Arts-based Discovery Focus Group for persons living with dementia who communicate primarily through non-verbal means

# ****Purpose:****

To explore Discovery questions with persons with dementia (e.g., What makes you happy? What would make life better for you?) through a guided creative art activity that employs multi-modal forms of communication (i.e., kinesthetic, verbal, visual).

# ****Materials Needed:****

**Recommended Art Materials:**

* Various sizes of water colour paper (90+lb weight)
* Colourful magazine images that represent some common sources of entertainment and enjoyment (e.g. music, dancing, food, family, friends, laughter etc…) Hint: these may come from lists generated by previous focus groups.
* Variety of collage materials (e.g., scraps of different coloured and textured papers)
* Water colour paints and brushes
* Crayons
* Glue (non-toxic)
* Paper cups (for water)
* Small plastic plates for mixing colour (optional)

# ****Instructions:****

1. Set Up and Gathering
   1. Limit group to no more than 8 participants.
   2. Seat participants around one large table for easy communication and socializing during the activity.
   3. Inquire into the group’s familiarity and experience with creative arts. Assure participants that strong art skills are not necessary to produce a great result.
2. Art Demo and Activity: **Collage**
   1. Introduce the group to the idea of connecting emotion to visual expression: we can use colour, shapes, lines as well as images to convey important feelings or memories.
   2. Show the group works of popular artwork that conveys emotion (e.g., anything by Van Gogh, Kandinsky, Matisse, etc.)
   3. Show the group clippings of various magazine images and ask the group to use these as a focal point around which they can create a collage. NOTE: May need to work with individuals instead of the group as a whole.
   4. Using the images, ask participants what makes them happy (this is your Discovery discussion) using the cut-out magazine images as concrete examples. Ask participants to point to images they like and want to use in their artwork.
   5. Help participants arrange and glue images onto paper.
   6. Ask participants what colour they like/associate with happiness.
   7. Assist participants in applying washes of selected colour around the images.
   8. Show participants additional decorative paper swatches; apply to collage freely.
   9. Encourage participants to apply other materials to design collage (e.g., crayon, more paint)
3. Facilitators should take careful notes and digital photos of what sorts of images were most used and enjoyed.