

This guide has been put together by Debbie Lee-Anthony, one of our Elevate artists. Debbie has outlined suggested themes, ideas and exercises, including music choices for you to run your own similar sessions. *Session duration – introduction, warm up and main theme followed by cool down approx. 45-60 mins*

N.B. Patients should listen to their own bodies' responses at all times and work within their own limitations.

You should begin your session with Part 1 – introductions and warm ups

Main theme of session – examples

Decade

Choose a decade as a theme, e.g. 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s etc. Encourage chatting and reminiscing music of the times, major world events, popular food, cars, films, etc. Build movement around responses from the group. Use appropriate music relevant to era. Here the group can follow the leader yet also have opportunities to create own gestures and actions to be incorporated into the movement sequence. This is always a fun and uplifting activity.

Prop-based dance

Paper plates – each patient is given two paper plates. Experiment with reaching, circling, balancing plates on body parts. Get creative by becoming something other than a plate e.g. moon, flying saucer, steering wheel, Frisbee, air traffic control, fan etc. I lead simple movements holding the paper plates, set to 'Fly me to the moon' - Frank Sinatra. In the instrumental section patients are encouraged to be playful and imaginative with the plates, as suggested above.

Large feathers – writing their initials or name in the air, conducting, tracing around their body and feeling texture (see feather image below).

Bean bags – using brightly coloured bean bags, pass them around own body, gentle throwing and catching, reaching and circling around the head, waist etc.

Coloured scarves – playful to use as a towel, scarf, head band, necklace, paintbrush, writing name (see scarf image below)

Seasonal dance

For example autumn – take in conkers for patients to feel and reminisce on school days, collecting conkers, conker fights etc. Someone always has a fun story to share! I also provide a wide range of yellow, brown and red autumn leaves, all shapes and sizes. Pass items around – this evokes stories and memories. Set a 'dance' with creative input from patients too.

Suggested music: 'Autumn Leaves' – Edith Piaf; 'Forever Autumn' – Justin Hayward and Moody Blues.

Location – major cities of the world

For example New York, Paris, Rome, London etc. Encourage patients to name famous landmarks, buildings, rivers, food, singers, film stars and so forth. Create movement sequences reflecting qualities and aspects of the city in question.

Suggested music: 'New York, New York' – Frank Sinatra; 'The last time I saw Paris' – Noel Coward; 'Roma nun fa la stupida' – Arrivederci Roma.

Sporting life

Recall major sporting events – often patients have a special memory of attending one. Talk about their favourite sports and do physical actions in relation to these. Abstract, make bigger, exaggerate or make playful to develop the movements.

Suggested music: 'Soul limbo' – Booker T & The MG's; 'Straight down the middle' – Bing Crosby; 'Grandstand theme' – Keith Mansfield.

Songs

Responding to and interpreting lyrics, for example 'Getting some fun out of life' – Billie Holiday; 'Old Cape Cod' – Bette Midler; 'Someone's rocking my dream boat' – The Inkspots; 'Light my fire' – Jim Morrison, The Doors; 'On the sunny side of the street' – Louis Armstrong; 'Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow' – Dean Martin.

Tap dance

Give patients a pair of elastics with buttons sewn on, to place around foot or sock or shoes (see image below) for improvised tap shoes. Gently invite each person and help in placing around their feet. Rhythmic toe tapping, alternating feet, set to music. Alternatively place around hand, to gently tap arms of chair.

Suggested music: 'Let's face the music and dance' – Fred Astaire; 'High Society Calypso' – Louis Armstrong; '(Get your kicks on) Route 66' – Nat King Cole.

Cool down

Cool down with slow stretches and relaxation, ensuring heart rate has returned to normal. Focus on the breath, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Suggest patients close their eyes, as they listen to a beautiful Aria. I often include a visualisation as part of the stretching to close the session, the aim being to find a sense of calm and tranquility.

