

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Floral Mementos

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Photo by N. Ellis, Salsforeverflowers.com, Lovehermadlyweddings.com, The Brides ofli.com



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will create floral mementos.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Use memory processing & reflection to recall event or person; create a memento using creative thought

Physical: Strengthen motor-eye integration & coordination; release pent-up emotions

Psychological/Emotional: Process grief using a floral memento; honor a loved one; remember &/or reflect on a special person or event where flowers were present (& now dried)

Sensory: Determine if dried flowers have scent, softness, dryness; handle dried flowers with light touch

Social: Listen attentively to others; allow others to talk for whatever time they need to share their memories

Materials

Shadow boxes, sachet pouches

Dried flowers, ribbon, glue/hot glue gun, scissors, pins, paper towel, containers,

Wipes

Optional: flower press, sand or silica gel crystals, orris root powder

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Facilitator needs to inform participant(s) of theme, asking them to bring dried flowers, photos to be used for the hands-on activity. For groups where this will be impossible, have dried flowers available as a substitution, where creating new memories can also be part of the session.
2. Facilitator begins session by asking participant(s) to lay out their items, then sharing important facts & memories that the floral items represent to them about loved ones, special memory.
3. Depending on participants & the materials they have, some may need to begin [process of drying flowers](#) to create new memories. If this is not required, suggest ways to create floral mementos: sachets, [potpourri](#), or [shadow boxes](#). Facilitator may have pre-selected which of these will work best. Participants begin designing/making the memento.
4. During the session, conversation drawing out the participants & their emotional attachment to the memory can be encouraged, using questions, prompts, comments about types of flowers, timelines of items (wedding 50 years ago?). Once made, sharing finished work with the group can be the full circle moment & a positive way to conclude the session.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This TH session may best be done with individuals who will have floral items appropriate for making a memento (see photo above). One on one sessions can focus on the individual's therapeutic needs and goals. The floral memento activity can also be done in a group setting, and one option is to make a corsage or boutonniere, start drying it, and have shadow boxes for them to do the rest of steps on their own. For groups that are attending regularly scheduled TH sessions, these could be sequential sessions.

Flowers have special meanings for most people throughout their lifespan from weddings, birthdays, proms, or other special events. Some people will have kept these dried floral items for posterity, and they are probably hidden somewhere in their attic. Suggesting they be brought out and used to create a floral memento for themselves, in memory of a loved one, or celebration of a personal achievement can be significant psychologically and emotionally. A session with family members could provide a positive focus for those with memory challenges. Family could provide details from the past where needed. For recently bereaved people processing grief, such an activity can help honor and reflect on their relationship with their loved one.

Thinking outside the box, this TH session could be delivered at a hospice, grief center or cemetery. Creating potpourri using flowers that need to be dealt with before petals drop is probably the most sensitive, least intrusive activity using flowers for mementos. Some cemeteries have restrictive rules about graveside plantings, gifts etc and some may be willing to partner with therapist or volunteers to upcycle expired flowers into potpourri (made on site or simply made available), where a drop-off location for flowers would be established, with volunteers drying petals and creating potpourri for families.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Some materials (pins, scissors, hot glue gun) may be a safety issue for some populations.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Dried flowers, particularly if they are old, can be very fragile so take care handling them. Flowers that dry well (participants may not have a choice if using flowers from parent's wedding) include: rose (*Rosa spp. and hybrids*), calendula (*Calendula officinalis*), lavender (*Lavandula*), hydrangea (multiple varieties), statice (*Linonium sinuatum*), celosia (*Celosia argentea*), coneflower (*Echinacea*), ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*), false goat's beard (*Astilbe*), ferns (*Filicophyta* or *Polypodiopsida*), pansies (*Voila tricolor* var. hortensia), and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*).

Other things to consider when working with dried flowers: order dried flowers (if required) in advance due to increasing popularity, dried flowers can be more expensive than fresh, some flowers hold their color better when dried, and dried flowers will turn brown if placed in water.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

- Blankenship, S. (2018). [Healing through art: Art therapy for grief and loss](#). Cetrainingworkshops.com.
Weiskittle, RE., & Gramling, SE. (2018). The therapeutic effectiveness of using visual art modalities with the bereaved: A systematic review. *Psychol Res Behav Manag.*, 11, 9 -24.
Wolfe, D. (2025). [How to dry flowers and preserve their beauty](#). HGTV.com.



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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.