

Elder & Dementia Engagement using Zoom

COVID Quick Guide



By Creative Engagement Specialist, Maurie Voisey-Barlin. Shared with permission

First, as playful and creative as many of these activities can be, it's important to note that this is not entertainment – it's about *engagement*.

Second, an aged care home team member (such as a Lifestyle/Activities team member) needs to be present and actively support all engagement activities. This team member will be an integral part of the interaction – a facilitator – and assist in helping those elders with cognitive or hearing challenges and be someone that elders can 'bounce off'.

This works best when there is an established and meaningful relationship between the elders and the facilitator: be mindful of their stories, what they love, and their concerns and triggers.

Third, one-on-one formats work best, whether in individual rooms and spaces or as part of a small group session like 'Hot Seats'.

FORMATS

1. Zoom Around the Room

Short N Sweet

Aged care home team member takes the iPad around and spontaneously gives it to an elder saying "Look who wants to say hello" & there you are on the screen in your bow tie & bowler hat with uke (or your costume). This is a short 3-4 minute chat/ banter /mischief/ comic carry-on/ joke or song. The iPad is then taken off again to the next surprised elder. I use this as a catch up to reach as many of my participating elders as I can. A kind of quick-fire one-on-one. Can also work well with a pair of elders participating together.

2. Zoom Room Visits

One-on-One sessions

iPad taken to visit elder in their room or a private space. If the elder is unable to hold the iPad/tablet/ laptop, set it up on a stand on top of a trolley or table.

3. Hot Seat One-on-Ones

Managing a small group session

Elders sit in small group of 4 or 5 (physically distanced) and in a semi circle around large TV screen (if the iPad/device can be connected to TV). An elder sits in a chair or their wheelchair – *in the Hot Seat* – in front of the group, facing the screen. The Hot Seat elder is the subject and focus of a one-on-one session while the rest of the group are able to watch (or actively participate if that's the character of the group: some might even heckle!).

When the one-on-one session finishes, you farewell the Hot Seat elder & invite the next elder to take the Hot Seat, with the assistance of a staff team member 'buddy'.

NOTE: Remember that if you are connected to a TV, the elders will be looking at the TV screen above and not back at you on the laptop. Be prepared for this as you lose the eye contact. Ask your staff team member buddy to show you what it looks like before you start so you experience the direction the elders will look in and get a feel for it.



SOME ACTIVITIES

Show & Tell

An elder is nominated for next session to share with the group a prized or meaningful possession, keepsake, photo or item.

NOTE: *This can also happen during a Hot Seat format.*

Pics From Me

> Photos, Pictures & Images

Prior to each session, email some images on A4 documents to a team member to print out on A4 size. You can use comic images from a net search, pics of old Holdens, Fuel Stoves, Arnott's Biscuits adverts etc, or personal photos with an update on your week. During the session, the pictures are shown to an elder (or all participants if running a small group). This is an alternative to screen sharing activities. Tip: don't distribute the pictures until the session is ready to go.

Finish This Quote / Saying

Read out the first part of a quote or saying and have the participating elder either finish it or make the rest up.

Pass It Here

> Hold up an object to the laptop camera

For example, hold up a tea cup close to your laptop camera and pass it over and above the laptop as if to hand the tea cup to the viewer. Have your team member buddy place an object from behind their laptop camera to the elder who reaches forward to take the "passed" object. The 'play' is in the fact that as they receive the object they are now holding a different object. Repeat back & forward. A toilet roll is always a good prop, as is a can of beer!

Let's Go for A Walk

Take your elder for a walk around the house or garden to view renovations or the surroundings.

NOTE: *Be aware that your connection might drop out with distance from the modem. (You can use a mobile phone hotspot for this.)*

Songs & Sing-A-Longs

NOTE: *singing might not be allowed if there are restrictions*

Be aware when elders sing along with you, you will experience a delay. Keep on your timing and don't let the delay put you off.

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