

Smelling Flowers

Flowers are beautiful to look at, they boost our mood and have a lovely aroma. Using flowers for the sensation of **smell** can be adapted for any level of dementia. This activity is best suited for a one-to-one experience.



You Will Need

- A vase of flowers (all one variety)

Use a scented variety such as lavender, lily, gardenia, jasmine, peony, tuberose or hyacinth.

Top Tips

- Enter the world of this person.
- Ensure you use direct eye contact, facial expressions and touch.
- Use one-word explanations and instructions.
- Do not over-stimulate them.
- Demonstrate movement by assisting the person.
- Timing is better kept short and sweet.

Other Ideas

Use a different scented flower the next time you use this activity.

If you do not want to focus on smell, allow the person to focus on touch instead. Have them feel the smoothness of the soft petals, or the weight and size of a large bouquet held in both hands.

Setting Up

Ensure the person can see the vase of flowers in front of them, either on the table or in your hands.

Clear the area of anything else that may distract the focus from the experience.

What To Say And Do

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What To Say And Do

Introduce yourself to the person. Get down to their level, look into their eyes and give a reassuring smile.

Explain that you have some beautiful flowers and that you are going to smell the scents together.

First, hold the vase of flowers close to you, and in the direct eyeline of the person, so their attention is fixed. Say 'Look' in an enthusiastic tone of voice and use a comforting smile.

As you say 'Smell', demonstrate this yourself by smelling the flowers, really emphasising the action.

Slowly, move the flowers closer to the person and hold them under their nose. Repeat the word 'Smell'.

Allow a moment for them to take in the fragrance of the flowers. Observe to see if they give any reaction to the scent.

As the flowers are still close to the person, ask them if they like the flowers? Do they smell nice? You do not need a verbal response to these questions; they are just to keep the person engaged.

Depending on which flower you are describing, say words such as 'Lavender', 'Beautiful' and 'Pretty'.

Place the vase back on the table. Ask the person if they would like to hold a flower. Give a smile and a nod to show it is a positive experience. Touch the person's hand so they are aware you are going to place something in their hand.

Pull a flower stem out of the vase, put one hand on the back of their hand as you place the flower in their palm. Monitor to see if the person's fingers clasp the stem or if you need to support them to hold the flower.

Say the word 'Smell', and demonstrate as before.

Place your other hand on their elbow and guide their hand upwards so the flower is under their nose.

Use your judgment as to how long you should continue and whether the person is still enjoying the scent of the flowers.

When you have finished the experience, thank the person and say 'Goodbye'. You can make this special by holding their hand and saying their name in the sentence. If you can, leave the flowers in their room, on a windowsill or desk.



Senses

Awareness

Surroundings

Interaction

Experience