

Activity: Nature Goal: Cognitive/Intellectual Populations: Rehabilitation

TH Activity Plan – What’s in Bloom?

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Photo by Legacy Health

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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will identify, discuss and enjoy seasonal plants in bloom.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Address cognitive challenges; improve memory & attention; practice taking turns

Physical: Improve brain health & cognitive skills; strengthen visual scanning skills

Psychological/Emotional: Recognize therapy & strategies for improving cognitive health as a positive self-care effort; expand sense of safety in group settings

Sensory: Use 5 senses examining & enjoying plant materials

Social: Improve communication skills

Materials

Variety of plants: greenery & blooms

Small vase

Wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather a variety of seasonal blooms & plant greenery with different textures, colors, fragrances, & sizes. Last person in the circle places blooms in the vase.
2. Facilitator begins session with orientation to the day, date, time, season, & month’s activities. Then inviting participant(s) to admire the flowers as they are passed around one at a time for discussion and task. Encouraging participants to use a few words to describe the blooms can begin the session that has sensory, communication, & social aspects all wrapped into a plant-based session.
3. Passing individual stems or blooms around the group or to individual participants, facilitator can verbally & visually guide people to use their senses of touch, smell, & listen to the plants. If communication goals are part of the session, facilitator can ask prompts – what color is that bloom, what shape is the petal, is it soft?

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This TH intervention can also be used a horticultural therapy. It is appropriate for most populations. This application focuses on people rehabilitating with cognitive health challenges including stroke, traumatic brain injury, mild cognitive impairment, age associated cognitive decline, Parkinson’s disease, cardiac rehab, cancer services, and general senior populations. Therapeutic goals can include strengthening attention, memory, turn taking, and communication as well as visual scanning skills. Therapeutic goals from any of the health domains can be tailored to suit individual participants or groups.

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

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Plants that elicit responses from this population include what is in bloom in the facility's garden or nearby nature.

A suggestion for a take-away from the session – use bobby pins to create an easy corsage where one stem or greenery is secured to participant's lapel with the "safe" bobby pin vs a straight pin.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Fleming, L. (2024). Practitioner tool: Therapeutic horticulture goals with THAD examples: Cognitive domain. *Cultivate*, 5(1), 1-4.

Hazen, T., & Lamoreux, C. (2024). [Defining cognition](#). *Cultivate*, 5(1), 5-8

Legacy Rehabilitation Institute of Oregon. (2023). [What's in bloom guidelines 2023 pdf](#).

Matrix Neurological. (n.d.). [Factsheet. Cognitive-Rehabilitation-Therapy.pdf](#). *Matrixneurological.org*.

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2024.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.