Activity: Creative Expression/Arts Goal: Physical Populations: All

TH Activity Plan – Pressed Flower Keychains

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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make a pressed flower keychain for themselves.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:
Cognitive/Intellectual: Strengthen attention, focus & concentration
Physical: Strengthen fine motor, sensorimotor skills, & hand-eye coordination
Psychological/Emotional: Expand self-confidence; enhance mood
Sensory: Feel the textures of plant materials
Social: Share plant materials being aware of social cues from others; compliment other's work & creativity; expand connections between people & plants

Materials

Pressed flowers

Paper plates, construction paper, pencils, scissors, circle template, glue, tweezers, toothpicks,

key rings

Wipes

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Previous TH sessions may have involved pressing flowers to be used in this session.
2. Facilitator begins session by showing example of the pressed flower keychain. Verbal steps are outlined to orient participants to the activity.
3. Place pressed flowers on a paper plate, then pass it around so participants can select several. They also choose a colored piece of construction paper for the background.
4. Participants arrange flowers on circle of paper, (pre-cut or cut in session using a cardboard template or the keychain lid's circle). Allow time for participants to try several different arrangements before choosing design. Tweezers may be helpful for handling items.
5. Participants put glue on paper and place flowers on top. Note that more than 4 flowers may deter keychain lid from closing.
6. Place lid on top of the side that has the flowers facing up. Fit the lid tightly.
7. Group can pass around each other's creative keychains, admiring & complimenting the work & each other. Discussion of creative activities providing ways to expand self-confidence & mood, with participants suggesting other plant-based activities can conclude the session.

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: Creating keychains with pressed flowers is a popular horticultural activity. When used as TH it can incorporate multiple therapeutic goals, though typically these are limited to one or two goals per session. These are based on the therapeutic goals, task analyses, and needs of the participants. Grouping together participants with common health challenges can be efficient.

Physical goals can focus on fine motor skills, defined as tiny movements with hands, fingers, feet and toes which involve complex coordination of muscles, joints and nerves (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). Processes involving precision, dexterity, coordination, muscle strength along with awareness and planning are part of fine motor skills, with these varying by age and stage of development. Adults' fine motor skills may be affected by injury to

hands, brain functioning (stroke for example), spinal cord, peripheral nerves and muscles. Medical conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome, multiple sclerosis, Huntington's and Parkinson's diseases, neuropathy and rheumatoid arthritis conditions also impact fine motor functioning. These are distinguished from children's fine motor skills most often related to developmental stages.

Challenges to sensorimotor skills, related to sensorimotor disorders, are characterized by immature and delayed gross and fine motor development without obvious medical or intellectual causes, and not related to sensory causes (Niklasson et a., 2015). Research has determined that motor problems do not disappear with age and that the same diagnostic instruments and treatment methods can be used for both children and adults with sensorimotor difficulties (Niklasson et a., 2015). TH interventions have been used for both sensorimotor and fine motor deficits.

Occupational therapists working with people to adapt their abilities to perform daily tasks including tasks requiring fine motor skills use techniques and adaptations with a focus on stabilizing items, extending or enlarging items making them easier to grasp or hold in place, and simplifying steps for task completion (Cleveland Clinic, 2023). These techniques can be adopted for use in TH and this particular activity where hands are used to handle and arrange small pressed flowers for keychains. The use of aids like tweezers and Q-tips for gluing can be additional accommodations.

Most populations will find the keychain activity interesting. Children may use keychains for their home key. Seniors may find the artistic keychain a colorful visual cue for finding keys when misplaced. Keychains can also be gifted to others, with this an important social therapeutic goal thinking of others, showing gratitude, and having positive engagements with others.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. For participants with propensity for putting items in mouths, close supervision should be used for glue, flowers, and the safe use of scissors.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: Various flowers are suitable for use in pressed flower activities. Flowers with single layer petals, that are fresh and dry work well. Flowers that lay flat are preferred, however, flowers with chunky thick centers can be pressed by removing and pressing petals, used without their centers.

Recommended flowers for pressing include viola, cherry blossoms (*Prunus serrulate*), Japanese maple (*Acer plamatum*), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), cosmos (*Cosmos bipinnatus*), forget-me-nots (*Myosotis sylvatica*), daisies (*Bellis perennis*), anenomes, pansies (*Viola x wittrockiana*), calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) and Wattle foliage (*Acacia pycnantha*). Note that the following plants are poisonous if ingested, but if there is no risk of population putting items in mouths, they may be appropriate to use: baby's breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*), and delphinium (*Delphinium elatum*). Queen Annes's lace (*Daucus carota*) is not poisonous but is very similar in appearance to poisonous hemlock.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

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Rodriguez, J. (2022). How to improve fine motor skills in adults. *Griswoldcare.com.*

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