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MEMORIES TO MUSIC

The Memories to Music (MtM) is a participatory group method, which is intended for people with mild or moderate dementia. The key idea behind the method is to produce culture together with people with dementia, not for them. The Memories to Music method can be used by anyone working with people with dementia. It is an inexpensive and risk-free method for the rehabilitation of people with dementia.



Memories To Music (MtM) is based on researches, praxis and Model of Human Occupation. (The roots)

Researches The positive effects of reminiscence and music have been verified in many studies. There is also research-based information about a group's role in human well-being. This research data has been utilised in the development of the MtM method.

Praxis The MtM method originated in a music group, which included 13 elderly people with dementia who were interested in music. Their own music was made in the group right from the start, but the MtM method began to take shape after about a year. It was discovered that new music was produced in the group with almost the same pattern every time. Positive effects were also detected gradually.

The *Vielä Virtaa* project, in which the Memories to Music method has been developed, is one of the development projects of Memory Association of Oulu Region. The aim of the project is enable elderly people to continue to engage in meaningful activities with others, in spite of dementia. This supports their perception of themselves as active persons. The *Vielä Virtaa* project organizes resource-oriented theme groups. In addition to this, voluntary activities are developed in the project. The project is part of the Active Age programme (funded by Finland's Slot Machine Association). The aim of the Active Age programme, which is coordinated by the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged, is to strengthen the capabilities of the elderly and to promote their inclusion, to identify problems brought about by different life events and to provide support at an early stage (www.eloisaika.fi).

Model of Human Occupation

According to the model of human occupation, the central force in human health, well-being, development and change is occupational performance. By participating in various activities, people maintain, strengthen and adjust their competence, beliefs and preferences. Occupation takes place in the interaction between a person and the environment.

In accordance with the Model of Human Occupation, occupational participation refers to engaging in something that is meaningful to a person. Such participation builds people's perceptions of who they are and what they want to become (occupational identity). By participating in meaningful activities, people can change their perceptions of themselves. (Kielhofner, Gary 2008. Model Of Human Occupation: Theory and Application. 4th edition)

The Aims of Memories to Music for the group and individual (the branches)

Improving the group cohesion

Human beings naturally need other people's company and a sense of belonging. Group cohesion is a prerequisite for a group that increases well-being. With the MtM method, doing things together, sharing experiences, receiving approval from others and shared success increase the cohesion of the entire group.

Improving the participant's psychosocial well-being

The group members' experiences of success, pleasure and a sense of belonging have a positive effect on their psychosocial well-being. The group members' experiences of success and possibly exceeding their own limits can improve their perceptions of themselves.

Positive effects of reminiscence and music

Dementia changes people's perceptions of their own lives. Reminiscence allows a person to structure their past and understand the meanings of the life lived. When reminiscing, people share their experiences. When the group members find shared memories with others, this strengthens their friendships and sense of belonging, as well as improving their mood. Music affects emotions and brings back memories. Singing has effect on mood, breathing and body posture, and it supports the linguistic skills of people with dementia. Music can have effect on both halves of the brain and it also activates the autonomic nervous system.

Environmental attitudes

When the abilities of group members are made visible, other people can also see their skills and resources. They notice that dementia is not an obstacle to learning or engaging in nice activities and enjoying them. A more positive attitude from other people contributes to the well-being of people with dementia.



Memories to Music includes many steps (The trunk)

Choosing a subject

A group decides on the making of new songs. Possible topics are discussed and the final topic is decided on together. Sometimes compromises have to be made.

Reminiscing

All group members take their turn to tell their own related memory which the group leader writes down. The memories do not have to be truthful or realistic. The most important thing is that a person experiences success in the expression of memories. Reminiscence can be supported by various tips. Depending on the chosen topic, scents, images or voices can be used to support reminiscing.



Making the song

The memories of group members are used to create a text (poem), for which a melody is written. A poem can be written together, it may be created by the group leader or some other person may be asked to help. Memories do not have to be presented in the poem as such. They can also be combined or themes can be collected from memories. Composing in a group is challenging, however, the group members can decide the tone for their song (minor, major, fast, slow...). The melody is produced by the leader or a third party. So that the participants can learn the song, the melody should not be too difficult. Repetitions, such as choruses, facilitate learning. A poem can also be written to suit an already existing familiar song. In this case, copyright issues must be taken into account, which may limit the use of the song.

Approving

The completed song is presented to the group members. The group members have the opportunity to request changes. It is important that all the group members can identify with the lyrics, even if they no longer remember which memory they contributed.

Practicing

Dementia impairs the ability to learn new things, however learning is facilitated by the fact that the group members have an interest in music and musical know-how in their background. The finished song is practised in several group meetings. When the melody has been repeated enough, it becomes more memorable. Accompaniment on the piano, for example, supports the learning of the melody. The group members do not have to know the lyrics or the melody by heart. When singing together, they get support from others. It is advisable to have a principal singer at the learning stage and preferably also at a later stage. Listening to the principal singer helps the group members to internalize the song.



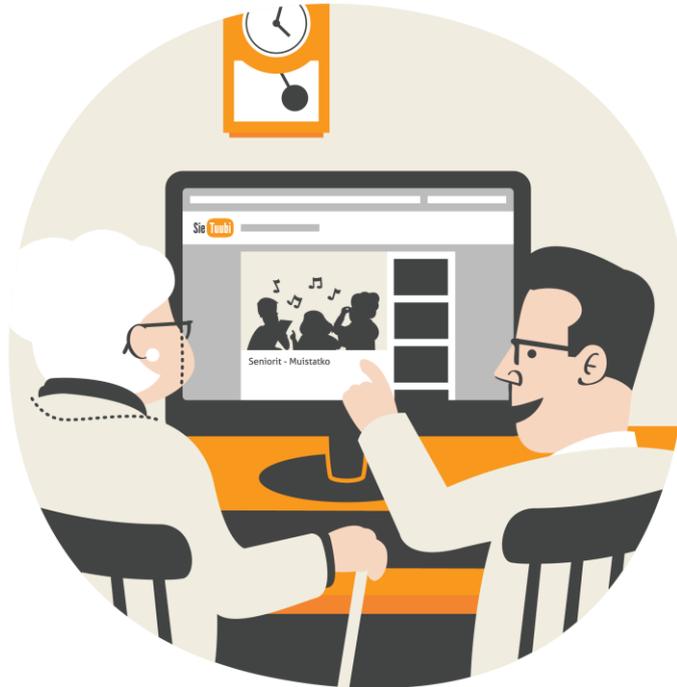
Making the music video

The final work on the music video is the leader's duty, but the group members can participate in the planning and implementation of the video. Photographs or creative products of the group members, among other things, can be used as video images. Creative activities, such as painting, pottery or photography may be part of the MtM process and one or several entire group meetings can be used for this purpose. In order to be in digital formats for the video, creative products are photographed or scanned. There are several computer programmes for making videos. In addition to photographs or video material, it is advisable to include lyrics in the final music video. The final music video is watched with the group members. You can also organize a release event for the music video and invite close relatives of the group members.

Releasing the video on social media

The finished music video is released on social media. You need to create a user account in order to publish videos on YouTube. The video link can be shared on Facebook or Twitter, for example. The relatives of group members are informed about where to find the music video, so they can watch it together later. An example of a music video created by using the MtM method:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r6g3zkP2q0> (keyword Muistoista Musiikiksi)



Performing

If possible, a common performance by the group members can be part of the MtM process. The group members can perform to their close relatives or residents in assisted living buildings, for example. You should not put too much pressure on the performance in order to keep it fun and suitably relaxed. Some performance anxiety may be good. *"I had butterflies in my stomach. It is quite a rare feeling today! It felt so good when we got through together, in spite of being nervous!"* In terms of group cohesion, it is recommended that all group members have the opportunity to perform, but they should also be given the opportunity to decline.

MORE INFORMATION? CONTACT US:

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