

Toolkit for Care Staff

Bringing singing into care settings for older people

Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Singing for Older Peoples' Health and Well-being Toolkit



Winner



Winner

Inspiration film (DVD)

This film is designed to support the information contained in this toolkit. It contains footage from singing sessions, together with advice and guidance from an experienced singing practitioner.

Singing for Well-being

A training resource that supports staff and carers in organising and leading music sessions for elderly clients

Right:
Valerie Stagg
leading a singing
project at
Chypons Care
Home in Newlyn



About the toolkit

The Singing for Well-being toolkit has been developed following the positive feedback received from clients and care staff from previous singing projects which described the benefits of singing with their elderly clients, especially those with dementia. The toolkit includes an inspirational film (DVD) to promote the benefits of music based creative activities as well as incorporating specific staff training and development information, which focuses on engaging elderly clients with singing based musical activity.

Evidence clearly shows that song can increase physical and emotional well-being by stimulating the senses

The DVD was filmed at Courtlands Care Home in Rosudgeon, near Penzance, and follows the care staff and Voice Facilitator, Valerie Stagg, organising and running regular singing sessions. It therefore aims not only to promote activities in general but to provide a training resource that supports staff and carers in organising and running singing sessions, which are sustainable, affordable and fun.

Purpose

Evidence clearly shows that song can increase physical and emotional well-being by stimulating the senses, increasing attentiveness and communication, helping to orientate in the present and prompt the memory of older people. This toolkit is developed to provide a resource for staff to give them the confidence, knowledge and tools to be able to run singing sessions on a regular basis with their elderly clients.

Valerie Stagg is a singing and voicework facilitator who's been facilitating workshops and courses for over 20 years whilst practising as a professional Complementary Therapist in Shiatsu.

'I enjoy creatively combining voice, movement and breathing to enable participants to discover or enhance their own singing abilities.'

Running the sessions



Left: People engaging with percussion instruments in a session at Chypons Care Home in Newlyn

Preparation

Anyone leading a singing session would be advised to learn or refresh a selection of songs including a good proportion from the 1930s and 40s as well as some folk standards such as local songs 'Molly Malone' and 'My Grandfather's Clock'. Stick to simple 'sing-a-longs' for initial sessions, for example, songs that almost everyone knows with simpler tunes like 'Daisy Bell', 'Me and My Girl', 'Roll Out the Barrel'. Karaoke CDs are a useful resource to help with support of holding the tune and rhythm, although some are a bit too fast and only give medleys. (See Appendix C for recommendations.)

Another consideration is to have staff or volunteers on hand to assist, particularly physically. For example, during the physical warm-up some participants benefit more by having someone directly in front of them demonstrating the exercises, others need one-to-one hands-on support. Spend a few moments with them in advance of the session explaining what the format of the session will take, and perhaps demonstrate the exercises and share the song sheets, so that the helpers can anticipate what the clients may need.

Ensure that the tea break is timed to support the session and not distract from it. Refreshments can

be themed to match the session. Arts and craft activities can also be inspired by some of the songs and the memories they generate, for example, old music halls, tea dances and tangos.

Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, who has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years says:

'The health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being. Psychological benefits are also evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour.'

Percussion instruments can also be used during the singing, with all the participants out different instruments for suitability and for fun

Some people will move or dance in their chairs sometimes improvising with scarves and feather boas

Content of Sessions

Each session begins with greeting and chatting briefly to each of the participants. This is then followed by a short physical warm-up to music (Appendix A) and then a simple vocal warm-up (Appendix B).

The main part of the session involves singing songs either unaccompanied or with a back up CD (Appendix C). Ideally the first two times a session is run it should be led by a voice artist, with staff present and joining in. This helps to develop the confidence of the staff, as well as their knowledge of the songs and engagement techniques.

Percussion instruments can also be used during the singing, with all the participants trying out different instruments for suitability and for fun. These can be brought or can be homemade, for example, shakers, tambourines, drums and bells.

Some people will move or dance in their chairs sometimes improvising with scarves and feather boas, so it is useful to have a few brightly coloured props to hand, for example, feathers, feather boas, hats and scarves.

The Arts Council in England have identified the following benefits of dance:

- Healthier heart and lungs
- Stronger muscles
- Stronger bones
- Better co-ordination, agility and flexibility
- Improved balance and spatial awareness
- Increased physical confidence
- Improved mental functioning

An important integral part of any session is to allow time for any reminiscences to be shared or feelings to be expressed. This often occurs between songs and during tea-breaks; songs are often prompts for memories and stories.

The session should end on a quieter song, that can bring the participants back into the here and now.



Right: Care staff and clients singing together at Courtlands Care Home in Rosudgeon

Running the sessions

Assistance

After the two initial sessions led by the voice artist, the staff should have sufficient confidence and song knowledge to run the sessions. If staff are already confident singers, they may not need the initial two sessions with an artist.

As with all activities, it is always best to have additional staff present to support the individuals and encourage engagement. Often local volunteers or members of the clients' families can be a useful extra pair of hands in supporting the sessions.

It can be very difficult to run a session as well as tending to the day to day needs of each of the clients.

Singing as an activity

People can often engage in singing, remembering the words, rhythm or tune where other communication channels may have failed them. It can provide an alternative way for people to express their thoughts and emotions. Integrating singing into the home's regular activities and into the daily routine can be really beneficial. This film can be a useful way of reinforcing this to other members of staff, who may not realise the full benefit of singing and music.

Things to consider

Engaging clients

Creating a sense of anticipation and raising awareness of the singing activity is useful by advertising it on a poster that is displayed in the care setting.

Let the other staff know when and where the singing will take place, so that they can encourage the clients to attend, perhaps suggesting that the clients may like to put on a special outfit for the occasion.

Music and movement attract the curious, so ensure the session is held in an accessible space that people can join in part way through, even if they just wish to sit and listen.

Be considerate of the space, arrange chairs in a circle, ensure the room is well ventilated but still warm.

General support is always good, such as spending time with those who may need extra encouragement to join in, showing people how to use percussion instruments or simply by smiling, singing and keeping good eye contact. Being spontaneous and responding to others is key to this, for example, if somebody starts a different movement in the warm-up, incorporate it, or if somebody bursts into song or comes up with a new song then go with it, even if you don't know it—somebody does! This all helps to build up confidence and shows them to have value, which all encourages them to keep coming.

Feedback

It can also be useful to obtain feedback from talking to and observing participants after the sessions, not only directly after but during the week and directly prior to the sessions. Music and singing in particular, is well known for its benefits to aspects of life such as communication, relaxation, sleep patterns, emotions and feelings of well-being. Don't forget to ask other staff and family members if they notice any differences.

Keep some feedback to remind you what songs and rhythms particular people responded well to and which brought back less happy memories.

Photos displayed on the notice boards or kept in people's personal journals offer a gentle reminder to everyone of how important activities can be, and can also give a focus for further conversation.

Be considerate of the space, arrange chairs in a circle, ensure the room is well ventilated but still warm

Keep some feedback to remind you what songs and rhythms particular people responded well to

Appendix A

Movement Warm-up

Right: Patients at Falmouth Community Hospital warming up for a singing session



Posture and breathing are important aspects of both physical and vocal warm-ups. Where possible a comfortably upright posture is good—enabling the breath to flow and the most benefit to be had from singing and stretching. Some clients benefit by being supported by a cushion behind them to enable them to sit more upright and further forward on the chair. Others may need support under the feet. Again, it is important to check individual needs—and obviously each setting's own resources! A good way of starting the whole warm-up section is to encourage gentle stretches of the arms with an inhalation followed by a release of the stretch and gentle sigh with the exhalation.

These are just guidelines, you will find your own way with the above information and yours or other staff's special knowledge of individual health issues, such as mobility, cardiovascular and cognitive difficulties.

Select music which is 'neutral'—music less likely to have associations—and has a good beat but is not too fast. See resource list for music used.

The movement warm up

- Start with facial grimaces or neck stretches
- Continue with shoulder rotations and stretches
- Move to arm and hand movements. These are good to support joints, for example, person's own hand or that of a carer supports at elbow whilst rotating lower arm
- Focus on torso, for example, gentle twists by touching left thigh with right hand, then right thigh with left hand
- Raising legs and rotating feet or any slight movement of feet
- End with a gentle all over shake, for example, start with fingers then move right through the body until everything is shaking, or that is the intention, for some people a gentle shake of the fingers can be quite an achievement!

These are just guidelines, you will find your own way with the above information and yours or other staff's special knowledge of individual health issues

Appendix B

Vocal Warm-up

Humming is a good way to begin as it is gentle and helps to massage the vocal chords as well as provide positive vibrations for body, mind and spirit. Start on one note then extend to higher and lower pitches. Follow up with vowel sounds prefixed with a hum, for example, moo, moh, mah, again starting on one low note, then higher pitches. You could use a scale here if confident. Another fun exercise is to imagine something that makes you go 'mmm!' — maybe a slice of chocolate cake, a scented bath etc. Imagine this and make the sound 'mmm' flowing into a long 'ah', stretching the arms out to 'reach' what you've imagined.

There are many more exercises which can be utilised to warm up the voice, however I find it best to keep things simple, particularly with older clients who may be quite inhibited about making unusual sounds.

Another fun exercise is to imagine something that makes you go 'mmm!' maybe a slice of chocolate cake... Imagine this and make the sound 'mmm' flowing into a long 'ah'

Mmmmm!

Ahhhhh

Appendix C

Resource list

Memory boxes

Louise McDermott
Community and Family Learning Officer
Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro
01872 272205 (ext.249)
louise.mcdermott@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk

Percussion instruments

Scott Jasper & Susan Garlick
Dragonfly Moon
01364 653247
dragonflymoononline@yahoo.co.uk
www.dragonflymoononline.co.uk

Sheet music

Cornwall Performing Arts Library
01726 61702
(Can collect from local library)

Sing-a-long CDs

Classic Karaoke, Old Time Party
Music Factory Entertainment Group
01709 710022
Available from:
The Music Box
Adelaide Street, Penzance

Sing-a-long CDs and Song Book with Props

www.activiestoshare.co.uk
01227 752199
simonandanna@activiestoshare.co.uk

CDs for movement warm-ups

The Very Best of Latin Jazz (RADCD96),
Tito Puente Party with Puente (CCD-4924-2)
Especially track two, 'Oye Como Va'
The Best of Miriam Makeba and the Skylarks
(CDN1001) 'Antonio Jobim, Instrumental'

Movement exercises and 'props'

JABADAO Centre for Movement Studies
Wendy Leveson
0113 236 3311
info@jabadao.org

Reminiscence specialists

Age Exchange Theatre
0208 318 9105
www.age-exchange.org.uk
Beanbags/small soft juggling balls/beach balls/

parachutes

www.sportwarehouse.co.uk
www.consortiumcare.co.uk
Consortium Care supply lots of different props, music, instruments and art and craft activity materials.

Scrapstores

Located all over the South West, these are a free source of arts and craft materials. For your nearest contact 01726 861166.

Scarves

From charity shops (look for brightly coloured, lightweight ones including red for the tango, square scarves usually work best!).

Instruments

Instruments can be purchased from Consortium Care (see above) or the Early Learning Centre as well as various independent shops.
www.elc.co.uk

Or, try making your own with reused materials from scrapstore or objects you find. Lentils inside plastic bottles work well as shakers for example. You can also 'play' pots and pans and other objects you find.

Craft shops

Crafts shops usually have a range of feathers, materials and elastics available.

Music

Music can be borrowed from libraries or friends, downloaded from the internet (from www.itunes.com). Please be aware of copyright and public performance rules. Websites such as www.spotify.com, allow you to play and share any song you choose (but be aware that adverts are played in between every few songs you play).

Useful websites/web pages

The Guardian
www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2008/aug/26/healthandwellbeing.fitness

Heart Research
www.heartresearch.org.uk/Singing_is_good_for_you.htm

Song sheet 1

Bye Bye Blackbird

Pack up all my cares and woes

Here I go singing low

Bye bye blackbird

When somebody waits for me

Sugar's sweet so is she

Bye bye blackbird

No one here can love or understand me

Oh what hard luck stories they all hand me

Make my bed and light a light

I'll be home late tonight

Blackbird bye bye

Song sheet 2

Hello Dolly

Hello Dolly, well hello Dolly

It's so nice to have you back where you belong

You're looking swell Dolly

I can tell Dolly

You're still glowing you're still growing

You're still going strong

I feel the room swaying

For the band's playing

One of your old favourite songs from way back when

So Golly gee fellas find her an empty knee fellas*

Dolly'll never go away again

*Second time:

Take a rap fellas, find her an empty lap fellas

Song sheet 3

Goodnight Sweetheart

Goodnight sweetheart all my prayers are for you
Goodnight sweetheart I'll be watching o'er you
Tears and parting may make us forlorn
But with the dawn a new day is born
So I'll say goodnight sweetheart
Tears may banish sorrow
Goodnight sweetheart
Till we meet tomorrow
Dreams enfold you*
In my arms I'll hold you
Goodnight sweetheart
Goodnight

*Second time:

Don't be blue dear
Dreams will all come true dear

Song sheet 4

Shine On Harvest Moon

Shine on shine on harvest moon up in the sky
I ain't had no lovin' since January, February, June or July
Snowtime ain't no time to sit outside and spoon
So shine on, shine on harvest moon
For me and my gal (last time)

Song sheet 5

My Old Man Said Follow the Van

My old man said follow the van
So don't dilly dally on the way
Off went the van with me 'ome packed in it
I followed on with me old cock linnet
I dillied and dallied
Dallied and dillied
Lost me way and don't know where to roam
Oh you can't trust a special
Like the old time coppers
When you can't find your way 'ome

Song sheet 6

Me and My Gal

The bells are ringing for me and my gal
The birds are singing for me and my gal
Everybody's been knowing
To a wedding they're going
And for weeks they've been sewing
Every Susie and Sal
They're congregating for me and my gal
The parson's waiting for me and my gal
Then someday I'm gonna build a little house for two
For three or four or more
In Loveland for me and my gal

Song sheet 7

If You Were the Only Girl in the World

If you were the only girl in the world
And I were the only boy
Nothing else would matter in the world today
We would go on loving in the same old way
A garden of Eden just meant for two
With nothing to mar our joy
I would say such wonderful things to you
There would be such wonderful things to do
If you were the only girl in the world
And I were the only boy

Song sheet 8

Oh What a Beautiful Morning

Oh what a beautiful morning
Oh what a beautiful day
I got a beautiful feeling everything's going my way
(Chorus)

There's a bright golden haze on the meadow
There's a bright golden haze on the meadow
The corn is as high as an elephant's eye
And it looks like it's climbing right up to the sky

Chorus repeat

All the cattle are standing like statues
All the cattle are standing like statues
They don't turn their heads as they see me ride by
But a little brown mav'rick is winkin' her eye

Chorus repeat

All the sounds of the earth are like music
All the sounds of the earth are like music
The breeze is so busy it don't miss a tree
And an ol' weeping willow is laughing at me

Chorus repeat

Song sheet 9

Tiptoe Thru' the Tulips

Tiptoe to the window, by the window
That is where I'll be
Come tiptoe thru' the tulips with me
Tiptoe from your pillow to the shadow
Of a willow tree, and tiptoe thru' the tulips with me
Knee deep in flowers we'll stray
We'll keep the showers away
And if I kiss you in the garden,
In the moonlight, will you pardon me
Come tiptoe thru' the tulips with me

Song sheet 10

Oh I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside

Oh I do like to be beside the seaside
Oh I do like to be beside the sea
I do like to stroll upon the prom, prom, prom
Where the brass bands play tiddly om pom pom
Oh I do like to be beside the seaside
I'll be beside myself with glee
And there's lots of girls beside
I should like to be beside
Beside the seaside, beside the sea

Song sheet 11

Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kitbag

Pack up your troubles in your old kitbag
And smile, smile, smile
While you've a Lucifer to light your fag
Smile boys that's the style
What's the use of worrying
It never was worthwhile
So, pack up your troubles in your old kitbag
And smile, smile, smile

Song sheet 12

Goodbye, Goodbye

Goodbye, goodbye
Wipe a tear baby dear from your eye-ee
Though it's hard to part I know
I'll be tickled to death to go
Goodbye, don't cry-ee
There's a silver lining in the sky-ee
Bonsoir old thing, cheerio chin chin
Nah pooh, toodle-oo, goodbye

Song sheet 13

The Old Bull and Bush

Come, come, come and make eyes at me
Down at the old bull and bush
Come, come, drink some port wine with me
Down at the old bull and bush
Hear the little German band (da, da, da, da, da, da, da)
Come let me hold your hand dear
Do, do come and have a drink or two
Down at the Old Bull and Bush (Bush, Bush)

Song sheet 14

Underneath the Arches

Underneath the arches
I dream my dreams away
Underneath the arches
On cobblestones I lay
Every night you'll find me
Tired out and worn
Happy when the daylight
Comes creeping
Heralding the dawn
Sleeping when it's raining
And sleeping when it's dry
I hear the trains rattling by above
Pavement is my pillow
No matter where I stray
Underneath the arches
I dream my dreams away

Song sheet 15

You Made Me Love You

You made me love you

I didn't wanna do it, I didn't wanna do it

You made me love you, and all the time you knew it

I guess you always knew it

You made me happy sometimes, you made me glad

But there were times dear, you made me feel so bad

You made me sigh for

I didn't wanna tell you I didn't wanna tell you

I need some love that's true

yes I do, indeed I do you know I do

So, gimme, gimme, gimme what I cry for

You know you got the kinda kisses I would die for

You know you made me love you

Song sheet 16

Oh You Beautiful Doll

Oh you beautiful doll

You great big beautiful doll

Let me put my arms about you

I could never live without you

Oh you beautiful doll you great big beautiful doll

If you ever leave me how my heart would ache

I long to hold you but I fear you'd break

Oh, oh, oh you beautiful doll

Song sheet 17

Don't Fence Me In

Oh give me land lots of land under starry skies above

Don't fence me in

Let me ride through the wide open country that I love

Don't fence me in

Let me be by myself in the evening breeze

Listen to the murmur of the cottonwood trees

Send me off forever, but I ask you please

Don't fence me in

Just set me loose let me straddle my old saddle

Underneath the western skies

On my cayoose let me wander over yonder

Till I see the mountains rise

I wanna ride to the ridge where the west commences

Gaze at the moon till I lose my senses

I don't live in hobbles and I don't like fences

Don't fence me in

Who we are, what we do

Arts for Health

Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (AFHC) is one of the leading arts and health organisations in the UK. Formed in 2001, we exist to advocate for the role of creativity in improving health and well-being and to develop and facilitate specific projects that deliver health improvement. We are a voluntary sector organisation and a registered charity with an Executive Committee of Trustees and a small staff.

Aims:

- To raise awareness of, and advance the role of, arts and creativity in improving health and well-being
- To improve the evidence base to demonstrate the positive impact of creativity on health and well-being
- To create a robust and sustainable organisation that is responsive to the changing needs of the individuals and communities of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- To become the leading organisation that provides advice, support and information on the link between creativity and health and well-being
- To build networks for, and provide training and support for, anyone working in the field of arts, creativity, health and well-being
- To enable, encourage and deliver sustainable projects that improve health and well-being through arts and creativity
- To lead and influence policy and practice in arts, creativity, health and well-being

Older Persons' Project

In partnership with Cornwall's Older People's Partnership Board, we are delivering a project which aims to contribute to improving the health, well-being and independence of older people through a range of creative activities. This project is part of the Local Area Agreement target of improving the quality of life and independence of older people. It is funded by Arts Council England and Cornwall Older People's Partnership Board.

The project involves:

- Developing a countywide approach to music and movement activities for older people in a variety of settings
- Piloting a range of creative interventions in various settings and evaluating their impact
- Developing intergenerational projects
- Establishing an Older People's Creative Network for professionals to explore ideas, develop further projects and ensure that learning and best practice are shared
- Training for care staff in creative skills

Aims of the project:

- To increase confidence, mental well-being and self esteem
- To reduce depression and facilitate the expression of feelings despite failing senses
- To value the skills and expertise of older people
- To promote physical health through increased mobility, improved circulation, improved continence and reduced constipation and lowering of the impact of diseases such as respiratory disease
- To address social exclusion
- To positively impact on the life of people with memory loss and dementia

Contact

For more information about the Older Persons' Project and our other projects see our website:
www.artsforhealthcornwall.org.uk

You can contact us by telephone:
01326 377772

Or by email:
info@artsforhealthcornwall.org.uk

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Environment

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