

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Lavender Wand

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Photo by Mom in the Garden



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Each participant will make a lavender wand.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Practice following sequential steps; accept directions from facilitator or volunteer

Physical: Strengthen fine motor skills; practice self-regulation managing stressors

Psychological/Emotional: Accept help for this & other tasks including recovery paths & psychological guidance

Sensory: Develop automatic & appropriate responses to sensations

Social: Manage frustration; reduce verbal outbursts

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Prep:** Cut the ribbon in pieces about 12 inches long for each participant. Place 15-21 (odd number) of lavender stalks, one twist tie, and ribbon at each participant's place at the table.
2. Facilitator begins with participants following the directions below: strip all the leaves from the lavender stalks, leaving the flowers intact.
3. Leave each end of the ribbon 6 inches long, tie the stalks together just below the flower heads.
4. Hold the flower heads in fist, with the stems pointing up. Bend the stems at the knot down towards the fist.
5. Enclose each stem in the fist along with the flower heads you are holding so they bend at the point where they are tied together at the base of the flower heads.
6. Make sure the stems are evenly spaced and resemble a cage surrounding the flower heads.
7. Use a twist tie to hold stems in place.
8. Wrap the ribbon around the stems a number of times and finish it off by tying a knot and bow.
9. Trim the bow and cut any uneven stalks. Remove the twist tie.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This activity requires good hand dexterity, patience, attention to detail & strong cognitive function. Some populations may find the activity difficult. Options include partnering with staff or volunteers, choosing a related herb activity like a tussie mussie small bouquet of lavender or using lavender to explore travel to France's lavender fields. When delivering this session with different populations consider the following:

Materials

ribbon 1/4-inch wide, 12 inches long per participant

a minimum of 13 fresh lavender stalks per participant (must use an odd number of stalks) 21 would be an ideal number of stalks. It is critical that the lavender is fresh and not dried. Cut stems with at least 8 inches of stem below the flowers which are young, just opening. Mature flowers will fall off as they dry.

snippers/scissors.
gloves, wipes
one twist tie per participant

Senior/dementia populations – Wellness groups will be challenged by the multiple steps making the lavender wand & may find it intellectually stimulating. Leader should gauge cognitive abilities to determine if it will be satisfying or frustrating. People living with dementia will probably prefer another herb activity that has a shorter duration but still involves fragrant lavender flowers.

People with mental health diagnoses – This is a very broad category covering many different mental health challenges. People in addiction recovery programs & eating disorder programs may find flower focused activity a good distraction & the metaphors of magic wand & fairytales may speak to their sense of hope. Therapeutic goals of following guidance & instruction, knowing when to ask for help & accepting it, managing frustration & outbursts, a behavior of self-regulation dysfunction, can be part of their treatment regimen in this session & other treatment interventions.

Corrections populations – For females who are incarcerated, particularly young women, this activity and its' therapeutic goals may provide a distraction from their circumstances if only for a little while. Goals related to self-regulating frustration & outbursts & improving skills developing automatic & appropriate responses to sensations & situations (polyvagal theory of multiple inputs explaining behavior) may help prepare them for life in a correctional facility & post release.

People with physical disabilities – This category spans a very broad range of health challenges. For people with hand injury, head injury or stroke, this intervention will be very challenging. For people with lower body paralysis or injury, cancer diagnosis, or recovering from certain types of surgery, the therapeutic aspect of the lavender wand making may provide psychological boost to self-confidence & willingness to try new things. A focus on what participants can do versus their limitations is important.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Lavender should not be put in mouths or ingested though it can be considered edible in teas etc. For some populations like corrections, ribbon, scissors & even the finished wand may be considered unsafe & unacceptable in their facilities.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Discussion of lavender & its many uses as a calming agent & tension reducer ties the session together integrating health benefits & therapeutic goals. The sensory aspects of scent & vision make it an appealing activity to most. Health benefits of reducing inflammation & pain, reducing anxiety, relief for menstrual pain, antimicrobial properties & improving mood, makes lavender an interesting natural product to explore. Making a decorative lavender wand does not diminish the health benefits & adds to its allure.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

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Sunshine Lavender Farm. (2023). Lavender crafts. Pinterest.

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