

Activity: Design Goal: Psychological/Emotional
Populations: Specialized Populations

TH Activity Plan – Flower Arrangement In a Box- Wellness

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Photo by R. Paez, Craftberrylush.com



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Each participant will make a blooming box arrangement using cut flowers and moss.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Expand knowledge about floriculture & floral design

Physical: Practice hand dexterity; exercise hands to relieve stiffness; strengthen standing stamina

Psychological/Emotional: Consider leisure activities that provide joy, intellectual stimulation, connections with nature

Sensory: Explore sensory inputs (visual, olfactory, tactile) using cut flowers & greenery

Social: Participate in a group activity; meet new people who share an interest in flowers

Materials

Small boxes
Dry moss cut to size for a four-sided box
Cut flowers (carnations, roses, stock)
Pruners, scissors, masking tape
Glue, dish, buckets, floral foam, floral conditioner/preservative
Optional: plastic film, waterproofing spray
Gloves, wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Condition the cut flowers by recutting & using preservative prior to the session. Make a sample arrangement. (This will confirm the number of flower stems required per arrangement).
2. Facilitator begins session by having a sample arrangement on the table as participants enter the room. Quiet music & fragrance (from flowers or other) can set a tranquil mood. Participants are invited to gather & seat themselves at the work area.
3. Facilitator introduces blooming flower box arrangement with cut flowers, suggesting it is one of many flower arrangements that can be done as a leisure activity using flowers from the grocery store, florist or one's own garden. Participants are invited to feel the petals, smell the fragrance & look closely at the flower's detail.
4. Using a step-by-step process, the facilitator leads the participant(s) through the session so that everyone progresses together, keeping pace, gaining confidence in their ability to arrange flowers & feeling a sense of accomplishment.
5. Moss is distributed and each participant cuts & glues it to fit the four sides of their box. Masking tape can hold moss in place as glue dries if needed. Moss can be optional.
6. Next step, a dish or bowl is placed inside box. Soak floral foam, then set into dish. Use floral foam that can be soaked vs dry foam.
7. Holes are punched in floral foam to accommodate stems. Flower stems are re-cut to length. For flat top look, cut all stems to the same



length. Position stems in tight formation with flowers close to one another, beginning at the edges.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This floral session is particularly popular with wellness groups who want to use cut flowers and create something beautiful while learning about floriculture practices. Learning about best practices for cut flower prep, floral preservatives, dry moss and styling of flowers can be done in one session or part of a series of sessions where different styles of arrangements are made. These can be delivered as recreational workshops or as therapeutic sessions. Therapeutic goals for wellness populations can target different aspects in all health domains depending on group. Intellectual health goals - expand horticulture knowledge. Physical health goals - work stiff or arthritic hands, maintain fine motor skills or expand standing stamina by doing activity in a work area positioned for standing height. Psychological and sensory health goals can focus on joys of connecting with nature, flowers and live plants. Social goals can introduce types of activities, organizations, courses or workshops that will provide opportunities to meet new people, and provide a sense of belonging to groups with like-minded interests in plants, flowers or gardens.

Health benefits of the activity can be identified as part of the session. Some groups/participants may prefer not to think of the floral activity in terms of health benefits, preferring to enjoy the recreational aspect, and in this case, facilitator may choose to not cover health benefits. Or perhaps a brief mention of benefits like connecting with nature, and endorphins released when joy is experienced (neurotransmitter in happiness) may be appropriate. “Endorphins are endogenous opioid peptides that function as neurotransmitters... released during continuous exercise, love, music” and other enjoyable pursuits (Dfarhud et al., 2014; Cleveland Clinic, 2024).

Discussion of floral styles, sourcing of flowers, flower shows or gardens, and volunteer opportunities as master gardeners or garden docents can provide additional information for participants interested in leisure pursuits involving plants.

This activity can also appeal to young people, hospitalized patients and families, seniors at all stages of senior aging and living. It is suitable done in pairs and health goals can address a variety of deficits across populations.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Flowers should be non-toxic and thornless. Care should be taken when using floral foam, floral preservative, pruners or scissors, and hot glue guns. Latex/non-latex gloves should be available.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Carnations, roses, stock, or combination of flowers work well in this type of arrangement. Flowers can be arranged in a flat-topped version all cut at same height (see top photo) or positioned with a mounded shape (bottom photo). Greenery can also be used in the arrangement. Cylindrical, circular, square, heart or irregular shaped boxes can be used. Note that they must be able to accommodate glass holder with floral foam or container with water inside the box. Using a glass container with water instead of floral foam may appeal to people concerned about the environment. Plastic film or waterproofing spray can be used inside the box for extra protection against water leakage. Consideration should be given to transporting the arrangement from the session.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

- Cleveland Clinic. (2024). Endorphins. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/23040-endorphins>
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- Montgomery, C.S. & Courtney, J.A. (2015). The theoretical and therapeutic paradigm of botanical arranging. *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture* 23(1).
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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.