

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Cognitive Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Choose One: Rose or Daisy

Text by Kathy Laurenhue, MA, CHP & Lesley Fleming, HTR

Photo by L. Fleming



Materials

Roses & daisies, live or fabric

Paper plates in 2 colors
(optional)

Wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will discuss and reflect on their personalities and traits, using plant metaphors.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Self-reflect on personal traits, self-esteem, reputation as mechanism for personal growth

Physical: Increase physical movement during session, moving around the room

Psychological/Emotional: Improve communication skills using plant metaphors that reflect human emotions, behaviors & perspectives; learn how to be more engaged with others

Sensory: Express responses to the questions as part of a personal healing or personal growth journey

Social: Practice tolerance of others & their perspectives

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather rose and daisy flowers as prompts for the session.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing the idea that people have traits like plants. Self-reflection can be informative, fun & allow people to get to know one another using a game format.
3. Facilitator begins with questions “Would you rather visit a garden or a museum?” These help leaders learn more about their participants’ preferred routines and interests.
4. Progression of the session – ask participants to stand on opposite sides of the room according to their answers & move about with each question. Those less physically mobile can sit in place and perhaps wave a colorful paper plate to indicate their preferences. Either way, participants can see who else shares their view, a step toward building camaraderie.
5. Key question – “Are you more like a rose or a daisy?” Each participant reflects on this, moves to the appropriate side, and shares their choice with the group. (For larger groups facilitator may create smaller groups allowing for more intimate exchange and discussion). For those with mobility constraints give a paper/silk flower of their choosing to them - this helps them identify with their fellow flowers and helps them remember which choice they made.
6. Facilitator or participants can broaden the exchanges by asking “Why” this being particularly helpful/insightful asking why they chose a rose or daisy – what aspects choose them to do so. Note that there are no wrong answers and being respectful of all people & perspectives promotes tolerance.
7. To expand the hands-on active components of this session, include a walk in the garden, planting daisies, pruning roses, making a daisy chain, or rose sachets.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This “game” of choosing a type of plant can be appropriate for diverse groups including clients from multiple populations, care partners, professional development workshop attendees and students. Plant-based themes offer inclusivity, creativity and alternative approaches for therapeutic horticulture interventions. “It is a deceptively simple activity appropriate for training sessions, virtual and in-person activities, care partner-client interactions, and people of wide-ranging ages, physical and cognitive abilities. One important application is teaching care staff how to learn more about the people for whom they care. This helps them realize that the person being engaged is sharing the characteristics they value in themselves, wanting others to see these in them, and wanting those traits to be drawn out more. This is especially true with metaphorical questions like: “Are you more like a rose or a daisy?”

A few more tips when using this activity, excerpted from *Creative Training and Programming Life Stories Choose 1 Exercise* (Laurenhue, 2018). Ask “Why?” at every opportunity. Asking “Why?” not only gives more information about people, but often expands our view of the question. Experience has shown that one person’s reasoning for daisy or rose preferences may be different from the reason others prefer them. Listening to others opens us to new possibilities. In addition, sometimes we find that we are closer in our thinking than our opposite responses would indicate....

For people living in an assisted living facility or skilled nursing home, the staff usually don’t know their strengths from their past, and aides don’t think of trying to praise them. These types of prompts offer little ways to ask a resident for information, and help, and opening the chance to say thank-you. The recipient immediately feels a stronger relationship to the person who sees them as they want to be seen. The technique works well with people of all ages in all situations - teenagers, store clerks, challenging relatives, and clients across populations...

People who identify with daisies tend to see themselves as sunny, cheerful, friendly, down to earth, able to thrive anywhere, and unpretentious. They also tend to think sophisticated roses look down on them, but I have never had a rose disparage a daisy, although roses do think they *smell* better than daisies....

Instead, those who see themselves as roses tend to consider themselves as complex. Don’t make the mistake of thinking you understand them too easily. They have beauty, but they also have thorns, and will use them if they need to. They also have layers and layers of petals. When the outer ones wilt, they shed them and appear rejuvenated. Thus, they have more life in them than they are often given credit for. Although research shows that roses are fairly easy to grow, they tend to be proud of the nurturing and care they expect – what non-roses call “high maintenance”. But the most amusing response was from someone who had a different take on that description: “I am a rose because I take a lot of manure in my life” (he didn’t say manure)” (Laurenhue, 2023).

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: If roses are used in the session, select ones without thorns.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Allow deviation from the two choices – participants can be a carnation or any other flower that suits them – because they are then asked to say why they chose the flower, and this is one of the therapeutic goals – self-reflection. Other important goals this activity supports are using communication skills to express a personal journey and personal traits, therapeutic for many populations.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

- Inspirassion.com. (n.d.). 90 metaphors for rose. <https://inspirassion.com/en/metaphor/rose>
- Laurenhue, K. (2023). Choose one: Rose or daisy training activity. *Cultivate* 3(1), 10-11. https://www.flhhn.com/uploads/1/3/8/6/138696150/winter_2023.cultivate.flhhn.pdf
- Laurenhue, K. (2018). *Creative Training and Programming Life Stories Choose 1 Exercise*. <https://WiserNow.com>
- Martin, C. G. (2000). *100 Old Roses for the American Garden*. Workman Publishing.
- Sutton, J. (2001). *Plantfinder’s Guide to Daisies*. Timber Press.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.