responses and interests.

CONNECTION

As the discussion progresses, have participants connect the artwork to their lives and experiences, and to the world. This will encourage the group to

"The first time that we took a group to the museum we videotaped the tour. On the video you can actually see the affect of one of the people in the group change—from being, 'I don't want to be here,' to, 'Wow, look at that painting, and look at what I see in it.'"

Mary Ann Johnson, Program Director, The Alzheimer's Association, Greater Richmond Chapter, Richmond, Virginia

interact in interesting ways and gain new insights into the work and each other. Do not hesitate to invite opinions or to share your own perspective.

SMALL-GROUP CONVERSATION (TURN AND TALK)

Toward the middle of the program, integrate a smaller discussion activity. Ask the group to divide into smaller groups of six or fewer people to discuss works more intimately. Give the groups a prompt that will encourage them to connect the work to their own personal life experiences: For example, ask participants to discuss whether they prefer to live in the city or the country and why, or to describe their favorite place to spend time and why it is meaningful.

SUMMARY

Toward the end of the discussion of each work (and at the end of the program), bring together the various threads of conversation, summarizing and synthesizing the ideas and opinions that have come up. Show your enthusiasm and focus on the meaning and value of these explorations.

Art-Making Programs

There is a wide range of mediums, materials, techniques, and strategies you can use in art-making programs. Projects will depend on the teaching artist's areas of interest and expertise, as well as the interests and abilities of participants. This section provides an outline for general planning and implementation. The specifics of each art-making project determine the details both the coordinator and the art educator must take into account. For sample projects related to specific themes, see the Art Modules included with this publication.

Designing the Projects

Project goals

Consider the goals of your program and an underlying theme. Keep the projects clear and enjoyable. Tap into participants' artistic potential and creativity without overwhelming them with complex instructions. At the same time, make sure to avoid projects that could be deemed condescending. Design projects that are interesting and intriguing to participants, while not necessarily demanding advanced artistic skills. Provide some structure while leaving plenty of room for flexibility and individual adaptations. Be sure to take into account the physical limitations and reduced dexterity that may come with aging when choosing materials and processes. Invite caregivers to participate when possible and appropriate.

Selecting a theme

Your program should have an overall theme to provide structure and purpose to the experience. In relation to this theme, research artists whose work you can show as examples. Sharing photographs and reproductions from catalogues or books or stories about relevant artists will spark interesting discussion among participants as they work on their own art projects. Make it clear that you are showing these works as inspiration only and not suggesting that the participants should produce similar results (i.e., avoid "create your own Van Gogh" or "create your own Pollock" projects).

Making samples

Showing samples of finished artwork or works in progress will help participants get a better idea of what they can make. A handmade example will create an

"One of our clients asked one of the staff if they had ever heard of Grandma Moses and stated that she was 'Grandma Gertha.' The pride and confidence she exuded in her accomplishments as an artist were truly amazing."

Karleen Gardner, Curator of Education, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis

opportunity for you to share something personal with the group. The sample should demonstrate a level of ability that is accessible to all participants.

Preparing materials and supplies

Prepare your supplies ahead of time. Make sure you have enough for all participants plus some extra materials. Anticipate that some participants may want to make more than one work.

Providing instructions

Use step-by-step directions that are easy to understand and follow. You may want to write out the instructions to help participants remember them. Be mindful of your delivery: speak loudly, clearly, and at a moderate pace.

Implementing the Program

Introducing the program

Welcome the group with warmth and enthusiasm. Ask if any participants are artists or have experience making art. Explain what participants will be creating and how. Introduce them to the supplies you have brought and how to use them and tell everyone the overall theme in order to help provide a framework for the project.

Discussing artwork

Using the strategies outlined in the Art-Looking Programs section (page 147), lead participants in a discussion of one or two works by other artists that relate to your overall theme. This conversation links the work they will be making to the scope

of art history and can act as a useful and inspiring prelude to the project.

Creating a positive work environment

Help participants get started with their projects by assisting them at any level necessary. Repeat instructions as often as needed. Make sure to balance your aims for the program with the particular mood and interests of the group. Do your best to adjust to distractions of all kinds.

Supporting participants

Support a “failure-free” experience, one that is safe and that builds confidence, and be ready to adjust if needed to accommodate differences in ability and interest. Show patience with your words and your tone, use humor, and share personal stories to set an informal mood. Offer positive reinforcement with specific praise; for example, “I like your use of green in this painting” is more useful than a general evaluative comment such as “This is great.” Offer insights and recommendations that can help a participant’s process.

Presenting artwork

Have participants share as much as they like about their work with the rest of the group. They can do this alone or with their caregivers. Presenting the work allows participants to connect with each other as well as with staff, and it helps everyone feel validated.

Displaying artwork

If possible, exhibit participants’ artwork for all to see. Viewing their own and others’ creations will empower participants and may inspire future engagement. Works



should be accompanied by labels that provide the artist's name and title of the work in large, legible type. Once finished, return the works to the participants.

ments and other factors when planning the trip. Visit on a day when the museum is not too busy or on a day when the museum is closed, if possible. Museum staff can assist you in determining which dates and times are best.

Museum Visits

Local museums may offer programs specifically for people with dementia. Learn more about them and how you can register. Your best contact is likely to be the museum's education department, specifically the person who coordinates programs for individuals with disabilities or community groups. If you would like to lead a group within the museum, it would be best to contact the museum to learn about their policy regarding outside educators. If a museum in your area is interested in starting a program, refer them to the Guide for Museums in this book (page 125).

Costs

Ideally, your program should be free to participants, but it also must be financially sustainable. Consider minimizing costs by attending free existing programs, seeking sponsors, applying for grants, and exploring partnerships with museums or other organizations.

Transportation

Consider how you will get participants to and from the museum. Gather directions and maps, and locate wheelchair-accessible entrances and parking lots in order to ensure a stress-free experience. Find out ahead of time if the museum can provide stools for all participants and wheelchairs, if necessary.

Museum policies

Make sure that all participants, staff, and family members are aware of the museum's rules and policies. Go over the most important factors, such as safety and respect for the works of art and the museum in your facility and right before entering the galleries.

The Museum Experience

Frame of mind

By taking the aforementioned logistical issues into consideration ahead of time, you will help to create a stress-free atmosphere that will enable participants

Logistical Considerations

Participants

Invite those individuals whom you feel will enjoy the experience and who are physically capable of making the trip. A group of six to eight people with dementia is ideal. If possible, invite family members and professional caregivers, including your staff, to either travel with you or meet you at the museum so that they can participate.

Scheduling

Coordinate with the museum in order to take into account their needs as well as those of your group. Consider your organization's scheduling require-

“We saw residents who often spent their day in silence look at works of art, create their own narrative about a piece, and talk thoughtfully about it. This held true for diverse works of art—abstract, representational, photographs, and sculpture.”

Susan Puttermann Jacobson, former Curator of Contemporary Collection and Director of the Judaica Museum at The Hebrew Home at Riverdale, Riverdale, New York

to focus on the experience of being in a museum and engaging with art. Additionally, you can further improve the experience by:

- Giving your group plenty of time to get to the museum.
- Talking about the museum on your way there.
- Exploring the museum space once you are inside. As you walk through the galleries, you can talk about the architecture of the space. The goal is to experience art but also the museum itself.
- Remembering that fatigue can set in. In general, two hours in a museum setting is the limit for any visitor's attention and concentration. Consider taking breaks and exploring non-exhibition spaces such as cafés and gardens for relaxation. You could also consider scheduling time for a snack or meal with the whole group after the museum visit.
- Making lightness and humor central to your interactions. Make sure to balance your aims with the particular mood and interests of the participants in the group.
- Adjusting to distractions of all kinds, like agitation, interruptions, or a lack of initiative or interest. It is fine if the viewing plan changes or you do not make it to a work you intended to see.
- Continuing to reflect on the experience after the program by sharing your experiences and listening to others share their stories. You can tie your visit to further discussions and art-making projects in your facility.

In the galleries

If you are participating in a museum program, take advantage of the fact that someone else is leading the

group. Explore your own interests in the works of art while remaining with the group, and participate in the discussions.

If you are not participating in a structured museum program but rather designing one yourself, think of the visit as a two-tiered experience. In the first tier, you will be leading the group and should have a general idea of what you will be seeing in terms of particular works or a particular exhibition. Follow the strategies and structures detailed in Foundations for Engagement with Art (page 111). In the second tier, allow the group to roam freely and look at and discuss whatever appeals to them. You can divide the group into smaller units and assign volunteers and caregivers to each unit. Make sure there are people from your staff accompanying all groups. Do not attempt to cover too much ground in one visit. Rather, focus on in-depth engagement with fewer works.

The visit should be integrated into your organization's overall art program. The museum experience can complement the art-looking or art-making programs that are offered on-site at your organization.

"I think one of the benefits is that this is an opportunity to see the person you love being successful in the community. It's an opportunity to actually participate in an activity with the person who has dementia."
Courtney Gerber, Assistant Director of Education, Tour Programs, Education and Community Programs, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Sample Program

To create a multiweek program for participants in your organization, refer to the Art Modules included with this publication. You have the option of sequencing multiple existing modules to create a multipart program that includes both art-looking and art-making components, or you can mix images provided as art cards or on the DVD to create your own themes. If possible, you may incorporate trips to a museum into the program.

The following example features a four-part program at a care organization that includes both art-looking and art-making sessions. This program was conducted by a MoMA educator with a group of individuals with early-stage Alzheimer's disease.

The program was divided into separate art-looking and art-making, or studio, sessions. At the beginning of each studio session, the educator introduced reproductions of images from the previous art-looking session to incorporate the ideas discussed then into the art-making process. Although some participants who are in the early stages of the disease may be able to recall the artworks from the earlier discussion with little difficulty, it is always useful to reintroduce the images.



Jacob August Riis. *Bandits' Roost, 59 ½ Mulberry Street*. 1888

Part I: The Importance of Place

Theme

Choosing a broad theme for the first session is a good idea. Everyone can relate to "place"—feelings inspired by a place, loving a place filled with good memories, being moved by a specific scene in a specific place. By tapping into long-term memories, the educator thought she would get responses from a broader spectrum of the group.

Week I: Art-looking sessions

Jacob August Riis. *Bandits' Roost, 59 ½ Mulberry Street*. 1888

Georges-Pierre Seurat. *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor*. 1888

Jacob Lawrence. *Street Shadows*. 1959

Piet Mondrian. *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. 1942–43

The educator took several factors into consideration when choosing these works. First, she wanted to show a range of mediums and a range of techniques or artistic styles to encourage experimentation with materials during the studio session to follow. She was also concerned with appealing to a broad range of interests: she tried to include works that are representational and works that are abstract.



Georges-Pierre Seurat. *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor*. 1888

During the program, when she realized that she would not have the opportunity to get through all four works, she decided to use the works done by New York artists—she had started with Riis, and participants loved talking about the way things used to look in New York, as most of them were native New Yorkers. She thought Jacob Lawrence was a perfect complement for their discussion of the city.

During this session, the participants were very engaged and constantly asked questions and shared personal experiences—to the point that they spent almost thirty minutes discussing just the first work. Rather than rushing them along, the educator felt it would be more beneficial to get everyone to share as much as possible. She adjusted the number of works and the amount of time spent discussing each work to the group's interest.

Keep in mind the value and meaning of these types of connections. Rather than sticking to a plan without flexibility, it is much more fruitful to allow participants' responses and interests to direct the discussion. Digressions, sharing of personal experiences, storytelling, and reflections on life and art should be encouraged.



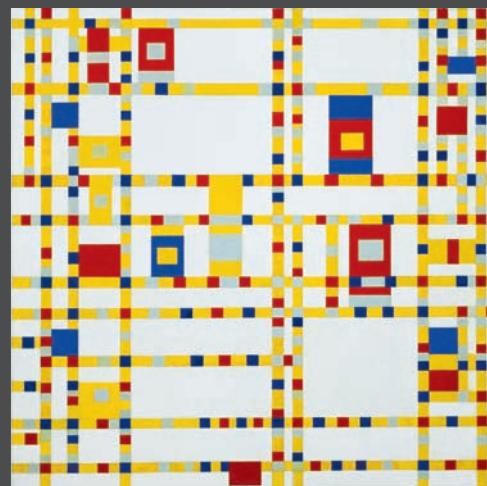
Jacob Lawrence. *Street Shadows*. 1959

Week II: Studio session

The educator chose a watercolor project so the group could experiment with color and composition in a free-form way. Each participant spent an hour creating a piece inspired by a place that was special to him or her. The images discussed during Week I were shown again in Week II to provide reference to a variety of styles and places.

Overall response

The educator was very pleased with the outcome of the first two sessions. The participants had much to contribute, and while some were more verbal than others, everyone seemed engaged and stimulated. Some group members were a little disconcerted that they would have to make art, saying things like, "I'm not an artist," and, "You'll want to throw it away when I'm done," but everyone tried, and everyone—including a ninety-two-year-old woman who was very concerned because she had been an accountant and "not creative"—seemed pleased with their work. The educator considered the project a success the moment everyone had made a mark on their paper because this meant they had overcome their fear of doing something "right" and let their intuition take over.



Piet Mondrian. *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. 1942–43

Part II: The Power of a Portrait

Theme

The educator introduced this theme because it allowed for in-depth discussion of a topic that was easily accessible to all participants. She wanted to focus on artists' choices to generate a lively discussion about technique in order to inspire participants to experiment during the studio session.

Week III: Art-looking session

Chuck Close. *Self-Portrait*. 1991

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. *Street, Dresden*. 1908

Henri Matisse. *The Red Studio*. 1911

Pablo Picasso. *Girl before a Mirror*. 1932

The educator chose works that demonstrated a range of artistic styles and techniques. She started with Close, and the group marveled at the large scale of the work (about eight feet tall and seven feet wide) and at what they felt was the psychological state of the painter. The group was very interested in the artist's personal life and what caused him to paint the way he did. When looking at the work by Kirchner, participants brought up the idea of loneliness.

Also, the subject matter and time periods of the other paintings led the group to discuss feelings related to identity as well as the social and political context within which the works were made. This conversation also enabled some participants to access long-term memories, which led to very meaningful exchanges.

Week IV: Studio session

During the follow-up studio session, the group spent an hour working with self-hardening clay to create portraits that depicted themselves or someone else of their choosing. These could be done with any degree of realism and in any style they chose. The group worked with basic modeling tools, and the educator encouraged experimentation with materials. The project was sophisticated yet simple enough to complete in one session so that workshop participants felt a sense of accomplishment at the program's end. It was also very important to the educator that every week be filled with some activity that was different from what had come before it. She wanted the group to have a chance to "get messy," to work with various media, and to experiment with materials they had never tried before.



Chuck Close. *Self-Portrait*. 1991



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. *Street, Dresden*. 1908

Overall response

The discussion was very productive, as participants made many connections to the works and to each other. The group was more comfortable this time when the educator presented the art-making activity. Some were intimidated by the clay, and some were unwilling to get messy—but everyone tried to work with the material. The group's coordinator noted that the tactile materials seemed to bring many people out of their shells. She thought it might be nice to use clay again if there was time during a future session.

Some participants were very happy with their work and proud to take it home, while others were less impressed by their skills but welcomed the challenge and engagement during the workshops. Everyone reported having a very positive experience during the discussion and studio sessions. The educator remarked, “I do believe I learned more from them than they did from me in our time together!”



Henri Matisse. *The Red Studio*. 1911



Pablo Picasso. *Girl before a Mirror*. 1932