



## **ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing**

### **Creating Conversations with Collage**

**A Copyright Activity Re-posted with Permission from  
Shelley Klammer**

<http://www.expressiveartworkshops.com>

#### **Objectives:**

The participants will:

- 1) Review the elements of creating collage art
- 2) Work with a partner to engage in conversation and remembrances with a “partner” while creating collage art



### Audiences:

This project was designed for working with individuals with dementia. It can be adapted, however, for any clients who can enter into conversation with a family member, friend or counselor. Most people with dementia need facilitation to create art. The reason that many people with dementia participate in art activities is because they want to make a connection and form friendships. This art activity is a connecting bridge to friendship.



The exercise illustrates the possibilities of using pre-existing imagery to spark connections, conversations and bridges to memory. This is a way to build friendship through art making that does not require the person with dementia to create from scratch. Creating conversations with collage provides stimulation from a wide variety of colorful imagery that sparks a dialogue between the facilitator/caregiver and the participant with dementia.



The aim of the exercise is allow two people to equally express who they are and “meet in the middle” in a collaborative artwork. In a care home setting this activity has the potential to build bridges with a person with dementia and also has the potential to provide a fulfilling activity with very disabled individuals as well who live in care facilities.

### **Meeting in the Middle with Collage**

The caregiver/facilitator encourages the artist with dementia to find imagery that he/she likes to assist them in making a collage. The conversation begins when the artist talks about why they like each image, what memories it evokes and what feelings are inspired by each image. Together, facilitator and artist practice the art of taking a creative journey together.

#### **Supplies/Materials:**

- Magazine clippings and magazines
- Assorted colorful papers
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Tape
- Background card stock for collage

#### **Class Instruction:**

**Note:** *Prior to beginning this project, it may be helpful for the facilitator to review the methods of creating art using Collage by visiting the lesson “Introduction to Collage” found in the “Art Bridges” Project.*

1. For the first half of the exercise, the facilitator encourages and helps the artist with dementia to create a spontaneous collage on 8-1/2” x 11” cardstock.



2. For the second portion of the exercise, the participants then switch roles. The facilitator/caregiver creates a spontaneous collage on an 8-1/2" x 11" piece of cardstock that will later be taped together and joined with first collage. While making the collage the facilitator/caregiver shares the process of creation by talking about what she/he likes, remembers, and is inspired by in the imagery.



3. In the final 10-15 minutes of the exercise, both participants are then to find a way to connect the two collages together. After joining the back of their two collages together with tape, they can discuss what they both share in common. They can discuss how they are different. They can then find a way to make the two collages – “one joined creation” - by adding collage elements that overlap over the two collages.



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Heartfelt thanks to **Shelley Klammer** who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity for our project. Shelley is a Registered Counselling Therapist and a Registered Counselling Supervisor with the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists in Canada. She currently works in Canada's largest therapeutic art studio, Artworks Studio, for adults at the end of life with dementia and/or physical and mental challenges. While she is designated as a counselling therapist, she has logged over 11,000 art therapy hours in the studio and feels blessed to have worked with hundreds of clients from all walks of life in this creative capacity. Please visit [www.expressiveartworkshops.com](http://www.expressiveartworkshops.com) to learn more about Shelley, her workshops and books, and her work.

**If you have used this activity, we'd love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website [www.hildegardcenter.org](http://www.hildegardcenter.org) .**

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