



## Resource Pack for Staff

# Module Four

# Understanding the Impact of Activities with your Residents

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## Introduction to this module

Welcome to **Zest Active Arts!** Our digital content has been created for use in residential care settings for sharing with older people under the supervision of a staff member or carer where needed. It is suitable for people with a wide range of abilities who can choose how they want to participate - with options to listen, watch, join in singing, tapping or playing along with the music; and join in moving at the level of intensity they are comfortable with.

This resource pack accompanies the 2023 testing of digital movement and music content for use with our partner care homes. It is designed to accompany our training; and to help staff be familiar with the digital content that is available and how to use it to increase activity levels for residents in their settings.

Module Four is all about understanding the difference that your activities make for your residents, as well as maximising and measuring impact with Zest. It is important to understand the impact activities make and how your residents benefit from them, in terms of physical health, mental and social well being.

Measuring impact is a key element of our project's funding and we really value your input. In contributing to capturing impact, you'll also be able to see how you're supporting your residents in relation to their care plans and evidence for CQC on how you're developing meaningful activities in an exciting and innovative way.

We recommend you have Zest open on your computer, tablet or TV while you work through this module, using this module (which will only need about 20 mins) as a guide. The URL of the site is: <https://www.zestactivearts.org>

### **This module aims to:**

- Understand the difference that moving more can make for your residents
- Give you some tips and insights on what to look for in assessing impact
- Give you an overview of the tools and measures that we use to understand the impact we want to make with Zest
- Provide Impact measurement troubleshooting and support



Group using a large elastic band as part of a Zest Active Arts session

## Understanding the impact of moving more

Residents in care homes can spend large parts of the day entirely sedentary. Research has shown that long periods of sitting, like watching television, are not good for our health. People who get up more regularly and break up long periods of sitting (every 1-2 hours) are more mobile and healthy. There are so many reasons why moving more helps us to be, and feel, well. Below are just a few recognised benefits.

### Physical benefits:

- Strengthens muscles, muscle groups and ligaments throughout the whole body, as well as in particular joints
- Supports good coordination of body movements, improving movement through space and balance
- Improves posture, which in turn can relieve pressure and pain in key joints and improve mobility
- Enhances overall flexibility, reducing general stiffness, aches and pains
- Helps to aid general mobility, such as sitting down and standing up, walking, stepping up and down and using stairs.
- Helps to prevent falls, giving a person self-awareness of their balance when moving around
- Supports daily living functions such as: dressing/undressing, washing and personal hygiene, tidying, lifting, moving items, making the bed, making a cup of tea, writing etc.
- Supports people to make decisions about moving from A to B safely and in their own time
- Increases physical energy and self motivation

### ➤ Mental and emotional benefits

- Helps boost the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins
- Maintains and helps to build self confidence with mobilisation
- Gives a sense of enjoyment and achievement
- Allows one to be in the present moment, relieving anxiety, worry and depressive thoughts and feelings
- Supports and enhances cognitive function - moving is good overall for our brain health!
- An alternative and engaging way of spending time with others, which is stimulating, fun and motivating
- Stimulates spontaneous creativity

### Social / Interactive Benefits

- Enhances a sense of community and togetherness
- Can support communication and interaction including non-verbal communication and active listening
- Brings people together who might not ordinarily engage with each other
- Creates new friendships
- Allows for new and different communications between residents, for example the use of props can really enhance and create lots of fun and laughter

➤ Residents work as a group and create a collective sense of enjoyment  
We all know that moving more every day is good for us, and that it is so important for maintaining independence, especially as we age and muscle mass decreases. Yet research highlights that people living in residential care are **sedentary for the majority of their day**. Inactivity can result in a spiralling decline in mobility and independence, with worsening physical fitness leading to a decrease in confidence and independence.

As we age we naturally lose muscle mass and the phrase **'use it or lose it'** says it all! A week of bed rest has been shown to result in 12% loss of strength and significant muscle mass loss.

Older people are often living with declining eyesight and hearing, and other long term health conditions, which can affect balance and confidence. Medication can also impact on balance, mobility and confidence. Exercising safely in a chair accompanied with music can support people to; challenge themselves physically, build up their confidence and help maintain independence and enjoyment of activity in multiple ways, and for longer.

What motivates each of us to move is very individual - some may enjoy group exercise to music, others practical activities like gardening or cooking; some may be able to motivate themselves, some may need a target or goal, and others may need encouragement and support.

There is a strong body of evidence that shared social arts experiences drive positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Social engagement and improving psychological health have been found to lead to positive health outcomes. Enjoyment and a sense of connection with others are linked to mental wellbeing. Here are just a few examples of research highlighting how creative activities can support healthy ageing:

- There is a growing body of evidence to support the value of creative and arts activities for people in care homes<sup>1</sup>
- The cost to NHS of an individual having a serious fall is £4,174. Dance to Health reduced falls by 58% in older adults (Sheffield Hallam University). One hour of dancing per week for six months by healthy older people has been shown to improve cognitive, tactile and motor performance while proving more engaging and popular than many falls prevention programmes<sup>2</sup>
- Dance can have multiple physical benefits for older people, including aerobic power, muscle endurance, strength and flexibility of lower body and balance<sup>3</sup>. Taking part in dance also improves the mental health of older people including reaction times and cognitive performance<sup>4</sup>
- Arts engagement helps to delay the onset of dementia & musical training can enhance the plasticity of the brain<sup>5</sup>
- The benefits of music to people dealing with dementia are clear, as well being available at little or no cost to patients and the NHS<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes/benefits-of-using-arts>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry/Briefings/SCIE.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Keogh JWL, Effects of different Weekly frequencies of dance on older adults functional performance and physical activity patterns. *Eur J Sport Exer Sci* 2012;1:14-23.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cpa.org.uk/information/reviews/shall-we-dance-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/music-and-dementia-a-powerful-connector/>

## Tips and insights for assessing impact

### Know the people you are working with

Knowing the individuals and groups you are working with really helps with assessing the impact of physical moving and activity. It will help you to understand the difference made which can vary a lot from individual to individual. Someone might be able to get out of their chair on their own; another person may report more motivation to take up new activities; someone else might smile more.

It is good to keep up to date with the overall health of the people you are working with as this will help when assessing the impact of the Zest active arts sessions and of other activities you do with residents. If there are changes in a person's health or somebody new attends, take time to find out how they are feeling and what their capacity for physical activity is.

### Spot the difference

Impact is really just about understanding the difference an activity has made. Look for signs of change before, during and after a session or programme of activities. Indicators of impact might include a change in: posture, facial expression, chattiness, the clothes they are wearing, the level of social interaction or physical activity, more motivation next time, more engagement in other activities or in life in general.

Your observation skills are especially important for people who are non-verbal or living with dementia and who may not be able to respond directly to questions. Think about what you noticed that was different - an atmosphere, feeling or mood change is as much a measure of impact as anything you can physically measure!



A group trying out some moves with dance artist Rosie Allen-Perdikeas

## **Effective communications skills**

Ask people how they are feeling before you start and afterwards (they are the experts after all!) and note down what they say and any key differences. Ask in different ways - perhaps you could set up a creative activity to collect people's feedback, like drawing a flower and writing on each petal something about how the session has made them feel.

Invite feedback during the activity - perhaps with a thumbs up / middle / down sign - to give you a quick and immediate idea of how people are doing and feeling. Note this down afterwards and reflect on what worked well and what was less successful, and how you might change things in the future.

Listen carefully before, during and after the session - this includes non-verbal communication like noticing that someone sits more upright in their chair and engages with other people when a certain song comes on. Try to remember these individual differences and reflect on them when assessing the impact of activities and planning future sessions.

## **Value small things & notice impact over time**

Impact is often not about big changes and over time small differences can add up to a lot. Something as small as a smile can be a massive indicator that the activity is making a big difference in the moment. Repeating activity over time can mean there is significant change but it can be hard to remember what the starting point was! Here are a couple of suggestions to support remembering / recording those changes you notice.

- Keep a journal noting what activities took place, who took part and what you noticed. Read it back at regular intervals and highlight changes that you spot over time.
- Use a tool like a long piece of paper with blank footsteps drawn on it and each week use one of the footprints to note down feedback or things you noticed in the session. Over time this will build up to give you a sense of the journey you have been on together and the impact it has had.

## **Impact measurement tips, troubleshooting and support**

Below are some tips and suggestions which may be helpful to you when thinking about measuring impact and avoiding issues that might come up.

### **Be clear about what you are looking for when measuring impact**

- When you are delivering activities there are many different outcomes and interactions that can be recorded through your observations. Before you start it's a good idea to remind yourself of what you are looking for in the session in relation to the questionnaire you are using.



## Consent, data sharing and safeguarding

- If you are collecting general feedback in a group session from a number of participants which won't be attributed to any individual, you don't need to worry about formal consent but it's a good idea to explain why you are writing things down or making notes so everyone understands what you are doing with their feedback
- If you are documenting activities by photographing or filming you need the informed consent of the people involved. Ways around capturing feedback on camera where there isn't consent might be to film or photograph a close up of someone's hands in an activity like drawing or writing feedback, or to frame a group photograph with people who do not give consent either outside the frame or if in the frame unrecognisable (eg back view over one shoulder)
- If you have gained consent for feedback and are collecting data or quotes from people these should still be anonymised when sharing. For the purpose of collecting ongoing information consistently from an individual you can use initials or a made up name so that they are anonymous. Make a note of how you are naming them for your purposes only and don't share with others
- If you have completed forms or other written or electronic evidence, be sure to store it securely following your care home policy.

.For support in relation to utilising observation/communication skills with the movement bites content please contact - Training and Digital Content Leads; Rosie Allen-Perdikeas at [activeartsforlife@gmail.com](mailto:activeartsforlife@gmail.com) or Clare Parker at: [clareparker@gmail.com](mailto:clareparker@gmail.com)



