

Activity: Creative Expression/Arts Goal: Social Populations: Senior/Dementia

TH Activity Plan – Creating a Plant Teleidoscope

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Photo by C. Crowder



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will create a teleidoscope and view plant material on a lazy Susan.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Expand knowledge; engage memory recall

Physical: Improve eye/hand coordination; practice fine motor skills

Psychological/Emotional: Enhance mood; create sense of connection with others

Sensory: Engage in tactile and visual stimulation

Social: Interact cooperatively with others sharing stories; cooperatively share supplies; practice working in pairs

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Facilitator scores and folds the mirrored paper to form a long triangle. The mirrored side should be folded in on itself so that the reflections are created. Facilitator has a sample ready for demonstration. This will be inserted and fit snugly inside the toilet paper tube by participants during the session. Tube sizes vary by manufacturer so specific sizing of mirrored sheet and the folds are determined by the size of tube. Gather colorful and textural plant material with a mix of colors, shapes & scents.
2. Facilitator begins session by asking if anyone remembers playing with a traditional kaleidoscope. Prompt participants to describe what was seen in a traditional kaleidoscope. Prompt participants to share stories about using a kaleidoscope. Describe the difference in a kaleidoscope and a teleidoscope. A *teleidoscope is a type of kaleidoscope but both ends open. The lens inside allows viewing of objects outside the unit. The mirrors form patterns.*
3. Decorate the outside of the paper tube with paper and stickers. If participants are challenged, or cannot use scissors, provide assistance.
4. Insert “the lens”/mirrored paper inside the tube.
5. Have participants tear up the plant material into smaller pieces, distributing around the outer portion of the lazy Susan.
6. Demonstrate turning the lazy Susan while looking through the teleidoscope.
7. For participant viewing, have one participant spin the Lazy Susan and another hold the teleidoscope to their eye for viewing.

Materials

Toilet paper tubes

Mirrored paper

Colorful paper or stickers

Washi tape

Heavier tape (ie masking tape)

Scissors (if allowed)

Plant material

Lazy Susan

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This activity is appropriate for all populations.

The collection of plant material could be part of the session unless cognitive or mobility challenges limited this.

Additional discussions for adult groups could center on a teleidoscope as a metaphor for life.

- Our life's journey is made up of a series of ever-changing moments.
- Our experiences and perceptions shape how we view the world.
- The mechanisms of a kaleidoscope/teleidoscope are rather simple, but create complex images. Our lives are seemingly complex, but there are simple principles that can guide us – love, kindness and peace.
- Describing and discussing the plants' shapes, colors, and patterns viewed with the teleidoscope can support mindfulness, reflecting on life.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.

If participants cannot or should not use scissors supply pre-cut paper. Check that none of the gathered plants are toxic. Ensure that there are no hitchhikers (bugs) in the plant material.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Decorating the outside of the tubes. If using scrapbook paper, the heavier tape is used for anchoring one side of the paper to the tube. Once wrapped around the tube the decorative washi tape may be used to secure the other end.
- If the mirrored paper is folded properly there is no need to secure it on the inside. If needed it can be secured with tape.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Millan, E. (2021). [Infinity of reflections.](#)

Pravin Shah, D. (2024). [The magic of the kaleidoscope.](#)

Richards, MC., & Schreiber, JS. (2024). Kaleidoscopes. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 63(4), 474-475.

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